Imagining Metaphors

Institute for Logic, Language and Computation

For further information about ILLC-publications, please contact:
Institute for Logic, Language and Computation
Universiteit van Amsterdam
Plantage Muidergracht 24
1018 TV Amsterdam
phone: +31-20-525 6051
fax: +31-20-525 5206
email: illc@science.uva.nl
homepage: http://www.illc.uva.nl/

Imagining Metaphors

Cognitive representation in interpretation and understanding

Academisch Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de
Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof.mr. P.F.van der Heijden
ten overstaan van een door het college voor
promoties ingestelde commissie, in het openbaar
te verdedigen in de Aula der Universiteit
op woensdag 24 september 2003, te 12.00 uur
door

Elisabeth Cathérine Brouwer
geboren te Baarn

Promotores: Prof. dr. R.I. Bartsch
Prof. dr. M.J.B. Stokhof

Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen

Cover design by Hein Eberson, Muiderberg
Printed and bound by Ipskamp, Amsterdam
ISBN: 90-5776-108-4

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to many people for their support over the past years, but especially so to Renate Bartsch and Martin Stokhof. If it were not for Renate's interest in the odd subjects of philosophy of language, such as the interpretation of poetic text, I could never have got started on this project. Her enthusiasm, paired to critical inquiry, provided a continuous motivation in this investigation. Martin saw me through the process of writing over the past years. As a reader, he displays a rare combination of openmindedness and precision. His continuous feedback allowed me not only to develop, but also to structure the line of thought presented here.
Many people read parts or previous versions of this work, and I am greatful to them all. I particularly want to thank Remko Scha, for inspiring discussions and comments that never failed to be constructive; and Bipin Indurkhya, who helped me get started, and introduced me to a number of conferences and workshops on the subject.
I further thank the librarians at the Institute of Philosophy, especially Saskia Speur, and also Ria Beentjes, for her invaluable help in all practical matters.
Part of the research presented here was the result of an exciting and fruitful stay at the Humboldt University in Berlin in 1998. I am obliged to professor Ewald Lang for welcoming me, and to NWO for providing the funding that enabled my stay in Berlin.

Also thanks to Alice, Betsy, Marijke, and Karen for knowing when to pull me away from my computer (and when not), and to Pepita for being there during the last hectic weeks. To Hein Eberson for realizing this printed version, to Jill Jooren for last-minute corrections, and to Marianne Brouwer for helping out in many ways.
Finally, I could not have written this book without the support and encouragement of Mark Jooren. Without him, and without our son Raf, finishing it would not be half the fun it is.

Overview

In **Chapter 1** I consider the problem that poetic text poses to theories of linguistic meaning. Interpretation of poetic text involves subjective representations of meaning, that are considered normally to lie outside the scope of a truth conditional semantics, or semantic theories on propositional meaning; hence, the scarce occasions where poetic text is mentioned in semantic theory, usually exclude it from the realm of semantic interpretation. One aspect of poetic interpretation concerns an allegorical, or metaphorical understanding of the text. Since the semantic literature on metaphorical interpretation is abundant, I at first restrain the topic of poetic interpretation to the metaphorical interpretation of poetic text, and consider to what extent theories on metaphor help explain it.
I consider first semantic perspectives, and then cognitive perspectives on metaphor. Throughout the discussion of different theories, I focus on possible implications for the metaphorical interpretation of poetic text. In this discussion, it becomes clear that virtually all the theories discussed relate metaphorical interpretation to the use of imagination, or sometimes more specifically to the work of productive imagination. However, none of the accounts discussed relates the role of imagination in metaphorical interpretation to its possible role in the conceptual understanding of common, non-poetic use of language. Hence, it seems as if metaphors require an entirely different type of interpretation than other utterances. Furthermore, examples can be construed of a metaphorical interpretation of regular utterances in an imaginatively construed context of interpretation. Hence, the process of metaphorical interpretation is not applied to metaphors only, and must then be characterized in another way than as prompted by linguistic or semantic form. Furthermore, if an utterance can be interpreted metaphorically, merely by imaginatively construing a different context, then interpretation would seem to depend on how imagination is used in it. The following chapter focuses first on how metaphorical interpretation may be characterized by a specific role of imagination, and second whether this role can be related to a role of imagination in conceptual understanding.

In **Chapter 2** I consider Kant's theory of imagination as presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and in the *Critique of Judgement*. Imagination, in its more mundane, not *a priori* understanding, can take on a productive as well as a reproductive role. When discussing how metaphorical interpretation could be understood as based on productive imagination, I consider how this may similarly be the case for regular, conceptual understanding. Starting with

Gibbons' interpretation of the role of productive imagination in empirical judgements, I engage in a speculation on whether imagination's reproductive role could be understood in terms of its productive role. This speculation, of course, brings the discussion quite beyond the realm of exegesis, and thus should emphatically not be taken as an attempt to reconstruct what Kant had in mind and did not write. Rather, it functions as a preliminary for more elaborate suggestions of a cognitive model in the next chapter. My speculations concern especially Kant's analysis of aesthetical reflection, or more specifically the possibility of forming subjective concepts on the basis of productive imagination. I suggest that this account might be generalized into an account of concept formation. Thus, my suggestions break with the possibility of objectivity, as I envision a model of cognition based on conceptual combination of intuitive presentations and imaginative representations in subjective reflection. Thereby Kant's remarks on how subjective concepts may attain the status of universals through the assumption of common ground, is well kept in mind, to ensure a notion of intersubjectivity of concepts.

In **Chapter 3** I first discuss two theories of concept formation, the first of Renate Bartsch and the second of Lawrence Barsalou. Both in a sense conform to the requirements set up for a model of cognition in the speculations on a generalized faculty of subjective judgement. These include an empirical, and not an *a priori* foundation for concepts, as well as the general cognitive tools of productive imagination for the conceptual combination of representations, namely recognition of similarity and laws of association. The problem I encounter, then, is that to assume that all concepts are produced in imagination, and do not follow *a priori* rules of understanding, entails that the formation of concepts is so radically subjective that common ground in concept formation may no longer generally be assumed. Both models discussed solve this problem by proposing an experiential grounding for the conceptual system, by relating concepts causally to perceptually processed properties of reality.
Nevertheless, such perceptual grounding is unwelcome in the case of metaphorical interpretation. To understand the interpretation of metaphor as *seeing* something *as* something else that hardly bears any perceptual resemblance, entails a different function of conceptually combining representation than the perceptual recognition of similarity between representations can account for. Thus, I develop a different approach, based on imaginative combination of representations in interpretation. In the outlined approach, I use Bartsch's understanding of how concept formation depends on and is furthered by the process of learning language conform to regulated use of language in a speech community, while I rely on Barsalou's account of

cognitive representation. In the outlined model an understanding of conventional use of language is developed as based on using words that are learned to be appropriate in a 'normal' context, while subjective interpretation is based on associations between expressions or perceptual representations on the basis of personal experience. In either case, understanding is based on combining cognitive representations in imagination, on the basis of what is experienced. Hence, every act of conceptualization involves the productive combination of representations in imagination. Conceptual, or routine, understanding and creative, or reflective, interpretation are then considered as the opposite ends of a spectre of acts of conceptualization, where the former is considered to involve familiar combinations of representations, triggered by an utterance in a context, while the latter, creative interpretation involves the new formation of conceptual combinations in reflection. At the end of the chapter, the relation between the proposed approach to conceptualization and Kant's understanding of aesthetic reflection is reconsidered.

In the epilogue I return to the issue of poetic interpretation. Since in the last chapter an understanding of productive imagination is used to characterize all acts of interpretation, there is only one feature left of Kant's description of aesthetic judgement that may still pertain to the interpretation of poetry or art, namely that of objective disinterestedness, which is taken up by many other authors in the identification of the starting point for a free imaginative contemplation of poetic text or art. However, such an attitude is tied to a conventional understanding of what is art. Hence, the use of free imagination can be considered as an idealization of what conventionally is the proper attitude to adopt in a normal context of poetry or art. Hence, free use of imagination is not the reality of poetic interpretation, but rather presents a model for how we are supposed to approach objects that appear in a poetic context.

Table of contents

III Representation

I Metaphor

Between language and cognition.

for the roses
had the look of flowers that are looked at
T.S. Eliot [1]

1 Poetic interpretation

1.1 Symbols in poetry

A poem about a rose is hardly ever about a rose. Its poetic guise has many traditional faces: the red of love, the pink of health or the white of purity. But the meanings of symbols, however traditional the image presented may be, are not fixed. The image of a rose, for instance, has a distinguished history as a poetic symbol, but what remains of that in Gertrude Stein's 'a rose is a rose is a rose'?[2] If a rose really were a rose in poetry - why should she say so? Could every single mentioned rose present a different one from its history of symbolic

[1] T.S. Eliot, 'Burnt Norton' in *Four Quartet*

[2] Gertrude Stein, 'Sacred Emily' (1913) in *Geography and Plays*. There are several other writings by Stein in which the same phrase occurs, sometimes without the indefinite particle, and sometimes with, but capitalized, and sometimes as part of a longer sentence: 'suppose, to suppose, suppose a rose is a rose is a rose' The mentioned reference apparently is the first of all these occurrences. The probably most famous reference is the children's book *The World is Not Round* (1939), which is about a girl called Rose.

meanings? One wonders: is this a statement about what the author wants from her readers? To stop them from thinking about what the image stands for and to read what is clearly said? Is it an enchanting formula that hinders the symbolic interpretation that we are likely to recall in poetic interpretation?

Precisely in asking this, we interpret the imagery in the tautological rhythm anew. We look for the use of the words, and thereby look beyond what is stated. We take the phrase for a poetic stance, and not merely for the reassuring tautology it appears to be. And with that, Stein's roses again become a symbol, representing all images in poetry that are interpreted as something beyond the words expressed.

The normal situation in which we encounter a poem is when we are reading a book, or maybe just a scrap of paper, or when someone is reading it out loud to us. The author is absent, and has left us to understand his text by ourselves. In the context of reading a poem, there is little fact of the matter that may help us interpret its message. Most of the time, when we converse, we understand what others mean not only through the utterances themselves, but also from the expressions on their faces or the tone of their voices, from our knowledge of their role and of their past. We anticipate what they may want to say, and look for confirmation in their words.

The lack of an immediate context of utterance is typical for any written text, but may be claimed to be so most radically for poetry. Many written texts explicitly present a context in which they are to be understood, through references, through descriptions or titles that remind us of their purpose and use. Thus, although for any text a thorough analysis may reveal implicit references to unexpected contexts, texts are often transparently situated in a context. Poetic text is different in this respect.

A poem, for lack of explicit context, can be interpreted in many ways. Schools of interpretation differ widely in what kinds of fact they claim constitute a poem's context: knowledge of its author, analysis of its formal properties or comparison to its literary predecessors and contemporaries. But then again, poetry is often read without such knowledge at all. A poem may simply be interpreted in the very situation in which we encounter it and consider its meaning, such as when it is quoted in a text, or in the middle of some event in our own lives. Reading poetry is a private matter, and a reader need not stand corrected for his entirely personal, sentimental or anachronistic interpretations. A poem may be interpreted in relation to our personal state of mind, rendering the poem an expression, surprising or not, of our own thoughts and feelings.

Poetry is distilled from fragments of our own language. Its form meets our making of meaning: our own knowledge resonates in another man's words; our own visions emerge from his imagery. In this sense, poetic interpretation is the great homecoming of language: when interpreting a poem, we recognize

our own perceptions and sensations, our own knowledge and memories in a form that is independent from our private minds.

Poetry is meaningful through private knowledge and sensations on the one hand and through public expression and cultural conventions on the other. In poetic interpretation, we thus witness the interaction between the personal and the public. To some extent, of course, this holds for all utterances, since they all consist of a personal use of conventional means of expression. However, most utterances are embedded in a functional context, and leave little room for extensive reflection on the meanings of the words. Poetic texts, by contrast, are written for such reflection. The reader is challenged by the poetic use of words, the imagery, the typography; he is seduced to understand what this use of his language means. In the process his imagination is addressed, and his sense of language is tested.

The lack of specification of an extra-linguistic context for poetic text is captured by Jakobson's qualification of the 'poetic function' of a text.[3] In poetic texts many stylistic devices occur, that hinder the transparency in the text, and thereby draw the reader's attention to the text itself. Examples of these are the use of figuration, both in the form of conventional or traditional poetic symbolism, and in the form of unconventional imagery; lack of grammaticality; unconventional use of words; or dominant use of rhyme and rhythm. With such means, the attention of the reader is drawn to the text, at the expense of its immediate comprehensibility. The use of figuration then, that is, the employment of verbal imagery, is a typical stylistic aspect of poetic language. Figurative language is characterized by vivid descriptions and metaphors; its form appeals to the imagination of the reader.

Thus, interpretation of a poetic text requires more of a reader than the faculty to partake in communication. It requires the reader to make meaningful what seems meaningful, to adapt his faculty of understanding to novel expression and unfamiliar form. Poetic interpretation, in other words, requires a creative act of understanding.

From a semantic point of view, we may ask how creative understanding relates to the understanding of conventional utterances. In what sense is it creative, and in what sense is it an employment of the same faculty? To find an answer to such questions we need to explore the relations between poetic interpretation and understanding as a more general faculty.

The present chapter focuses on an analysis of metaphorical interpretation of poetic imagery. By way of an example, I start out with a discussion of several interpretations of a poem of William Blake. This discussion serves mainly to

[3] Cf. Jakobson[1969]

raise questions about the process of interpreting poetic imagery, that is, about how a reader goes about in metaphorical interpretation.[4]

In the following section, this question is considered from a semantic perspective on interpretation, which is, traditionally, mostly concerned with truth-value and reference. The subsequent sections are devoted to a discussion of various semantic theories on poetic metaphor, which in one way or another provide an answer to the questions raised. After that, I discuss several approaches to metaphor from a cognitive perspective, in each of which the role of imaginative representation in interpretation is described.

For each of the discussed approaches to metaphorical interpretation, its appropriateness with respect to poetic imagery will be singled out. None of the theories discussed gives rise to a full-blown account of the interpretation of poetic imagery. Thus this chapter concludes by stating the relevance of an account of imaginative representation in both poetic interpretation and linguistic understanding, to which we turn in the subsequent chapters.

1.2 The Sick Rose

Reading poetry, I said, is a private affair, but that does not keep people from sharing it. Reports of interpretations, guidelines for interpreting and discussions on the correctness of an interpretation are everyday phenomena. Public differences of opinion, be they methodological or on a specific interpretation, provide a chance to compare how different people approach a poem, and how different the outcome of these encounters can be. The following discussion is based on the exchange of different interpretations in a class on philosophy of language. The students were asked to interpret a well-known poem by William Blake:[5]

The Sick Rose

O Rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:

[4] Since the word 'image' can be understood in different ways, my frequent use of the word risks ambiguity. In order be as clear as possible I will use the terms 'poetic image' and 'verbal image' and corresponding verbs where I mean (the use of) figurative language; and use the term 'mental image' or 'imaginative representation' for cognitive representations; and the word 'picture' for actual pictures.

[5] William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, 1789

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

Unsurprisingly, in their reported interpretations the students all relied on the interpretation of the symbolic meaning of some of the images described in the poem. Some students started out with a metaphorical understanding of the rose, and considered the poem as a whole in the perspective of that understanding. The metaphorical meanings attributed to the rose were varied. Some understood the rose as a symbol for love, and consequently interpreted the whole poem as an allegation against something that makes joyful love impossible. They interpreted the worm in accordance with their global interpretation as a symbol for respectively concealed homosexuality, AIDS, and syphilis. Someone saw the rose as a woman, maybe called Rose, being destroyed by pregnancy. Others started with an interpretation of the worm, as a factor more generally destroying health, like an unspecified disease, or as something destroying future life, such as environmental pollution. A more canonical interpretation was offered as well, namely that the poem was about the joys of sexual love, being destroyed by the indictment of the church that carnal love is sinful.[6]

In all of these interpretations some extra-textual fact is brought into play, and is supposed to be captured by the poem. One student for instance was convinced that Blake was a homosexual, and he understood the secret, invisible worm as the concealment of Blake's homosexual love, which ruined its purity. The poem was interpreted as an expression of the author's state of mind, on the basis of some alleged biographical information. Another student, who interpreted the poem as being about AIDS, by contrast, did not care about the anachronism of his interpretation. He considered the poem in relation to a contemporary dilemma.

Generally, we observed two recurring aspects in the interpretations. The first observation regards the diversity of interpretations. The poem was interpreted in a multitude of possible contexts. The resulting interpretations sometimes were not plausible to anyone but the interpreter, and even to him maybe only for a moment. In class the reported interpretations were discussed, and during the discussion, one at first generally appreciated interpretation easily made way for another if it was argued well. The open-endedness of interpretation, witnessed in these ongoing changes, was not considered a matter of defect or

[6] Cf. the commentary of Geoffry Keanes in the Oxford UP edition, 1990, p 147

insufficient understanding, but rather one of considering additional bits of background knowledge, which seemed plausible enough to be related to the poem. Thus, each new bit of information altered the context of interpretation, and with that, the domain of possible symbolic references was extended or changed.

The second observation is that in the given interpretations the imagery and the narrative structure of the poem played separate roles. First meaningful references were sought, and found, for those words recognized as metaphorical (such as 'rose'). Along with the recognition of the symbols, the poem as a whole was considered as an allegory. In its interpretation, the relations expressed in the poem (such as 'destroy') were taken literally, just as most of the attributions of some property ('of ... joy', 'secret', 'invisible'); the terms indicating more concrete imagery ('rose', 'worm', 'crimson', 'bed', 'howling storm') were interpreted metaphorically as related consistently to one another within what we may call the metaphorical domain of reference. However, in this regard, some aspects of the poem were ignored (as happened to the 'night' and the 'howling storm' in most of the students' interpretations).

The interpretations thus consisted of two distinctive activities. The first is the finding of a domain of metaphorical reference on the basis of some symbolic image. The second is the building of an allegorical meaning, based on consistency of the metaphorical interpretation of the whole poem. These two activities interfered with each other. For instance, if the remainder of the poem's imagery failed to be interpreted consistently with the initial metaphorical interpretations, this would be pointed out in the discussion, and a new interpretation would be considered.[7] The metaphorical domain of reference, thus, was subjected to changes. However, the 'method' of transferring the narrative of the poem to such domains recurred in all of the interpretations.

These observations are not surprising, all the more since Blake's poem is typical of a genre of 'symbolism'. It presents clear imagery and structure, and is mainly opaque with respect to the interpretation of the symbols. The resulting interpretations indeed differed mainly in this respect. Other poems employ fewer images, or less consistently so, and thus may demand something else from the reader. Nonetheless, the example shows how metaphorical interpretation can play a role in understanding poetic imagery. It shows that specific background information leads to an interpretation of references for symbolic images in the poem, and thus to some extent determines the interpretation of the poem. It also shows that upon reconsideration of this

[7] Thus, in our class the discussion exhibited the dialectic between reading and interpreting normally known as the hermeneutic circle.

information, the symbolic references are equally reconsidered. Thus, the process of interpretation involved an on-going consideration of relevant and worthwhile bits of information that would serve as a background for interpreting.

Thus, although of course of limited value as empirical evidence, the discussion of this poem in class does indicate some aspects of poetic interpretation, and thus gives rise to some questions. How does a reader determine which knowledge is relevant for the interpretation of the poem? In the case of using alleged biographical information, the reason seems clear enough; but then, why did other students come up with entirely anachronistic interpretations (such as the worm-as-AIDS interpretation)? How can we explain such variety of interpretations, when we look for *the* meaning of the poem? And then there are questions on the method of interpretation. Is metaphorical interpretation the general strategy, or is it one among other ways of dealing with poetic images? The survey of perspectives on problems of interpretation, presented in the next section, identifies these questions as belonging to a semantic approach to poetic text, and shows how they have hardly been studied in that branch of theory.

2 Semantics and literary text

2.1 Semantics

The study of poetic interpretation has a long history, and is conducted from different perspectives, and with many different goals. On one side there is the interpretation of the meaning of the individual work; on the other there is the scientific study of literary texts, that regards them as manifestations of laws external to them, e.g. laws about the psyche or society. Todorov distinguishes three different perspectives in the study of literary discourse generally. They are: semantic analysis; syntactical, or structural, analysis; and stylistic analysis.[8] At the stylistic level, discourse can be typified through verbal aspects, such as the degree of abstraction and figuration, the number of references to other texts or discourse types and the traces of the author in the text. At the level of structural analysis, aspects such as the perspective from which it is written, the conformity to grammatical laws, the logical and temporal order in the narrative are at stake. The semantic level of analysis, finally, concerns the references of the words, the truth of the text, and its meaning in context. Stylistic devices, such as metaphorical figuration, recur in semantics from a different perspective, in which the truth and reference of the words rather than their typicality are under investigation. According to this division, the perspective I engaged in the questions on metaphorical interpretation raised above concerns a semantic level of analysis. With such a semantic perspective, it should be noted, the metaphorical interpretation of poetic text is considered from a more general standpoint, namely within a systematic approach to language. Thus, I consider poetry as one of many discourses in which use of words may give rise to metaphorical interpretation. The interpretation of poetic metaphor, then, is considered at once as exemplary of, and as limited by a more general capacity of metaphorical interpretation. Furthermore I am concerned with interpretation insofar as the text or expression allows for it, and not primarily with the actuality, relevance or justifiability of a given interpretation.

In the following section, I consider what traditional, truth conditional semantics has to say on the analysis of poetic text; and it will soon be clear that we cannot derive the tools for a satisfying analysis of metaphorical interpretation from this field. This conclusion is much in line with what many semanticists have concluded, and in the remainder of this chapter I will look

[8] Todorov[1981] p 7

into some alternative semantic theories that are not principally concerned with a truth conditional understanding of meaning.

Semantic theories of meaning are not normally concerned with non-transparent uses of language. Rather, they by and large concentrate on the analysis of formal, systematic properties of utterances, which are often absent or deformed in literary texts.

Formal semantics presents systematized accounts of topics such as quantification and inter- and intra-sentential relations, such as entailment, synonymy, and presupposition. The referential function of words is postulated in formal semantics: given certain parameters in the context (such as the speaker, the utterance-time, and previously introduced references), and given the type of referential phrase (e.g. indexical, proper name, natural kind term) a (number of) non-ambiguous interpretation(s) results. A similar approach to metaphorical interpretation of poetic text, i.e. defining an interpretation of a poetic image as relating the expression to one of a collection of possible domains of reference, seems hard, as the relation to either of these determined domains of references cannot reflect the process of interpretation as described in the previous section, nor its relevance to possible other domains of interpretation. It is then doubtful whether the choice of a single referential domain could be considered the result of such interpretation. In a sense, this problem resembles that which fictional discourse forms for formal semantics, in that the problem stems from a lack of determinate reference. Thus, in the next section, I focus on the semantic treatment of problematic referents.

Lexical semantics, as it exists, deals with the classification of the conventional use of words and their established interpretations; there is hardly any attention for the novel, unconventional use of a word or the singular imaginative interpretation of a term. As we saw, in poetic interpretation, the symbolic interpretation of a word is partly dependent on the informational background of the reader and on the context of interpretation. Hence an account of conventional word-meanings by itself cannot cover the occasional unconventional interpretations that characterize poetic texts. This justifies, I believe, that I refrain from going further into this branch of semantics below.

2.2 Reference and literary discourse

The undeniable presence of literary use of language has forced semantics to deal with this type of discourse, even if only to demarcate the boundaries of literal, truth bound language. The characterization of literary discourse in itself however presents a problem. According to Todorov's scheme mentioned

above, on each level of analysis a text may exhibit properties that are typical of literary discourse. Thus, one may recognize a text as literary, for instance, through a structural property such as a change of narrator's perspective, which is a typical narrative strategy that may serve as an indication. Another, stylistic indication is the use of figurative language, such as the employment of many metaphors.[9] However, none of these properties are exclusive indications for literature or poetry. For instance: rhythm and rhyme appear in advertisements, prayers and hymns; narrative structures that prevail in novels may also occur in journalistic or historical writings; tropes are used in puns and political speeches as well as in poetic texts and so on.

From a semantic perspective, several properties qualify as typical for poetic discourse, albeit in the same loose manner. In prose, for instance, references to fictional characters and events are likely to occur; in poetry ambiguity of metaphorically applied predicates may be exploited. Regarding the question of truth, literary texts hardly present transparent, factual accounts that could qualify as true.[10] Thus, the lack of truth sometimes is considered the most crucial property of literary text.

For instance Frege writes: 'Assertions in fiction are not to be taken seriously, they are only mock assertions [...]. The logician does not have to bother with mock thoughts, just as a physicist, who sets out to investigate thunder will not pay any attention to stage thunder'.[11] Frege distinguishes three components in the interpretation of a word: *Sinn*, *Vorstellung*, and *Bedeutung*. Words in fiction may possess a meaning (*Sinn*) and they may cause ideas (*Vorstellungen*). However, they do not possess a reference to reality (*Bedeutung*), and hence sentences of fiction are not true. Poetic utterances do not aim at truth, and are therefore 'not serious'; however they are justified insofar they 'approach by way of intimation what cannot be conceptually grasped'.[12] The *Vorstellungen* that poetic texts may cause do not qualify as a semantic concept of meaning, since they are entirely subjective. Taken thus, semantics has not much to say about literature, since it is all about the analysis of the expression of justifiable beliefs.

---

[9] This principle, according to Todorov who quotes Riffaterre, is not so much based on the density of metaphors (i.e. quantitatively) but is the result of polyvalence of a text. That is, a text using many metaphors, or typical metaphors, refers to other, similarly figurated texts, and are known to belong to literature. Cf. Todorov[1981] p 21

[10] Transparency is defined by Jakobson in opposition to figurated text, which draws the attention of the reader to the words themselves, instead of to their referents. (See section 1.1, also note 2)

[11] Frege[1979] p 130

[12] Frege[1977a] p 9

However, Frege's notion of *Sinn,* and consequently its relevance for literary meaning, has been interpreted along different lines in the literature after Frege. Generally, there are two positions on the question whether fictional use of language has sense (*Sinn*), dependent on how this notion is interpreted.

First, if the *Sinn* is understood as the meaning that allows us identify the reference (*Bedeutung*) of the utterance, then all utterances containing fictional names are false.[13] This interpretation follows the path that was taken by Russell, who was not satisfied with Frege's formal logical solution of assigning the empty set as a referent to fictional terms. Thus he presented his extensional analysis of meaning, that states that every definite description necessarily presupposes the existence of its referents; if the existential presuppositions within a sentence are not fulfilled the sentence is false.

Second, the notion of sense is interpreted as meaning independent from whether there is a referent or not. Searle interprets Frege's concept of *Sinn* as an independent meaning-representation, which allows us to determine the truth conditions of an utterance, rather than its truth.[14] In this view, semantics should account for the difference between use of meaningful words in both fictional and truth-bound discourse. Previously, Strawson stated the need for a theory that allows distinguishing fiction from truth-bound discourse, in his criticism of Russell's assumption of existential implications in definite descriptions. According to Strawson, descriptions may have existential presuppositions, but they are typical for only one kind of language-use, and they are not part of the meaning of the expression as such. Existence of referents only matters in the context of truth-bound assertions, and truth is determined pragmatically.[15] Thus, fictional use of language has meaning but not truth-value.

So, truth conditional semantics generally considers fictional utterances as either false or devoid of truth. Nonetheless, there could be good reasons to investigate the notion of truth in literature. First, for instance, it is true in some sense that James Bond works for Her Majesty's Secret Service; even if it is not true in another sense that he was on the paying-list of any British agency. Thus, there is a notion of fictional truth, or internal truth in fiction, that plays a role in our dealing with literature.

---

[13] Gareth Evans interprets the notion of *Sinn* in this way, as a recipe to arrive at a reference by following a causal chain; he thus contends that fictive utterances are false, since the chain does not begin with a referent. Cf. Evans[1982].

[14] Searle[1979]pp 162, and Searle[1983] pp 197

[15] Strawson[1969]

Second, there are some other notions of being 'true' that apply to fiction. We discern for instance 'verisimilitude', 'likeliness', 'plausibility', 'realism' and 'naturalism' of literary texts. Of poems we colloquially say that they are 'true' or 'right'; that they give us a better perspective on how things are; or that they just put to words 'how it is'. This points to a second 'external' type of truth of literary texts that addresses a relation between the text and reality, even if it is not the factual truth of the text.

Notions of 'naturalism' or 'plausibility' allude rather to a style of writing, and not to the referential content of the text in a strict sense, for normally in such writings the characters and events described are fictional. However, they do sometimes present a *possible* course of events in the real world. In what sense, then, are such texts true: is it that they describe reality as it could have been, or do they apply to reality in some other way? The question points to a counterfactual understanding of 'fictional truth', namely as a latent possibility in reality.

Another characterization of the relation of literature to reality amounts to what has been called 'metaphorical truth'.[16] In this understanding, a literary text presents us a model of reality, which allows us in any number of ways to compare it to reality. Such a model may have different degrees of abstraction. It can be highly metaphorical; as for instance the poem of Blake allows us to allegorically understand some relations in the domain in which it is interpreted. Or a literary model can be next-to-real, such as for example *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or *American Psycho*, presenting a political and social reality drawn in fiction. The interpretation of fiction-as-model then presents yet another understanding of truth in literary discourse. Thus, truth in literature is not simply to be dismissed on account of its lack of reference to reality. And indeed, several attempts have been made to define truth in literary discourse.

Donnellan investigates the first mentioned type of internal truth in fiction, and arrives at the conclusion that we need two truth-definitions.[17] One for 'discourse about actuality', for which he suggests a causal theory of truth modelled on Russell's account of knowledge through direct acquaintance, in which any sentence containing terms without reference (or, more precisely, with the empty set as reference) is false. Next, we need a definition of truth for fictional discourse, according to which it would be true that Bond works for Her Majesty's Secret Service. The most important property of interpretation in fictional discourse for Donnellan is that the interpretation of a term does not involve an existential presupposition regarding the referent, so that the lack of actual reference is no obstacle to fictional truth.

---

[16] Cf. section 3.3 below, on Nelson Goodman

[17] Donnellan[1974]

However, with this proposal the question is why, even in Donnellan's framework, we should stop at two definitions of truth. For, if we say: 'Bond's manners present an example of male chauvinism', whose manners do we refer to, and is the sentence true in fictional discourse or in the actual world? Further, if Bond in the novel says something that would be true, if it were uttered by an actual secret agent, is it true in fictional discourse or in actuality? Would not meta-fictional sentences, and sentences about actual facts in fiction require yet more truth-definitions? Thus, along with the first type of 'fictional truth' we distinguished above we could use at least three other types of truth. But even if we would have such a number of definitions, their value would be questionable. On the verge of fiction and reality there are, for instance, historical writings, of which we aren't always able to tell which type of truth should apply. Fictional discourse pervades discourse about actuality, and vice versa: there is no clear border between the two. An attempt, despite these problems, to model a referential understanding of meaning in fiction was made by David Lewis, discussed shortly below.

There is still another argument against the characterization of fiction as language use without existential implications, and that lies in the arbitrary distinction between different works from a literary point of view. On the one hand the definition of fictional truth would apply to all types of discourse, not only literary, that contain empty references. On the other hand, a fictional story would become discourse about actuality if the story accidentally turned out to be true. Thus, a definition of truth as providing the criterion for the distinction between two types of discourse seems to miss the point of literature. Consider for instance that the novel *Anna Karenina* would be discovered to be about a woman who indeed experienced all the adventures described. Would there not, in the respect of truth, exist a greater similarity between the functioning of this novel and, for instance *The Idiot*, than between it and any arbitrary historical biography? On the other hand, with this truth-definition any text that turns out not to be about an existing referent, for instance scientific treatises about the famous inflammatory substance 'phlogiston', would become fiction, while theories about phlogiston were not at all intended as such. Thus, the definition of fictional truth in terms of the lack of actual reference is unsatisfactory. However, an alternative definition of when fictional truth pertains would equally be unsatisfactory, since it presupposes knowledge of the discourse before establishing its (truth-conditionally defined) meaning.

In view of these problems David Lewis made another attempt at a truth-definition for fiction. Lewis devises a possible-world semantics where different worlds are counterparts of each other. Amongst the possible worlds there are fictional worlds. Thus, fictional names refer to fictional entities within a world

belonging to the fictional narration. A story is then considered as a counterfactual: the fictional world presents a hypothetical account of characters and events. The relation between the actual world and a fictional world is determined through the counterpart-relation, a somewhat underdetermined relation of correspondence, but not identity, between similar inhabitants of different worlds. The actual existence of a Don Quixote or an Anna Karenina is then not relevant for truth within their respective fictional worlds.

Lewis defines fictional worlds such that whatever is true in the actual world, or rather in the 'collective belief worlds of the community of origin of the fiction', is true in the fictional world, unless there are other 'overt beliefs' presented within the fiction itself.[18] Fictional discourse is then semantically analysed as containing an intensional operator, referring us to the fictional world.

The postulation of fictional entities in a counterfactual world, instead of denying them any existence, does not add much in the way of a clarification of the interpretation of fictional discourse. Apart from the resulting ontological unclarities regarding the assumption of fictional entities, Lewis' account merely projects his model of truth in the actual world onto fiction. Fiction, then, becomes but a parasitic discourse, simply employing the referential use of language in a vacuous way.[19] To define truth in fiction in this way is merely to recount what a story already tells us. Apart from the redundancy of such a notion of truth, it is somewhat simplistic. For fictional discourse does not always disclose a world to us so easily. There are many stylistic devices that make a text opaque with regard to what actually happens in a story. The use of different perspectives, the role of the narrator in the events described, intertextual references etc. constitute what Lamarque calls 'narrative filters', which hinder the transparency of the descriptive content of a story.[20] Thus, to construe an account of what happens in a story often is a matter of interpretation in itself; a story has no single fictional world in which it is to be interpreted, but several possible worlds. Counterfactual truth in Lewis' account then remains a matter of interpretation; it has to be 'discovered', just like actual truth, with the disadvantage that fictional worlds are not factual.

Other understandings of truth of literature, such as its model function mentioned above, are entirely foreign to Lewis' account. The fact that fictional characters become only alive within our imagination is ignored, and thus our empathic experiences are, as it were, deferred to another world. Lewis' account

---

[18] Lewis[1978] p 44

[19] This attitude towards literary discourse has explicitly been defended by John Searle, who writes that 'telling stories is a language -game [...]; [which is] not on all fours with illocutionary language-games, but is parasitic on them'. (Searle[1979] p 67)

[20] Cf. Lamarque[1990]

thereby suffers from what Patricia De Martelaere calls 'the fictional fallacy', that is, the assumption of a separate fictional reality, which presents personal, imaginative representations as if they were part of some distant objective reality, and not of our own, subjective, experience.[21] Through the experiences of empathic reading, and of growing familiarity with the characters, we can explain how a story may become a relevant 'model' for our experiences of the 'actual world'.

Lewis' theory of counterfactual worlds lacks any explanatory value of such recognition; it offers no account of allegorical interpretation of a story or poem, in which its relevance for reality is explicated. The only relation between the fictional world and the actual world he presents is given by the notion of a 'counterpart' relation. This is a merely formal relation between corresponding referents in both worlds, and does not cover any structural relations between one world and another. The one advantage of this account is that notions of realism or verisimilitude can be explained as a relative high degree of correspondence between the two worlds. Such analysis however understates the literary function of the stylistic aspect of the 'true' text, namely its relevance for our perspective on the 'counterpart' in reality.

Theories of literature that focus on the semantic interpretation, that is, on the analysis of the normal truth-conditions of an expression, seem generally ill-devised to analyse the typical empathic qualities of fictional discourse. Literal interpretation of poetic text does not present meaningful discourse about reality, and thus, if it is interpreted as such, it yields mere falsehood. But such falsehood is hardly as informative as when we consider an account of factual events false: the falsehood of literature is simply irrelevant, since literature is not intended as a factual account, and is normally not interpreted as such. Thus, accounts of literal truth, and notions of 'fictional truth' based on this model, do not meaningfully characterize literature. The function of narrative ambiguities, fictional references and metaphorical insights are not captured in such an account of truth and reference. A definition of fictional truth on the model of correspondence to reality, even if such correspondence remains hypothetical, can but present literature as a mere 'as if'.

Another perspective on truth mentioned above concerns the metaphorical 'application' of the text to a domain of interpretation. The literal understanding of the text, and the truth-conditions thus disclosed, may somehow present an allegorical model, pertaining to a different interpretational domain of reference. To this end, as we saw in the discussion on Blake's *Sick Rose,* references in the text may be interpreted metaphorically. The construction of

[21] Cf. De Martelaere[1988]

the domain of interpretation, i.e. what the metaphorical references are 'about', thus becomes an important aspect of the interpretation.

Considerations of truth of a literary text are thus directed to the use that is made of the text. The analysis of truth should then rather address the appropriateness of the model that a text could present for a given domain, rather than to the semantic properties of reference within the text. From such more pragmatically oriented analysis, a notion of the rightness of an interpretation might result. However, any analysis of 'right' interpretations would rely on an account of what a model provided by a text could be, and how it could metaphorically be brought into relation with a domain of referents.

There are quite a few accounts of metaphorical meaning and reference that present alternatives to the truth-conditional approach discussed above. In the next sections, several of these theories are discussed, in order to get a better grip on what metaphorical interpretation is.

3 Semantic perspectives on metaphorical interpretation

3.1 Tropes and texts

There is a vast literature available on metaphor, and many theories are relevant for this investigation. To pick out some, and leave others unmentioned is to some extent arbitrary. The discussion below addresses only those accounts that are explicitly concerned with the interpretation of poetic metaphors and consider the role of extra-textual knowledge in interpretation.[22] The one exception is Aristotle's typology of metaphor from the *Poetic*. I discuss his account because it is the origin of Western thought on metaphor, and because in later theories his rhetorical approach is abandoned, but remains influential in all definitions of metaphor. Other theories that are mainly discussed on grounds of historical influence are the Interaction Theory of Max Black, which lies at the basis of virtually all the other theories I discuss, and the so-called 'comparison view', because it presents an interesting fallacy in the theorizing on metaphorical interpretation. Both accounts are discussed here in order to present a background to the discussion of the other, more relevant theories.
The first of these is from Nelson Goodman, who gives a general analysis of reference, other than denotation, which applies to all expression, including art. Then I proceed with the discussion of a few authors from the 'Cognitive Semantics' movement, who present an account of metaphor that emphasizes its all-pervasiveness, and analyse the role of conventional metaphors in poetry. Next, Indurkhya includes poetic metaphors in his account of creative application of proportional analogy, emphasizing the role of perception in interpretation. Finally, Ricoeur presents an account of the creation of metaphorical meaning, with an emphasis on the imaginative aspect of interpretation.
In most of these theories, a metaphor is understood as a sentence with a specific structure, such as 'Thine eyes are two cold jewels'.[23] In poetic texts, the imagery is sometimes presented in a single word, sometimes throughout a text;

---

[22] Several theories on poetic metaphors are not presented extensively, as for instance those presented by Richards, Gibbs or Hester. This is not only for reasons of space, but also because the accounts that I do present either appeal to those theories (e.g. Ricoeur appeals to Hester), or they present an approach that is somewhat comparable to, or outdated by approaches discussed, and a discussion would not add greater insight in the subject matter. Further, I concentrate on semantic literature, mainly excluding philosophical and poetical works.

[23] Baudelaire: 'tes yeux sont deux bijoux froids', example and translation derived from Gineste e.a.[1997]

it thus does not always have the recognizable 'standard' tropical form of metaphor. What I call a standard tropical metaphor and an allegorically interpreted text may be different with respect to the choice of a domain of reference. In the interpretation of a trope, the reference of the metaphor is normally derived from an available context (e.g. 'thine eyes' provide the reference for 'jewels'); in the metaphorical interpretation of a poetic text, this context of interpretation is not always available, as we saw in the interpretations of *The Sick Rose*.[24] Nonetheless, theories on the interpretation of the former may help us explain how poetic imagery acquires an interpretation. In section 5.2, we compare the two instances of interpretation, and, consequently, we arrive at an understanding of 'metaphoricity' as a property assigned in interpretation. The syntactical form of 'standard' metaphors is there identified as a formal property that serves as one, but not the only possible indication that a metaphorical interpretation is in order.

3.2 Traditional Theories on Metaphor: Aristotle, Black

Traditional theories of metaphor distinguish two terms within a metaphor, the *target* or tenor and the *vehicle* or source.[25] The target is the term that receives a literal interpretation; the vehicle is the metaphorical predication. In a metaphor such as Gertrude Stein's 'Rose is a rose', the subject term 'Rose' is the literal term, and 'is a rose' is predicated metaphorically.[26] Thus 'Rose' is the target and the predicative 'a rose' is the vehicle of this metaphor. On a theoretical level metaphors are thus characterized by the specific predicative relation between target and vehicle.

---

[24] Todorov indicates the possibility of an analysis of texts as a metaphor, with text-external references (Todorov[1973] p 16). An account that, contrarily, explicitly emphasizes the tropical definition of metaphor as differing from allegory is presented in Paul Henle[1958]. He bases this difference precisely on the occurrence of both literal and metaphorical words (and hence the situation of the metaphorical reference) within a text. Below, I argue that both trope and discourse can be interpreted metaphorically, and that hence the rhetorical distinction does not reflect an entirely different strategy of interpretation, although there are differences with respect to the construction of both target and vehicle in different cases. See section 5.2.

[25] The list of terms used for the distinct parts of the metaphor is much longer. Black[1962], for instance uses both 'frame' and 'focus', and 'primary' and 'auxiliary subject', and Henle[1958] indicates words with a 'figurative' or 'literal sense'. I don't discuss the subtleties of the different definitions, but translate (as far as possible) the terms back to my own use of 'target' and 'vehicle'. For a discussion on the precise meanings of all terms see e.g. Henle[1958] or Leezenberg[1995]. The latter presents a discussion of the level (i.e. semantic, referential, cognitive or pragmatic) on which metaphors are situated by any of a wide range of authors.

[26] Ch.26 in Gertrude Stein's *The World is not round* (1939).

The first more extensive analysis of metaphors in Western philosophy is that of Aristotle. Aristotle writes that metaphorical predication is the result of an uncommon use of words.[27] [28]He specifies the categorical relations between vehicle and target, resulting in four specific types of metaphor. First, the generic word may be applied instead of the specific, as in 'my ship *stands* here', for 'standing' is more general than the lying attached of a ship. Second, the specific may be applied for the generic, as in '*innumerable* brave deeds', for in this sentence Homer uses 'innumerable' where he means the more general 'many'. Third, the one species may be used to name the other, as Empedocles does when he interchanges the expressions '*drawing away* life' and '*cutting off* blood', where both mean 'taking away something'. The last case he mentions is the use of a word on the basis of analogy.

In analogy, two things A and B have the same relation to one another as two others, C and D. In the metaphor, A may be called C, or B may be called D. For example, the attribute of a cup for Dionysos is analogical to that of the shield for Ares; hence the poet may speak of 'the *shield* of Dionysos' or of 'the *wineless cup* of Ares'. In some cases there is no proper word for one of the things in the analogy; in that case there is no substituted term, and the 'uncommon' word is the only word to address the issue.[29] Thus one can say about the sun that it '*sows* its divine fire', even if there is no proper word for the action of the sun releasing fire.

Where the first three types of metaphor are devices in which one word is replaced with another, related word, the last is of a different nature. The first difference is that an analogy involves four constituents in two pairs. As in the '*sowing* sun', we saw that not all of these constituents need to be given verbally; the fourth term in the analogy (here: 'grain') may simply be suggested through the analogy itself (in the example the sun's releasing fire is suggested through the image of the sun as a farmer sowing fire instead of grain).

In contemporary understanding some of these described phenomena would not qualify as metaphors; for instance, the first two tropes could be called synecdoche, and the third may sometimes be qualified as metonyms. Oddly, in

---

27 Ch XXI Aristotle, *Poetica*

28 The use of the word 'uncommon' is one of different possible translations. In some translations the word 'improper' is used; other suggestions include 'not current' or 'foreign'. It seems unlikely that Aristotle held that metaphorical terms are 'improperly' used, since, in the *Rhetorica* he discusses the 'proper' use of metaphors. Cf. Leezenberg[1995] pp.34.

29 This is also known as a 'lexical gap' filled by a metaphorical expression; an instance, thus, of *catachresis*.

one view the metaphor based on analogy is excluded or at least underspecified. This view holds that all metaphors can be rendered in the form of a simile, e.g. 'The cup of Dionysos *is like* the shield of Ares'.[30] An analogy however is not explicated properly in this way, since one may also understand the simile more generally: 'Cups are like shields'. In the four-place analogy indicated by 'the shield of Dionysos' the relation with the two missing terms is modelled in the relation between the two given terms, whereas in the two-placed simile the aspect of resemblance may be anything, from the material of which it is made to its shape or use.

Although the simile-analysis is too general, it does point out the comparative aspects in the interpretation of a metaphor. The analysis in the *Poetic* is concerned only with the structural relations between the terms in the metaphor; the properties of what these terms refer to are not considered. However, upon interpreting and valuating the metaphor the reader may compare the substituted terms to the metaphorical substitutes, and conclude that their referents have similar qualities, such as in the given example, the brilliance of the material and the shape of both cup and shield. These likenesses enhance the feeling of appropriateness of the analogy-based substitution, and make the metaphor more interesting.

The same holds for the three other types of metaphors, of which I will discuss one more.

In 'Rose is a rose' the predicative 'rose' is a specific term substituted for the generic. Roses are one of the things of beauty and joy, and so is Rose. The image of a rose however is more vivid and has more imaginative qualities than the generic 'things of beauty and joy'. Its colour, its scent, its growth and its traditional symbolic meaning represent qualities that are somehow brought into relation to Rose through the predication. Thus the stylistic choice of the word 'rose' adds something to the understanding. In fact, elsewhere, Aristotle points out this property of metaphors: they enhance the understanding of what is said, since the topic is 'brought before the eyes' by a metaphor.[31] But the use

---

[30] This view appears in the literature as the 'comparison-view'. It is apparently derived from Cicero's qualification of metaphor as a subcategory of similes. Apparently the comparison-view is the view everyone loves to hate: Black dismisses Whately and Bain as adhering the comparison view (Black[1962] pp 35-36), Leezenberg[1995] attributes it as a 'referentialist position' to Henle and Fogelin(pp 63-69), while Henle[1958] puts Middleton Murray on the spot for his viewing metaphor as a 'compressed simile' (p 182). An extensive criticism of the view that metaphors in fact are similes is given by Donald Davidson[1979]. Davidson's own view is that metaphors invite comparisons (and further thoughts) but do not *mean* comparisons. Although I refrain from further discussion of alleged comparison-view'ists, I do discuss Davidsons views somewhat more extensively in section 3.4.

[31] Rhetorica 1411b26 , quoted from Leezenberg[1995] p 40

of metaphors also has consequences for the interpretation of the sentence and its constituents, which is left unmentioned by Aristotle. The metaphorical predication 'is a rose' is not taken as a statement that Rose belongs to the class of roses, or even, on account of the substitution, to a generic class containing 'roses'. Rather it is taken as an indication that other properties of roses also belong to Rose.

In the before mentioned 'comparison-view' the copula is understood to have a different meaning in metaphor: 'is like', that is: the metaphorical 'is' indicates a simile. The meaning of 'Rose is a rose' accordingly would be: 'Rose is like a rose'. However, again, that is too general, since it implies a general likeness between Rose and roses, whereas in the metaphor, only one aspect or property may be the ground for the substitution (for instance, when in the context it is said that Emily is a lily-in-the-valley, one aspect of roses, something like 'preciousness', is emphasized). The metaphor may be interpreted as an indication of some similarity, but its meaning is not the blunt expression of a general likeness. A further argument, against the theoretical soundness of the comparison-theory, is that it does not explain metaphorical interpretation. Recognizing the copula as expressing a simile already presupposes a metaphorical interpretation of the predication.[32]

An answer to the question how metaphorical meanings come about is that a word has more meaning to it than 'belonging to a class of somethings'. In the Interaction Theory of Max Black metaphorical interpretation is described as a process of interaction between the meanings of the vehicle and the target. A vehicle is a 'model' through which one looks at the target, like a 'smoked glass on which certain lines have been left clear' through which one looks at the sun.[33] This model is provided by a 'system of implications' associated with the vehicle. These implications 'usually consist of "commonplaces", but may, in suitable cases, consist of deviant implications established *ad hoc* by the writer'.[34] As a result of the metaphorical modelling then, both target and vehicle acquire somewhat different meanings than in a non-metaphorical context.

Black gives the example of 'Man is a wolf'.[35] In this metaphor, a system of associated commonplaces, consisting of popular beliefs and platitudes on the vehicle, whether true or not, such as that wolves prey on other wolves, are fierce, hungry, engaged in constant struggle and so on, is made to fit man. That is, a 'suitable hearer' will be led by this system of implications to construct a

[32] Cf the discussion in Levinson,S[1983].

[33] Black[1962] p 43

[34] Black[1962] p 44

[35] Black[1962] pp. 39

corresponding system of implications about man, and make him see man as preying on others, in permanent struggle and so on. But it also results in his 'humanizing' wolves, since on the part of the wolf, irrelevant properties such as having fleas in your fur, are downplayed in the metaphorical interpretation. That is, the word 'wolf' is understood within context: the metaphor does not lead us to see man as a true four-legged animal that kills true sheep.

In the former discussion, we emphasized the role of extra-textual knowledge in poetic interpretation, as well as the non-conventional interpretation of poetic images. Precisely in these respects, the Interaction Theory deviates from traditional semantics, and provides a perspective for developing a semantic theory on the interpretation of poetic imagery. Black seems to agree on this point. He devotes little thought to poetic or 'complex' metaphors; but here and there he does refer to the appropriateness of the Interaction Theory in such cases. As an alternative for the commonplace implications, for instance, an *ad hoc* system of implications may be presented explicitly by the writer: 'metaphors can be supported by specially constructed systems of implications; they can be made to measure and need not be reach-me-downs'.[36] This feature, he claims, is especially relevant in poetry, where the context of the metaphor builds the frame for the associated implications in the metaphor. However, he never explains how this is done, nor does he present an example. The nature and construction of such poetic implicational systems thus remain wholly unspecified, along with questions regarding the subjectivity of such systems, their coherence, and the possible sources on which such implications might draw.

With respect to its application to poetry, the Interaction Theory has another obstacle. According to Black the recognition of a metaphor is a matter of 'our general knowledge of what it is to be a metaphor', and of contextual judgement that the statement should be interpreted metaphorically rather than literally on account of its obvious falsehood, pointlessness or incongruity with its context.[37] It is unclear how such criteria apply to poetic imagery, first because, as we saw, the notion of literal truth makes little sense with regard to a poetic text and second because the occurrence of verbal imagery is characteristic of poetry, not incongruent within its context.

The idea that the meaning of a metaphor is dependent on 'associated commonplaces' brings a notion of meaning into play that is unsystematic, since it is not predictable. On the whole, metaphorical meaning remains a rather vague concept in Black's account, since he does not specify how the system of implications is related to the words it is associated with, nor how this

[36] Black[1962] p 43

[37] Black [1979] p 36

knowledge is revived in interpretation.[38] He considers only the association of commonplaces or implications that are 'specially constructed' in the context. However, since the notion of 'associated commonplaces' is not truth-bound or in any other way delimited, there seems no reason to stop at commonplace associations in the determination of metaphorical meanings, and leave other, more personal associations on the part of the reader out of consideration. Thus Pandora's box is open, and even more uncontrollable, unsystematic notions of meaning are luring out in the open from the Interaction Theory.

However, even if the associated implications may run wild, the *method* of interpreting a metaphor can be described systematically, and Black provides a start with his formulation of the principle of metaphorical modelling, i.e. the projection of vehicle-related qualities to the target of the metaphor. Following the Interaction Theory, many theories were developed, focusing on similar systematic principles governing the projective construal of metaphorical meanings.

Both the accounts of metaphor of Aristotle and of Black are important for contemporary thought, but in very different ways. Aristotle defines metaphor as a rhetorical device. With his account we are reminded of metaphor as a stylistic technique, bound by formal rules. As such it lacks explanatory value with regard to the actual interpretation of metaphor, since it is not concerned with the meanings that result from substituting terms, other than the rhetorical function of making the discourse 'vivid' and bringing the topic 'before the eyes'. In contemporary approaches to metaphor, the focus has shifted from the construction of metaphor itself to its interpretation, that is the construction of its meaning. Despite this shift in the subject of research, contemporary theories often presuppose some rhetorical definition of metaphors, visible in the terminology of 'tenor' and 'vehicle', and thus implicitly maintain the assumption that only metaphorical tropes receive a metaphorical interpretation. In the remainder of this discussion of theories on metaphor I will not pursue the issue, but only to return to it in chapter 3.

Black's account is important because it is one of the first semantic accounts that single out several aspects typical of metaphorical interpretation, even if it remains somewhat vague on the subject. He laid the foundation for any theory on 'metaphorical projection', through his understanding of the vehicle as a cognitive model for the target. This understanding by now has generally replaced the understanding of metaphors indicating a comparison of referents, or as the result of a stylistic substitution of terms. Other aspects, which Black

[38]Cf. for example Leezenberg[1995] who criticizes Black for not making clear whether metaphorical meaning is a pragmatic or a semantic concept.

brought to the attention anew, are the interaction of meaning, i.e. the changes in the meanings of both terms, and the emphasis on associated background-knowledge involved in metaphorical interpretation, other than knowledge of linguistic references. Keeping this in mind, we may now turn to discuss those theories that do address poetic metaphor more explicitly.

3.3 Metaphorical reference: Nelson Goodman

Nelson Goodman sees metaphors as classifications, just like any other predications. Consequently, a metaphorical utterance may be 'metaphorically true' just as a literal utterance may be literally true. The typical property of metaphors is that they are 'migrant' predicates, that is, predicates applied in a 'foreign' realm. Thus for Goodman a metaphor is the result of a transference of a predicate, resulting in the use of an old classification for a new realm.
Predicates normally function in a schema of oppositions and equivalences. Thus, the word 'blue' may apply to things that are blue as opposed to things that are 'not blue', but it may also be used in opposition to the words 'green' or 'near-black'. In each case, the range of objects to which 'blue' applies is different. In a metaphorical predication such a schema is applied to another realm of objects. With the metaphorical use of a predicate, the same structural oppositions and equivalence relations to other predicates hold, but the predicates acquire a different, metaphorical denotation. Hence, it is not just the single predicate that is transferred to the new realm, but a whole network of classifications: '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. Partly by thus carrying with it a reorientation of a whole network of labels does a metaphor give clues for its own development and elaboration'.[39]
The view that any predicate is part of a network of 'labels' is crucial for Goodman's analysis of metaphorical meaning.[40] Any predicate acquires meaning by its reference to other predicates or to objects. Goodman uses the term 'reference' for a generic relation, covering more than ordinary or even metaphorical denotation. Some of these referential relations specifically play a role in the 'development and elaboration' of a metaphorically transferred network of labels.

---

[39] Goodman[1976] p 72

[40] Goodman 's position is nominalist, as well as extensionalist. Consequently he speaks of 'labels', and not of properties or representations. However, since these notions according to Goodman are all translatable into his terminology, and since he sometimes colloquially does use such non-nominalist vocabulary, I prefer to use the more familiar terms.

First among these referential relations is the notion of denotation, which is what most authors mean by reference, namely a predicate referring to an object in its extension. Second, reference includes the relation of 'exemplification', which is more or less the converse of denotation. A sign (or an object) *exemplifies* those labels that *denote* the sign (or object). Goodman's standard example of exemplification is that of a tailor's swatch, which is used as a sign in order to exemplify the colour (e.g. 'red') and the material (e.g. 'woolly') of the cloth it is taken from. Exemplification is more restricted than denotation, since 'I can let anything denote red things, but I cannot let anything that is not red be a sample of redness'.[41] Metaphorical labels can be exemplified as well, and this makes for a third referential relation. Goodman calls metaphorical exemplification 'expression'. A work of art, for example, expresses those predicates that apply to it metaphorically. Thus, a painting expresses 'sadness' if the label 'sad' can be applied to it metaphorically and truthfully.

In the transference of a schema in metaphor both exemplification and denotation play a role. In our example 'Rose is a rose', 'a rose' exemplifies for instance the label of 'a thing of beauty and joy'. Through the metaphorical predication of 'is a rose' to 'Rose', 'Rose' comes to express such exemplified properties. Thus, the metaphor can be understood as transferring Rose (namely the denotation of the *label* 'Rose') into the denotation of 'things of beauty and joy'. Other properties, such as the radiant colour of a rose one has in mind, may equally be predicated of Rose through the exemplification-denotation relation.

Incidentally, Goodman's account of metaphors can be analysed as presenting all metaphors as four-place relations, as in Aristotle's analogical metaphor (even if Goodman never mentions such a model). The two pairs are formed by the labels ('Rose' and 'rose') and their respective references: the denotation (Rose) and the exemplified labels ('things of beauty and joy' etc.). The metaphor establishes a crossover between the references: 'Rose' comes to exemplify 'things of beauty and joy' etc., whereas 'rose' temporarily denotes Rose.

The subtlety of Goodman's analysis lies in the range of properties a word may exemplify, and the inherent contextual nature of reference, established by the notion of a schema of oppositions and similarities. With it, one can explain for instance that someone, who fights his way through a prickly rosebush to find a beautiful princess inside, may not be inclined to call her a rose, since the nasty labels (applying to roses at that moment) would thus be transferred to her.

In fact the labels that 'a rose' may exemplify are many more than could be characterized through classes to which roses belong, or properties that roses

[41] Goodman[1976] p 58

have, because of the peculiar definition of exemplification that Goodman gives in an early article. Goodman there describes the set of exemplified predicates as the 'secondary extension' of a word, the primary extension being the denotation of the term.[42] The secondary extension of a label 'X', i.e. what is exemplified by it, contains every label that is a description of 'X'. The theoretical function of this definition of the secondary extension lies is that it allows Goodman to remain faithful to extensionalism, while considering the meaning of fictional references. It allows him to distinguish the difference in meaning between two terms with no existing referents, such as unicorns and centaurs. For although on the primary level of extension all unicorns are identical to all centaurs (since there aren't any), on the secondary level they are quite different, since centaur-descriptions are not unicorn-descriptions.[43]

The problem with these secondary extensions is that they also include such descriptions as 'last heard uttered by Speaker S at Location P'. Each single utterance of a word thus has a different secondary extension.[44] Goodman cheerfully embraces this consequence, and says that indeed every 'inscription' of a label differs in meaning from another. It seems, thus, that any exemplified label can be transferred through a metaphor to anything else, not just those expressing a 'cultural commonplace' or any other 'constructed implication' as Black would have it. What is exemplified may just be some exclamation that we are reminded of.[45]

However, in *Languages of Art*, this liberal sense of meaning is restricted, since here Goodman writes: 'I have risked the charge of making what a symbol expresses depend upon what is said about it -of leaving what a picture, for example, expresses to the accident of what terms happened to be used in describing the picture, and hence of crediting the expression achieved not to the artist but to the commentator. This, of course, is a misunderstanding. A symbol must have every property it expresses'.[46] However, when he poses the question how it is possible that some metaphors do apply, while others don't, he replies that this is about the same mystery as why some literal predicates apply and others don't. Thus: 'the general explanation why things have the

---

[42] Cf. Goodman[1972 a and b]

[43] Goodman[1978b] p 178

[44] Cf. the criticism in: Scheffler[1982]

[45] In this context, Mary Hesse notes that Goodman maintains an implicit naturalist ontology, since the continuity of any part of the referential content of a label depends on the stability of the properties of the referents. Cf. Hesse[1983]

[46] Goodman[1976] p 87

properties, literal and metaphorical, that they do have [...] is a task I am content to leave to the cosmologist'.[47]

Hence, what Goodman means with 'metaphorical truth', and how it is precisely related to 'literal truth' is equally deferred to the cosmologist. Because of this lack of definition, it remains a mystery how Goodman can attribute the success of a metaphor to the actual possession of the metaphorically assigned property, and thus defend his notion of metaphorical reference against the allegation of arbitrariness.

The transference of a network of labels to a 'foreign' realm in Goodman's account resembles Black's projection of the vehicle-related implications on the target. The first difference, as already noted, lies in the description of what is transferred from the one term to the other. For Black this is 'implicated knowledge', and it is not necessarily truthful but commonly assumed; in Goodman's account it is represented as a schema pertaining to exemplified labels, the only restriction being that the latter 'must apply'.

Another difference is that in Black's theory such models only come into play when literal interpretation of the metaphor leads to an obvious falsehood or incongruity. Goodman's theory requires no such falsehood. Instead, it requires that the metaphorical predicate has another, non-metaphorical application. For, if the metaphor is not 'guided by prior use', but is a novel application of the term, there is no transference of a 'foreign' schema, and hence no metaphor. Goodman fares better than Black in this respect, since certainly not all metaphors are literal falsehoods or incongruities. For instance the sentence 'Rose cannot be a rose. She doesn't have a single thorn' clearly presents a metaphor, although there is nothing literally false about it.

Although Goodman's analysis of metaphor thus solves some of the problems of the Interaction Theory, in that it does present a full-blown systematic account of meanings of metaphors and does not require metaphors to be false, it is in some ways not as insightful as the latter. With his fine-tuned description of the diversity of referential relations, Goodman presents a sophisticated form of extensionalism, that suffers from a pointed but unmotivated realist notion of truth.

This problem also obscures the application of Goodman's theory to the interpretation of poetic imagery. Goodman offers an account in which poetic imagery obtains out-of-text references: the words in a poem exemplify many literal and metaphorical classifications on the one hand, and they can freely be understood as novel denotations on the other. However, the referential relations that thus provide the set up for an interpretation are unmotivated to

[47] Goodman[1976]p 78

the point of arbitrariness. Goodman tells us that in the end they consist of whatever formulations truthfully apply to the text, but refrains from telling us when a label applies truthfully.[48]

Thus, although Goodman presents an account that specifies the nature of the relation between a poetic image and its interpretation (namely, as metaphorical exemplification), he presents no overt account of how such relation is meaningfully constructed. In order to find a full-blown theory of interpretation, then, we need not retort to consulting a cosmologist, but rather to find a theory that explains and motivates the creation and cognitive representation of referential relations. But in doing so, we may well keep in mind the richness of such possible referential relations between labels and objects that Goodman describes.

3.4 Another line of thought: Davidson's insights and Rorty's noise

A general point of criticism against the traditional theories on metaphor was brought forward by Donald Davidson. His criticism concerns the assumption of 'metaphorical meanings', 'implications', 'systems' and the like.[49] The main argument Davidson gives against the assumption of special meanings for metaphors, alongside with 'normal' linguistic, literal, meanings, is that it suggests a fixed cognitive content for the metaphorical use of a word. There are several reasons, Davidson points out, why this cannot be the case. First, with it the difference between a fresh and a dead metaphor cannot be explained. If the first has a specific encoded meaning, why should it, when it dies, not retain the exact same meaning?

Second, if a metaphor has a special cognitive content, why should it be so hard to describe it? Metaphors however, according to the views Davidson criticizes, are notoriously difficult to paraphrase. These views on metaphor lead to an impasse, since 'on the one hand, the usual view wants to hold that metaphor does something no plain prose can possibly do, and, on the other hand, it wants to explain what a metaphor does by appealing to a cognitive content-just the sort of thing plain prose is designed to express'.[50]

The way out of this impasse, Davidson suggests, is to see that metaphors consist of plain language themselves, and thus have no other meaning than the 'patent falsehoods and absurd truths' they usually present. However, they are *used* in a specific way, and what is mistakenly understood as their message is,

---

[48] This line of criticism is presented in Hesse[1983]

[49] Davidson[1984]

[50] Davidson[1984]p 261

in fact, their *effect* upon us. A metaphor 'makes us see one thing as another by making some literal statement that inspires and prompts the insight'.[51] The insights that metaphors bring to our attention are mostly not of a propositional nature, Davidson writes, and this accounts for why it is so hard to say what a metaphor means. By way of illustration, he discusses the relation between propositional knowledge and some pictorial examples. For instance, it is impossible to fully put to words what a photograph conveys, just as it is impossible to see a rabbit as a duck upon a description of Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit picture, that is, without actually seeing it. Davidson concludes: seeing-as is not seeing-that, and therefore a metaphor does not carry a message that could possibly be paraphrased. It does make sense to give interpretations of the cognitive content of a metaphor, according to Davidson, since these serve a different purpose. Explicit interpretations help the 'lazy or ignorant reader to have a vision like that of the skilled critic'; they do not so much express the meaning of a metaphor, but help an interpreter to 'see what the author of the metaphor wanted us to see and what a more sensitive or educated reader grasps'.[52]

As a consequence of this view, it is unclear how metaphors are recognized. The form of the metaphor cannot be the reason that leads to a metaphorical 'vision': most metaphors, Davidson writes, are patently false or true, but not all. Davidson likens the effect of the poem quoted in part below, *The Hippopotamus*, by T.S. Eliot, to that of metaphors.[53]

> The broad-backed hippopotamus
> Rests on his belly in the mud;
> Although he seems so firm to us
> He is merely flesh and blood.
>
> Flesh and blood is weak and frail,
> Susceptible to nervous shock;
> While the True Church can never fail
> For it is based upon a rock.
>
> The hippo's feeble steps may err
> In compassing material ends,
> While the True Church need never stir
> To gather its dividends.

No resemblance between the True Church and a hippopotamus is stated. In the poem nothing happened to the words: they have no special metaphorical

[51] Davidson[1984]p 263

[52] Davidson[1984]p 264

[53] Davidson[1984]p 256

meaning. Nonetheless the effect of the poem is comparable to that which the metaphor 'The True Church is a hippopotamus' would have. Thus to have a 'metaphorical effect' puts no restrictions on the form of an utterance: simple juxtaposition can cause it, just as a patently true or false utterance may prove to be a metaphor.

The insistence on the plain character of metaphorical language is a strong point in Davidson's argumentation, since so far, we saw, the proposed criteria for special semantic properties of metaphors provide neither sufficient nor necessary reason to interpret an utterance metaphorically.[54]

However, Davidson does not point to any factor at all that would lead to the metaphorical 'effect'. Surely, if a metaphor can be used to make a suitable reader grasp some insight, there must be more to say about the circumstances in which the intended effect can be obtained?

Oddly then, Davidson speaks of 'what the author wanted us to see' as if there is some fixed non-propositional content to the metaphors, dependent on the author's intentions. The only means through which such content can be brought to the reader's attention is through words. However, since Davidson does not appoint any formal criterion that distinguishes metaphor, may not *every* utterance give rise to such metaphorical insights?

Davidson tackles this complication with a denial of any semantic status to the mediated metaphorical insights. Davidson situates whatever we grasp from metaphor, and in whichever way, outside the scope of linguistic research. He seems to view the literal or 'first' meanings of words in metaphors as an incentive or a steppingstone, while denying that they actually express that which is grasped through the metaphor.[55] Thus, if an utterance is grasped metaphorically, even if it is a perfectly sound literal utterance, the resulting insights do not have any semantic content.[56]

Semantics, as a consequence, does not deal with language as a means of communication, but only with some fragment in which a strict concept of propositional meaning applies, doing away with any psychological, sociological or other phenomena that relate to linguistic communication. Word-meanings in semantics are then no reflection of what words mean when they are used.

---

[54] This point was discussed in section 3.3 above, and returns in section 5.1 below.

[55] Davidson defines a first meaning as follows: 'if the occasion, the speaker, and the audience are 'normal' or 'standard' (in a sense not further explained here), then the first meaning of an utterance will be what should be found by consulting a dictionary based on actual usage' (Davidson[1986] p 435).

[56] The possibility of a metaphorical interpretation of a differently intended utterance is further discussed in section 5.1 below

Rorty takes up Davidson's point, and pushes it still further. In a criticism of the standpoint that metaphors have cognitive content, he writes that metaphors are *noises* that barely have a 'non-natural' meaning.[57] Live metaphors may lead to insights, but only in the way a strange noise or an absurd phrase in poetry may capture and sometimes hold the attention. As metaphors get 'picked up, bandied about, and begin to die', they turn into 'increasingly predictable utterances, usefully describable in intentionalistic language'.[58] Thus, from its appearance in quotations and discussions, where it is used rather than just mentioned, a metaphor may acquire a conventional explanation over time. Just as a strange noise may become familiar, and in time may for instance be classified as the sound of a quetzal.

Noises then may acquire a 'double describability': both as noise and as language, as cause and reason. It is brought about by 'unpredictable shifts in causal relations to other noises', that is, through an unforeseeable process of familiarization. Thus, we cannot prospectively explain how a metaphor works.

Both Davidson and Rorty adhere to the position that semantic analysis of non-conventional utterances is impossible. Rorty especially holds the position that 'cognitive content' implies a describable conceptual content, and that the attribution of cognitive content to metaphor thus amounts to an attempt of reducing metaphor to scientific discourse.[59] Attributing cognitive content to metaphors just shows that 'we philosophers still tend to take 'cognition' as the highest compliment we can pay to discourse'.[60] Thus according to Rorty, positivist claims are enforced rather than countered by the cognitive claims of metaphor.

The strange thing about this position is that the rationality of one type of discourse is opposed to other, 'natural' discourse. Thus a romantic conception of natural language is propagated, namely that natural language is unpredictable, unsystematic and ultimately undescribable. Language that appeals to the imagination or that intimates feeling, rather than knowledge, is thus mystified. But given this consequence, the peculiarity of Rorty's position lies mainly in the assumption of unproblematically describable language. How can anyone, understanding language as a *doppelgänger* of 'noise', take the

---

[57] Natural meaning is a noise 'having a place in a causal network', whereas a non-natural meaning is possessed by noises 'having a place in a pattern of justification of belief' (Rorty[1987] p 295).

[58] Rorty[1987]p 295

[59] In the same article, Rorty does acknowledge that Hesse's work on the role of metaphor in science has 'helped us realize that metaphor is essential to scientific progress' (p 283). But then, of course, so is the first hearing of the 'noise' from the quetzal.

[60] Rorty[1987]p 284

existence of 'usefully intentionalistic describable' utterances for granted? Surely, any utterance has this double describability and hence is unpredictable to the same extent?

Davidson seems to have realised the peculiarity of such position, and anticipates any criticism in the famous, heavily criticized article: 'A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs'. Here he does nothing less than refute that there is such a thing as a language, describable in the way philosophers and linguists have supposed. Here he takes up the theory that first meanings are what a hearer recognizes as the intended meaning of a 'normal' utterance by a 'normal' speaker. He loosely formulates three principles concerning such first meanings, with which most linguists should agree. First, first (or 'standard') meanings are systematic, and systematically organized; second they are shared by speaker and hearer; third they are governed by regularities or conventions. Following these principles linguistic competence is roughly defined as having a recursive method of combining words from a finite set by a finite set of rules. Then, Davidson discusses the *real* use of words, especially the occurrence of malapropisms. In normal communication, both speaker and hearer have a 'prior theory', namely how they understand first meanings. In the interpretation of an utterance, this prior theory is revised, since the utterance presents new information relevant for this particular interpretation, such as the introduction of names, malapropisms, new words or new ways to use them. Thus, in the interpretation, the interpreter transforms his 'prior theory' into a 'passing theory' accommodating all this information in order to interpret the speaker's meaning better. Thus, either theory is possibly identifiable as a systematic one, but only the passing theory is shared between speaker and hearer. The real problem with any theory of linguistic competence, then, comes with the assumption of the third principle of regularity or conventionality. Upon this principle, we should be able to discern a common core between prior and passing theories of both speaker and hearer. This core, however, cannot exist: the actual theories differ from each other, since they suit the specific idiolect of either speaker or hearer. Neither would a more abstract framework like a set of categories and rules shared between the speakers of a language qualify as a common core, for two reasons. The first is that such a framework cannot provide the interpretation of particular words and sentences as uttered by a particular speaker; the second reason is that even if such a framework is an ingredient of interpretation, it has to be rich enough to accommodate all the differences of all speakers; a single malapropism could disqualify it. Davidson writes in summary: 'what interpreter and speaker share, to the extent that communication succeeds, is not learned and so is not a language governed by rules or conventions in advance; but what the speaker and interpreter know in advance is not (necessarily) shared, and so is not a language governed by

shared rules or conventions'.[61] Thus: 'We may say that linguistic ability is the ability to converge on a passing theory from time to time [...] But if we do say this, then we should realize that we have abandoned not only the ordinary notion of a language, but we have erased the boundary between knowing a language and knowing our way around the world generally [...] I conclude that there is no such thing as a language, not if language is anything like what philosophers and linguists have supposed [...] We must give up the idea of a clearly defined shared structure which language-users acquire and then apply to cases. And we should try again to say how convention in any important sense is involved in language'.[62]

Even if we do agree with Davidson and Rorty that the interpretation of metaphors is not analysable in formal semantics, we need not stop at the mystifying conclusion that they are not to be analysed at all. There are more understandings of cognition than presented in formal semantics, and there are more ways of systematically investigating linguistic meaning than through extensional semantics. Davidson in fact indicates where we may look for such investigation, when he emphasizes that metaphors make us *see* things differently.

Convention and regularities certainly occur in the field of the perceptual, but, sceptics have taught us a few centuries ago, they are not simply derived from a set of properties inherent in the object. Rather, we have a faculty of perception that allows us to recognize things as similar, or even the same, through the recognition of certain features, which our perceptual system can cope with. If it makes sense to analyse the faculty of speaking and understanding along these lines, then maybe that would allow for an understanding of speech, in which the language that is the formal object of semantics is related to natural language in the same way as, to use a metaphor derived from Frege, a carpenter's tool is related to the human hand: a tool that, although it was formed to suit a certain purpose, and to be held in a given way, may become purposeful in the most unexpected of ways, not so much because of its clever design, but simply because it happened to be available.[63]

The authors discussed in the following sections have little in common but that they all are concerned with the relation between language and cognition and that somewhere perception and experience come in the way.

Thus, the authors discussed in the first section, in a branch of semantics that a few years ago was commonly called Cognitive Semantics (now part of the

[61] Davidson[1986] p 445

[62] Davidson[1986] p 446

[63] Frege[1977b]

broader framework of Cognitive Linguistics), emphasize that language merely expresses what the mind thinks, and that what the mind thinks is based on experience. According to the cognitive semanticists, the cognitive mechanism that allows us to interpret metaphors does not stop at utterances such as 'The true church is a hippopotamus' or 'Rose is a rose'. Instead, it is recognized as the basic mechanism that makes much of language (and the world) meaningful.

Section 4.2 is devoted to the theory of Bipin Indurkhya. He analyses metaphorical interpretation as a cognitive method of projection that applies conceptual structures to perceptual representations. He analyses the relation of projective analogy in mathematical terms, therewith providing a tool for a highly systematic account of metaphor. Finally, in 4.3, the position of Paul Ricoeur is discussed. He does maintain a cognitive perspective on metaphor, and attributes great epistemic value to it as the authors just mentioned do; but he refrains from the methods and notions used by these. Instead, he draws on a Kantian understanding of imagination, and attributes to language an iconic function, that is, an imaginative representation of meaning that bears no relation to actual perception.

From the discussion on cognitive perspectives on metaphor below, it becomes clear that such allusions to perception, imagination and experience should be worked out more clearly. Thus in the remainder of this investigation, turn to accounts of cognition in a more general understanding, in order to investigate the role of imagination, such that, in the end, it may help us to describe the process of metaphorical interpretation.

4 Cognitive perspectives on metaphorical interpretation

4.1 Schematic metaphor: Cognitive Semantics

In the last decade or so, the framework developed within Cognitive Linguistics has dominated the study of metaphor. Generally, in this framework, metaphors are understood as a linguistic surfacing of a cognitive act of metaphorical projection. Since the domain of research is vast, and often belongs to psychology, neurobiology or linguistics rather than semantics, I restrict the discussion to a few publications. I first outline the general approach, as it was originally presented by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and then consider two other publications in greater detail, the one a book by George Lakoff and Marc Turner on metaphors in poetry, and the other a more philosophical approach to schematic metaphor by Mark Johnson.

In the book *Metaphors we live by* Lakoff and Johnson take a cognitive perspective on metaphors. As a result, they uproot the notion of metaphor as a rhetorical phenomenon. Instead, metaphors considered to be the result of using a familiar conceptual structuring as a model for the conceptualization of a new experience. Metaphor, then, is the result of projecting, or mapping' a conceptual scheme from one domain to another, in order to provide a conceptualization of the latter by means of our understanding of the former. Thus, it seems that Black's notion of metaphor as a model has been taken up.[64] However, in this case, there is no doubt whether the meaning of metaphor would be semantic or cognitive, since Lakoff and Johnson claim that linguistic metaphors are the surfacing of a cognitive mechanism. There are some further differences between this approach, and Black's theory. The first is the claim that almost all language is metaphorically structured, even if it does not fall under any rhetorical definition of metaphor. That is, some uses of for example presuppositions (*out* of sight), or of conventional expressions (*high* quality) are analysed as metaphorical, since they are derived from basic metaphors (respectively: 'visual fields are containers' and 'good is up').[65] Second, this approach emphasizes the structural and coherent appearance of related metaphors, just as we have seen in Goodman's analysis of metaphor as the migration of a whole 'schema' of oppositions and similarities surrounding a label. However, in this case, what Goodman calls a schema, is analysed as

[64] Cf. Indurkhya[1992], p 81

[65] Lakoff and Johnson[1980] resp. p 30 and p 16

linguistic diversity in the surfacing of a single basic metaphor, which itself is understood as a 'schema' in a different, more Kantian sense. Examples of such coherent discourse structures that relate to the same basic metaphor are quoted below, namely, of the discourse that sustains the metaphor 'the balance of justice', and of metaphors surrounding our understanding of death.

The relation of projection that holds between more and less basic conceptual domains is thus structurally detectable in the semantic structure of discourse. As a result, most of the research conducted within this theoretical framework is concerned with empirical analysis. Literally hundreds and thousands of examples, that implicitly draw on conventional metaphors, have thus been analysed, in all kinds of discourse, ranging from for instance the exposure of Quran-based metaphors in Saddam Hussein's speeches, to the detection of misogynist metaphors in the notes of a Belgian Council meeting.

From an empirical point of view, then, the theory appeals to many, and if quantity would provide the standard, certainly by now we should be convinced about the rightness of this theory. However, on the theoretical side, something seems to miss. For one, a criterion with which we can detect whether a given scheme is basic or not is not explicated. Further, the understanding of projection as a one way relation between source and target seems less suitable for some cases, for instance, for the fourth kind of metaphor of Aristotle's definition, which comprises four terms, and allows for a two-way relation (i.e. yielding both *Dionysos' shield* as well as *Ares' cup* as a metaphor).[66] Finally, with the presented emphasis on the conventionality of metaphor, the possibility of creative interpretation, and of subjective understanding predictably remains understated. In the discussion below, I focus on the first and the third aspect: when is a metaphor basic, and how is the subject involved.

---

[66] Such criticism, as well as the directedness of the projective relation seems to have led to Fauconnier and Turner's alternative suggestion of the cognitive mechanism of 'blending' (Cf. Fauconnier and Turner[1998]). They suggest that the projective relation of mapping the source onto the target of a metaphor, is the outcome of a more fundamental mechanism, of selecting elements and partial structuring from both, and representing these in a 'blend', which then allows one to produce inferences on the target, in part using structures derived from the source, but also developed in the 'working space' that the blend forms. However, the 'blending' operation is described mainly through numerous examples, lacking a precise description of what, for instance, constitutes a 'mental space', or the representations that can enter it, while the operation of 'blending inputs' is unpredictable, since it depends on both elaboration of the 'blending space' and context. Thus, although the model provides a terminology to describe in which ways some aspects of the source and of the target remain relevant in a given interpretation of a metaphor, it hardly presents an account of interpretation generally, since it remains unclear how or why any information comes to play a role in interpretation, and what kind of information must be represented in order to be able to give an interpretation.

Mark Johnson philosophically identified the origin of such 'basic schemas' as an act of schematizing bodily experience.[67] Our physical capacity to deal with the world around us creates schematic representations in our minds, which allows us to apply the schema in other situations. As a result of this, finally, the schema develops into a concept. One of the many examples he gives is the concept of 'balance'. I discuss the example at some length, and use more quotations than elsewhere, for fear that the philosophically trained reader who is unacquainted with the theory might attribute the raised doubts to my recount and not to the author's original.

The development of the concept 'balance', then, is taken to start with basic bodily experiences, and leads to such highly abstract concepts as, for instance, mathematical equivalence. At first we learn to maintain our own balance; that is, we learn to stand up straight. Then we visually learn to recognize how other things stand up straight through their maintaining balance. And then we learn to apply the schema that has thus been developed in a more abstract way:

'My main claim is that [...] the metaphorical projections move from bodily sense (with its emergent schema) to the mental, epistemic, or logical domains. On this hypothesis, we should be able to see how it is that our experience of bodily balance, and of the perception of balance, is connected to our understanding of balanced personalities, balanced views, balanced systems, balanced equations, the balance of power, the balance of justice, and so on'.[68]

To give an example of how an 'emergent schema' can be detected in more abstract domains, I quote a description of the occurrence of the balance schema in the field of justice:

'The institutions of civil and criminal justice are founded upon a basic notion of balance, as symbolised quaintly by the scale of justice. As we would expect, legal arguments adopt all of the standard features of rational argument in general. The lawyers want the jury to *lean* in their favour, so they employ a confusing *mass* of facts, encourage *weighty* testimonies, *pile* one argument upon another, add the *force* of acknowledged authorities, and summon the *weight* of the legal tradition. Justice itself is conceived as the regaining of a proper balance that has been upset by an unlawful action. According to some assumed calculus, the judge must assess the *weight* of the damages and require a penalty somehow equal to the damages as compensation. We have linguistically encoded manifestations of this juridical metaphor, such as "an eye for an eye" and "let the punishment fit the crime"'.[69]

---

[67] Johnson[1987]

[68] Johnson[1987] p 87

[69] Johnson[1987], p 90, original italics.

The evolvement of the 'balance' schema is summarized as follows:
'In our daily lives we are constantly experiencing symmetries and asymmetries of forces relative to axes and points of various kinds. Despite the different manifestations of balance, there is a single image-schema present in all such experiences: a symmetrical arrangement of force vectors relative to an axis. It is because of this shared BALANCE schema that so many different experiences of symmetrical relations of by the same word, "balance"'.[70]
Later on, after an analysis of the 'definite internal structure' of this schema as consisting of relations of symmetry, transitivity and reflexivity, Johnson claims that 'these *same* relations obtain for *abstract* objects related by the BALANCE schema', for instance in the mathematical concept of 'equality of magnitudes'.[71]
Hence: 'It is no accident that the properties of the balance schema are just what mathematicians call the "equivalence relations" [...]. There is no other category of bodily experience with just that constellation of properties. Balance, therefore, appears to be the bodily basis of the mathematical notion of equivalence'.[72]
What is striking in the above description of the balance schema, as well in that of its internal structure, which I do not cite, is that it is almost entirely restricted to the use of mathematical notions, such as 'vectors', 'axes' or 'symmetrical arrangement'. Johnson does attempt to translate some of these terms into descriptions of bodily experience, for instance on the relation of transitivity in balancing objects, he writes:
'If A balances B, and B balances C, then A balances C. Suppose A is in the left hand and B is in the right hand, and they balance. Now suppose I replace A by C, and the balance is maintained, that is, B balances C. Then I will know immediately that A and C will balance, even though I have not performed the act of weighing one against the other'.[73]
I find it hard to understand what it means to say that A balances B if I have the one in my left, the other in my right hand. It reminds me of a game on television that is all about estimating the weight of some object, the only method allowed being the comparison with measured weights in the other hand. The point of the game, of course, is that this is notoriously hard to do and people make gross mistakes. Surely, such 'balancing' with right and left hand would not be allowed for when buying a lump of cheese, instead we use

[70] Johnson[1987] p 97, printing corrected .
[71] Johnson[1987] p 97
[72] Johnson[1987] p 97
[73] Johnson[1987] p 97

a balance, as Wittgenstein remarks, because of the predictability of its results.[74] Thus, I cannot follow how the presented bodily understanding of 'balancing' would explain how we come to have adopted a system of numerical measurement regarding mass, which is applied when buying lumps of cheese. But maybe other basic schemes should account for that. However, the algebraic properties of natural numbers being derived from this 'category of bodily experiences' alone, suggests that that is impossible.

From a theoretical point of view, the observation that one realm of discourse, such as the legal institution, uses words that can be related to a concept of balancing one's own body, does not entail that the conceptualization of bodily experience should be primary to either visual experience, or to linguistic expression. I extensively discuss the issue of forming abstract concepts on the basis of experience in a discussion of Barsalou's model of the conceptual system below, in chapter 3, section 3. The argument presented there suggests that any interpretation of *which* bodily experience should underlie an abstract concept, presupposes precisely this abstract concept. For one appeals precisely to abstract concepts when characterizing the primary, non-verbal experience verbally. Thus, with respect to retracing the meaning of abstract concepts into experience, a fundamental problem of circularity hinders any explication of experiential meaning. We cannot, in other words, separate the interpretation of our experience from the language and the concepts that we already have. In the above description of the 'balance'-schema, this fallacy is illustrated most clearly: the mathematical terms that are supposedly derived from the basic schema, function exclusively to describe it. Thus, the counter-intuitive reconstruction of the notion of 'transitivity' seems specifically motivated by theoretical need, and not by bodily experience.

Further problems I have with the present account stem from a fundamental unclarity on the generality of the resulting concepts. If concepts are derived from bodily experience, does that mean that my concepts are based on my subjective experience? Or is it an assumption about general institutions, and the development of knowledge within society or even mankind, as well as language? The question really is hazardous, and has consequences. Does Johnson's analysis entail, for instance, that a person who is lame from birth cannot have the same concept of justice as walking people? Do blind and deaf but walking persons have the ability to solve mathematical equations?

Generally considerations on subjectivity, objectivity or intersubjectivity of basic concepts are left out of consideration, except when Johnson opposes an 'Objectivist' approach to language and representation. His criticism here is

[74] *Philosophische Untersuchungen*,142

aimed specifically against a truth-conditional understanding of meaning, and given in defence of a mentalist conception of meaning. Objectivism is characterized as follows: '[Objectivism] assumes a fixed and determinate mind-independent reality, with arbitrary symbols that get meaning by mapping directly onto that objective reality'.[75] Johnson claims that for instance Frege's semantics exhibits 'the Objectivist view of meaning in its purest form', since supposedly in Frege's writings 'all mental processes (ideas, meanings, imaginative projections) that might explain how it is that a sign could come to connect up with the world, and with other signs, are excluded from consideration'.[76] [77]

In opposition to grounding the meaning of signs in reality, Johnson intends to ground concepts in the human mind, and especially in imagination. To this end, Johnson proposes a generalization of a Kantian conception of productive imagination. Hence he writes: 'Imagination is central to human meaning and rationality for the simple reason that what we can experience and cognize as meaningful, and how we can reason about it, are both dependent upon structures of imagination that make our experience what it is'.[78] One would expect this to be followed by a discussion of the inherently subjective nature that Kant contributes to the representations that are employed in productive imagination. However, no such discussion is presented. The lack of a discussion on subjectivity, and further the emphasis that this account of schematization yields a semantic theory of meaning, suggests that Johnson indeed means that basic conceptual structures, schematized from experience,

---

[75] Both citations from Johnson[1987] Introduction, pxxii

[76] Johnson[1987] Introduction, pxxxi

[77] This understanding of Frege seems almost a deliberate misinterpretation. Although Frege does assume a 'third realm' for meanings (*Sinne*), he also states that to man such 'objective' meanings are not fully known, and hence, that the *mode of presentation* of an object as a referent (*Bedeutung*) in experience for him will represent the meaning (*Sinn*) of the term referring to it. Thus, although the meanings (*Sinne*) of 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' may be the same, to a given individual they need not be known as such. Further Frege's dismissal of subjective notions of meaning (*Vorstellungen*) as irrelevant for semantic meaning does not stem from a reductionist view of cognition, but rather, from a theoretical approach to semantics. Frege sees semantic analysis as an instrument to clarify the scientific use of natural language, and to make its logical inferences more precise. Hence he is concerned with a systematic account of the intersubjectively accessible, truth-bound part of meaning. He compares his semantic analysis of propositions with the use of tools, which are highly valuable, but can never replace the use of one's hands (comp. natural language), since a tool lacks their dexterity. (Cf. Frege[1977a], and also [1977b] in which the latter comparison is stated) Hence, although I agree that Frege's semantics does not provide a cognitive account of meaning, I find Johnson's characterization of the 'Objectivist' view a severe, and somewhat tendentious simplification of Frege's considerations with respect to human cognition.

[78] Johnson[1987] p 172

are shared by all. Thus, it seems that Johnson attributes basic schemata to the human mind in general, and hence should be taken as universals. Going on his reference to Kant, we could then infer that schemata are universal insofar as they are grounded in an assumed objective origin of experience, and insofar as they are the result of an assumed uniformity in the process of schematization throughout different minds.[79]

This, however, gives no indication of the kind of schemata that are developed in an individual's mind, on the basis of specific, i.e., personal bodily experience. How the postulated bodily origin of such concepts, then, should work out in the conceptual system of someone with limited or deviant physical capabilities, such as regarding the invalid's ability to solve mathematical equations, is a question I happily leave to the reader.[80]

Above I suggested that the realm of poetry is one in which private understanding meets public expression. It is then interesting to see how poetic language, as the use of language that allows best for personal interpretations, is treated in the philosophical framework of Cognitive Linguistics. In a book from Lakoff and Turner: *More than Cool Reason*, this task is undertaken.[81] However, as will become clear shortly, the approach is not very relevant for my concerns here, as it focuses on finding how conventional mechanisms of interpretation can be used to understand poetry. The interest of the authors apparently did not concern the interpretation of creative use of language, but the recognition of basic metaphors in a poetic guise.

Again, the starting point of the theory is provided by the assumption of basic, cognitive metaphors. The aim of the book, then, seems to detect these basic schemes in poetry, and to explain an (existing) interpretation on the basis of these. I will briefly discuss the analysis that is presented of the following poem of Emily Dickinson.[82]

---

[79] Inference on the basis of Kant's notion of 'subjective universals', which are thought to be possible on the basis of these two mentioned necessary rational assumptions. (Cf. the discussion on the *Critique of Judgement* in the next chapter)

[80] In chapter 2 Kant's theory of imagination is discussed, especially with regard to subjective imagination. Although I do agree in some ways with Johnson's suggestions, such as on the role of imagination in concept formation, I do certainly not agree, as will be clear from the discussion in this section, with the postulation of a set of *basic* conceptual schemes as derived from *bodily* experience in the sense intended here. On the plausibility of attributing a perceptual grounding to all conceptual content , see the discussion in chapter 3, sections 3.2-3.4

[81] Lakoff and Turner[1989]

[82] Quoted from Lakoff and Turner[1989] p 4

Because I could not stop for Death-
He kindly stopped for me-
the Carriage held but just Ourselves-
and Immortality.

We slowly drove- He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For his Civility-

We passed the School, where children strove
At Recess- in the Ring-
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain-
We passed the Setting Sun-

Or rather- He passed us-
The Dews drew quivering and chill-
For only Gossamer, my Gown-
My Tippet- only Tulle-

We paused a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground-
The Roof was scarcely visible-
The Cornice in the Ground-

Since then- 'tis Centuries- and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity

One of the basic metaphors that Lakoff and Turner recognize in this poem is the conceptual scheme summarized by: 'life is a journey'. In the poem it is used in relation to another, characterized as 'death is going to a final destination'. The journey in Death's Chariot passes through several scenes, depicting stages of life, and goes on till 'eternity'. Thus, the third stanza is read allegorically as describing the different stages of life, employing several other basic metaphors, such as 'people are plants' in the image of the 'gazing grain', or 'A lifetime is a day' in the image of the setting sun. This part of the journey ends at the 'swelling of the ground', in the fifth stanza, interpreted as referring to the appearance of a grave. The chariot pauses a while, only to continue in the sixth stanza with the journey to eternity.

Lakoff and Johnson conclude the discussion devoted to this poem:

'[F]ive basic metaphors for death [...] are used naturally, automatically and largely unconsciously in understanding the Dickinson poem. They are DEATH IS THE END OF LIFE'S JOURNEY, DEATH IS DEPARTURE (an inference from LIFE IS BEING PRESENT HERE), DEATH IS NIGHT (from A LIFETIME IS A DAY), HUMAN DEATH IS THE DEATH OF A PLANT, such as the harvesting of grain, the falling of leaves from the

tree, and so on (from PEOPLE ARE PLANTS), and DEATH IS GOING TO A FINAL DESTINATION (an instance of CHANGE OF STATE IS CHANGE OF LOCATION'.[83]

Throughout the discussion, these metaphors are recognized in a similar vein in many different poems, and thus, by the majority of examples, they are held to be basic. Apart from these and other 'naturally, automatically and largely unconsciously' employed basic metaphors, it is recognized that poems may present other, less conventional metaphoric imagery; an example of which is brought in the form of a line from T.S. Eliot: 'Evening is a patient etherized upon a table'. However, the authors conclude: '[This metaphor] is quite dispensable for the ways we think and for the general structure of our conceptual system. And our lives do not noticeably differ if we do not happen to have this metaphor'.[84]

Thus, the aim of the analysis is not so much to characterize the role of metaphors in the interpretation of poetry, but rather to find how poetic interpretation is an exponent of our everyday conceptual structuring, and how it makes use of metaphors that are so widespread and general that they must be basic. Taking this starting point into consideration, it is no wonder that subjective aspects of poetic interpretation, such as resulting from personal understanding, feeling, or recognition of the gentle image of death presented by Dickinson, are entirely absent in this analysis. Also, we should reconcile ourselves with the lack of consideration of what the poem actually *does* with such conventional metaphors as 'death is going to a final destination'. For, in view of the project of finding general cognitive structures, surely subtle alterations or emphases of these in the poem, such as presenting death as a polite travelling companion and not as a violent obducter, are of no concern. And finally, we should not look into this theory for an explanation of a poem that would contain a deliberate deformation, or an appalling use of such conventional metaphors, such as may be found in Eliot's juxtaposition of the euphemistic 'evening' with the all too concrete etherized patient. In other words, the theory is concerned with what can be recognized automatically, through a largely unconscious appeal to knowledge of conventional metaphors, and *not* with what is specifically expressed by a poem, or what would be its impact on a given reader.

However, Lakoff and Turner *do* consider the impact of the study of basic metaphor:

'Recent discoveries have shown that metaphor is anything but peripheral to the life of the mind. It is central to our understanding of our selves, our culture,

---

[83] Lakoff and Turner[1989] p 8

[84] Lakoff and Turner[1989] p 56

and the world at large. Poetry exercises our minds so that we can extend our normal powers of comprehension beyond the range of the metaphors we are brought up to see the world through'.[85]

To analyse how conventional metaphors surface in poetry, then, provides a tool for the analysis of the world we live in. It can help us expose an ideological structuring of the world by means of metaphors, for instance by revealing the conceptual schema underlying the terming of 'higher' and 'lower' social classes.[86] In this way, in this approach some space is left open to consciously move beyond the automatic understanding in terms of conventional metaphors. Indeed, the authors remark that some poetry is recognized to be based on the conscious analysis of conventional metaphor: 'The theorists of the avant-garde, in promoting new poetic forms to create new ways of understanding the world, have been acutely aware that classical forms of poetry implicitly embody ideologies -views of man and his relation to nature, to society, and to the cosmos'.[87] However, the questions how such an acute awareness comes about, or how the subsequent deliberate deformation of conventional metaphors takes place are not posed in the investigation.

The project undertaken by Lakoff and Turner would thus seem to be of interest especially for linguistic anthropologists, who investigate discourse structures in order to arrive at a characterization of culture, and not of individual minds. In this sense, it reminds one of the work of Benjamin Whorf, and especially his research among the Hopi, in which he considers their discourse as an expression of a general metaphysics.[88] Indeed, just as Whorf analyses those grammatical inflections in Hopi that indicate a somewhat different conceptual relation between time and distance than in our alleged 'Western metaphysics', Lakoff and Turner mention the 'for any speaker of English (and many other languages)' highly indispensable metaphorical scheme 'time moves'.[89]

The origin of basic metaphors, for Lakoff and Turner, then seems to be situated elsewhere than that of basic schemes for Johnson. In view of Johnson's philosophical foundation of the notion of basic metaphor, it would appear that basic metaphors are not dependent on a given language or culture, but emerge from physical capacities. Of course, experience of the body itself is to some extent determined culturally, since taboos on exposure, matters of hygiene, and rituals surrounding nurture surely in part determine such experience.

---

[85] Lakoff and Turner[1989] p 214

[86] Lakoff and Turner[1989] p 211

[87] Lakoff and Turner[1989] pp 203-204

[88] Cf. Whorf[1956]

[89] Lakoff and Turner[1989] p 56

However, once again, this issue is not pursued by any of the three mentioned authors.

To be fair, all authors present an overwhelming amount of convincing examples of structurally related metaphorical use of expressions. Thus, cognitive semantics seems to present a powerful tool for discourse analysis, and as such can be highly valuable. However, it is unclear how the conceptual structures that emerge from these analyses should be understood, in part because it is unclear whether the analysis is intended to reveal universal concepts or cultural platitudes. With this unclarity the status of any possible counterexample for a basic metaphor, is unclear as well. Are we, for instance, to dismiss the 'good is up' schema as being basic on account of expressions such as 'I've had it up to here', or are we to judge them as exceptional reversals of an otherwise sound basic metaphor?

Another problem is that the authors do not present a heuristic for the method of empirically determining whether a metaphor is basic or not, even if the relation of projection defines a hierarchical relation between the origin of projection, and its destiny. To determine which of the two domains involved in metaphorical mapping is more basic than the other, we can only go by majority of appearances of one term in discourse, or else by an intuition of dimensions of concreteness, or closeness to physical experience. The role of actual perception in schematizing is hardly addressed explicitly, just as, we saw, the implicit treatment of human cognition as a single entity raises questions regarding the universality of concepts. At the bottom line, there is no clear reason why a basic schema should be derived from our own physical actions, or bodily awareness, and not, for instance, from the repeated experience of utterance situations in which a given term is used. After all, hearing an utterance is a physical experience as well, just as producing one.

4.2 Metaphorical projection and perception: Indurkhya

Bipin Indurkhya addresses the unclarities regarding the nature of metaphorical projection. In his account he does not presuppose any culturally or universally 'basic' concepts, but instead, he retains the vocabulary of the syntactic analysis of metaphor as consisting of a target and a source.[90] His approach is again

[90] Indurkhya uses the term 'source' for the vehicle of a metaphor. Although not by definition, in Indurkhya's account the terms 'source' and 'target' often seem to indicate a concept, rather than a predicate. Thus, in the following discussion, I will stick to his terms.

based on the Interaction Theory, and attempts to systematize the process of 'modelling' more systematically as a projective, isomorphic relation.[91]

In his view a linguistic expression is represented in cognition on two levels. The first level has a high degree of abstraction, where the meaning of the expression is represented as part of a structured network of concepts. The second level is what Indurkhya calls the 'senso-motoric data set', containing perceptual information that is associated with the expression. The two levels, then, are made up by concepts and their perceived instances. In literal understanding the senso-motoric representations are not consciously evoked, that is, perceptual representations related to a concept need not become actualized when interpreting a literal predication.

Interpreting a novel metaphor requires a different use of both conceptual network and perceptual representations. In this case the conceptual network that belongs to the vehicle or source is applied to the domain of perceptual representations that belongs to the target of the metaphor.

In metaphor interpretation, the perceptual representations belonging to the target are *seen as* belonging to the source. Indurkhya understands this 'seeing as' as a projective relation, through which the source network is mapped onto the target domain. The target-domain is thereby 'accommodated' in the source domain. The process of accommodation results in a newly perceived, structural similarity between representations belonging to the source and to the target.

An example will help to clarify the used notions. For our example 'Rose is a rose' the present account holds that in the interpretation the perceptual representations we associate with Rose are newly structured by the concept-network belonging to the predicate 'rose'. Hence, perceptual Rose-representations are re-represented as organised by the conceptual network that belongs to the predicate 'rose'. The concept-network in which 'Rose' functioned, i.e. the network that structured the target domain (the representations of Rose) is thereby altered. It is either adjusted, or even discarded entirely: our Rose-representations retain the conceptual structuring of the concepts in the network belonging to 'Rose' insofar as it is compatible with our vision of her as a rose. Thus, for instance concepts in the network about Rose that imply that she loves to run, are downplayed for the moment, since this is hardly relevant for, or compatible with our concepts about roses. Thus, the interaction between the meanings of the vehicle and target that Black emphasizes is accounted for as a change of focus in the conceptual networks belonging to either.

The restructuring of the perceptual representations of the target is performed by way of proportional analogy. This analogy is set up as a four-place relation,

[91] Indurkhya[1992]

somewhat in the manner we could construe for Goodman's account of metaphor, namely, a relation between two pairs, both consisting of a referent and a reference. However, in this case the referential relations, as well as the entities between which they hold, are situated in cognition. The referential relation between network and domain are one of 'association' (where Goodman speaks of exemplification and denotation), while these associations hold between cognitive entities (Goodman's 'labels'), namely of conceptual structures on the one hand, and perception-based representations on the other.

Indurkhya's proportional analogy, then, is set up between two pairs consisting each of a conceptual network and a perceptual domain. The first pair consists of the target network (the conceptual network belonging to 'Rose') and the target domain (associated perceptual representations of Rose); the second pair consists of the source-network and source domain (i.e. respectively the conceptual network and the perceptual representations belonging to 'rose'). Metaphor is analysed as the projection of the source network onto the target domain; that is, with the predication 'Rose is a rose' the network of concepts belonging to 'rose' is projected onto the domain of representations of Rose.

The metaphor is thus translated into a problem with a logical form, of the kind:

'if **T**[***t***] and **S**[***s***], then how to construct **S**[***t***]'

in which **T** and **S** are structuring functions on a domain, and ***t*** and ***s*** represent a set of elements in the domains for which the functions are defined. To solve the problem, then, we have to find out how **S** structures ***t***, thus, in what respect ***s*** can structurally be mapped on the domain ***t***.

The same holds for the metaphorical predication. That is, if the perceptual domains of target and source to some extent exhibit the same *structural* relations, then the target domain can be described by the structure of the source to this extent. In other words, insofar as the network of concepts belonging to the source may capture a structure between the representations in the target domain, the source network can be applied to the target domain. In the formal guise of the problem stated above, then, we try to determine how elements of ***s*** can be mapped onto ***t***.

To 'solve' the metaphor, then, means to construe a mapping of the target domain onto the source domain. We do this by considering the target with respect to any structural similarities it may have with the source domain. Thus, interpreting the metaphor involves finding a similar structure organising representations belonging to Rose, and representations belonging to roses. This is then what Indurkhya calls the accommodation of the target into the source domain: in interpretation, Rose-representations are merely considered insofar as they agree with the source network, that is, by virtue of the structural similarity to rose-representations. In other words, the metaphor becomes

meaningful to the extent that the conceptual structuring of the rose-domain can be mapped onto the Rose-domain.

According to Indurkhya, predications may differ with respect to the degree of conventionality of the similarities that are involved in interpretation.

If structural similarity is evident, the metaphor can easily be understood. In a 'similarity-based' metaphor, then, (part of) the mapping between *s* and *t* is already known; hence its novelty may consist of the transfer of more of the concepts belonging to the source network to the target domain. By contrast 'similarity creating metaphors' require the interpreter to perceive an entirely new similarity. Since in this case there is no overlap whatsoever between source and target concepts, the metaphor requires the interpreter to project the source network onto the target domain 'as if the target realm were encountered for the first time'.[92] That is, the target domain is entirely reconceptualized by means of the source network; in this process the source network remains 'more or less invariant', while the ontology of the target realm 'is varied so that its structure, as seen from the concept network layer, is isomorphic (as far it can be) to the structure of the source concept network'.[93] In this sense, then, similarity-creating metaphors are 'the hallmark of a truly creative genius', and the risk that they are not understood is very real. The presented examples of similarity-creating metaphors are typically heuristic or poetic metaphors. I will discuss an example of either.

Indurkhya describes a case where a group of researchers was faced with the problem that their synthetic paintbrush did not perform as well as a natural brush. Reconsidering the activity of brushing paint onto a surface solved the problem. Instead of seeing a brush as a container of paint that smeared the paint onto the surface, the brush now was seen to *pump* the paint out, by the gradual bending of the hairs in the movement of painting. On the basis of this model, a new, more gradually bending fibre was produced with good result. The example shows how the target, that is the putting of paint on the surface, was reconceptualized: the structuring concept of smearing was discarded, and the pump model was projected on the painting activity.

A poetic example Indurkhya uses is the following poem by Eavan Boland:[94]

---

[92] Indurkhya[1992] p 271

[93] Indurkhya[1992] p 271

[94] The poem is quoted from Indurkhya[1992] p 41.

White Hawthorne in the West of Ireland

I drove West
in the season between seasons.
I left behind suburban gardens.
Lawnmowers. small talk.

Under low skies, past splashes of coltsfoot,
I assumed
the hard shyness of Atlantic light
and the superstitious aura of hawthorne.

All I wanted then was to fill my arms with
sharp flowers,
to seem, from a distance, to be a part of
that ivory, downhill rush. But I knew,

I had always known,
the custom was
not to touch hawthorne.
Not to bring it indoors for the sake of

the luck
such constraints would forfeit-
a child might die, perhaps, or an unexplained
fever speckle heifers. So I left it

stirring on those hills
with a fluency only water has. And, like water, able
to redefine land. And free to seem to be-

for anglers,
and for travellers astray in
the unmarked lights of a May dusk-
the only language spoken in those parts.

Here first an image is described of a hill full of little white flowers, hawthorne. Then, in the last two stanzas this image is described in terms of water: the downhill rush, the fluency of water, and the anglers. According to Indurkhya's analysis the network of water-related concepts is projected onto the visualized flowery hill. Some elements of the conceptual image of the target-domain become more prominent, others recede into the background because they do not fit in nicely. For instance, the *flowers as water* are seen as a surface, whereby certain qualities, such as sharpness or differing DNA-structures, are ignored. Thus the domain of representations belonging to the target is accommodated to the newly projected conceptual structure.
Indurkhya treats the two examples uniformly in his account, since they both involve the creation of similarity between target and source domain. This novel

similarity is situated on a level of internally represented experiential or perceptual data, and it is motivated by a newly shared conceptual structure.

However, in each example the interpretation has a different starting-point. The heuristic model is developed in order to solve a problem with a paintbrush. Hence the target (the paint-brush) is available beforehand, and in the context of this target a heuristic model (the pump) is offered. The lack of a suitable conventional explanation of the problem makes a reconceptualization of the target necessary. We could consider it a conceptual variety of *catachresis*, since no conventional description of a brush suits the phenomenon at hand.

In the poetic example, by contrast, the description of the target is offered along with the new, metaphorical description. The target domain is only accessible through its description, that is, it is not given in experience or by independent descriptions. This makes the function of interpretation quite different from the case where I have an experience-based representation of a paintbrush, which presented a practical problem. The 'problem' presented by the poem regards my understanding of the poem, and not a better understanding of my previous experiences of flower-covered hills.

The reader is led to visualize the hill full of flowers *through* the description of a water surface. Thus, that the resulting visualization resembles an image of a water surface is not surprising. It is not so much the *similarity* that is created, since it is presented by the text, but the perceptual representation of the target *as exhibiting* this similarity. It seems to me that the meaning of the presented similarity lays not so much in the act of visualizing it, but in a further, symbolic interpretation, for which clues are equally provided by the text.

The 'I' in the text leaves behind the suburbs with its lawnmowers and small talk, and finds, in the hills far away from all this, an image of freedom, which we can see from the space being 'free for anglers' and 'travellers astray'. He cannot take any of this freedom back home, since bringing the flowers, now symbolizing freedom, home might cause an accident of some sort.

This transferred symbolic meaning of the water-image is not accounted for in Indurkhya's analysis, due to the focus in his theory on the perceptual qualities of the target representation. One could argue that the symbolic meaning of the source is transferred to the target-domain, since it is part of the conceptual network that is projected onto the target domain. Only after the accommodation of the imaginative representation, this argument would run, can such symbolic properties be transferred.

However, that is begging the question. Even if the transfer of meanings is thus explained, we still wonder how this specific symbolic meaning of the source image is picked out of all the possible concepts that apply to water. How is it that we do not imagine a little brook to compare with the flowery hills, equally

providing space for anglers or travellers astray? And why should we not stick to some perceptual representation of the flowers-as-water?

The answer seems easy, and involves the interaction of meanings as Black describes it: depending on its new application, the source-network is represented in such a way that there is some ground for the comparison, such that the imagery fits in well. That implies however that in constructing the image of the flowers-as-water there is not a uniquely directed projection from the water-related concepts to the flower-image, but also an influence in the other direction. To understand the poem as a description of the impossible longing for freedom we need the source descriptions to blend in with the target descriptions: we need the knowledge that bringing flowers home brings bad luck, and that the perception of flowers is only possible away from the suburbs and the lawnmowers. These descriptions pave the way for the symbolic understanding of water as a reference to freedom.

The interpretation of the poem is thus not the result of the application of a foreign conceptual network to an accommodated perceptual domain, rather, the description of the target domain gives a frame for the construction of the source, while at the same time the representation of the target is restructured by this source. Thus the interpretation has a circular structure, a going back and forth between the descriptions belonging to target and source.[95] The picture Indurkhya sketches of the metaphorical interaction as a projective analogy, does not explain how the projective relation influences the projected structure.

Recalling the formal statement of the problem, the point is that the metaphorical application of **S** is partly determined by **T**, and as a consequence itself becomes a metaphorically interpreted predicate (that is, where **S** before the metaphorical projection is a concept network related to water, it now also stands for freedom) and thus that the metaphor is not to be stated as **S[*t*]**. As a result we no longer have a solvable proportional analogy: where first we had a three term-problem (**S:*t*** as **S:*s***) with a clear solution (find how ***s*** can be mapped onto ***t***) we now have more terms: **X:*t*** as **S:*s***, where **X** is based on interpretations of both **S** and **T**. Thus, in the case of this poetic metaphor, the mathematical heuristic does not state the problem of interpretation.

Indurkhya's account presents a highly systematic model of projective analogy, which he identifies with the principle of metaphorical projection as Black originally presented it. One of the merits of his theory is that the loose characterization of metaphorical projection is replaced by a clear mathematical definition. However, in the application to poetic metaphors, the limits of such a

[95] A process, of course, which has been identified since long as the 'hermeneutical circle'.

systematic model become clear. The process of interpretation is more dynamic, and more flexible, than can be rendered in the form of a homomorphic projection of a structure on a foreign domain. Thus, his analysis accidentally reveals the flaws that remain implicit in looser understandings of metaphorical projection.

Another merit of this account, is that Indurkhya emphasizes the imaginative character of creative, unconventional interpretations. He understands creativity in interpretation as the capacity to reconceptualize some perceptual representation, thus presenting a new, perceptual understanding of the 'seeing as' in metaphors. Every author who writes on metaphorical interpretation at one time or another resorts to the use of a perceptual vocabulary, including such expressions as 'seeing as' or 'bringing before the eyes'. It is Indurkhya's achievement that he takes this vocabulary as an indication that actual perceptual processes are involved in the interpretation of poetic metaphors.

The assumption seems likely enough: reading poetry often evokes mental imagery, and in imagining what is written we may arrive at an interpretation. However, whether this kind of imagery is indeed related to previous perceptions stored in memory as a 'senso-motoric data set' as Indurkhya assumes, remains an open question. Indurkhya presents little evidence to sustain his assumption; issues such as the accurateness of the stored perceptions, their relation to concepts, and the level of conceptualization at which they may be accessed remain largely undiscussed. Thus, for a more elaborate theory on the role of perception and imagination in the interpretation of poetic imagery, we will have to turn elsewhere.[96]

4.3 Metaphorical visions: Ricoeur

Paul Ricoeur considers the role of imagination in interpretation from quite a different perspective. In his theory, the beginning of the process of metaphorical interpretation is similar to what we may by now call the classical interaction-model: when literal, routine interpretation simply is not possible, or would lead to an absurdity, the interpreter turns to an imaginative representation of the predicates in order to find an interpretation. Then, in the process of imaginatively relating the vehicle to the target, the meaning of the metaphor is formed. With Ricoeur, the images that are thus involved in understanding metaphors are not revived perceptions, as they are for Indurkhya. According to Ricoeur, the latter view of imagination can be

[96] A brief discussion on the difference between percepts and mental imagery follows in chapter 3, section 3.2.

retraced to Hume's mistaken understanding of imagination as a faint impression of the senses; that is, a 'residue' of perception. What is needed is a theory of imagination which underscores 'a mode of functioning of similarity, and accordingly of imagination which is immanent [...] to the predicative process itself'.[97] The theory of imagination he proposes is based on Kant's understanding of the productive imagination.

In the article quoted above, Ricoeur summarizes the functioning of imagination in the understanding of metaphor, following the theory he presents in *The Rule of Metaphor*.[98] Metaphorical interpretation presents a threefold task for the imagination. Briefly, these tasks consist of the following: the first is the schematizing of a novel likeness between the terms of the metaphor; the second is the representation of this schematic resemblance in a 'depicting mode'; and the third and last is the suspending of the usual references of the terms to make way for a 'second order reference': a possibly altered view of reality. Each step then reflects the impact of metaphorical interpretation on some level of interpretation. The first act of schematization takes place on the conceptual level, resulting in a 'predicative assimilation' of the terms in a metaphor. The second takes place on the level of representation of meaning, resulting in an actual *seeing* of the one *as* the other. The third step takes place on the level of referential application, resulting in a possible new reference to reality, not just for the metaphorical terms, but also for the whole of language in which they are embedded.

Ricoeur describes these three tasks as three steps in the 'attempt to complete a semantic account of metaphor with a proper consideration of the role of imagination', and although he claims they are meant as logically discernable, theoretical moments, they reflect a chronological order in the interpretation as well.[99]

A closer look at these different tasks of the imagination through the discussion of an example follows below. After thus expounding Ricoeur's position, I take a closer look at Ricoeur's appeal to Kant's theory of imagination and his ambition to formulate a semantic theory of imagination. An ambition, to recall section 4.1 above, that was also expressed by Mark Johnson.

---

[97] Ricoeur[1978] p 145

[98] Ricoeur[1993]

[99] Ricoeur[1978] p 149. Incidentally, the emphasis on the nature of the ordering of these steps reminds of a controversy in the interpretation of the first Transcendental Deduction of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the subject of which is the nature of the ordering that Kant intended in his subsequent description of the syntheses in intuition, imagination and conceptualization. See chapter 2 below.

One of the few examples Ricoeur presents is brought forward in his discussion of the first step, the schematizing of likenesses. It is the familiar example of Aristotle's proportional metaphor: 'Ares' cup' or 'Dionysos' shield'. This first step in metaphorical interpretation is that of seeing likeness through differences between the concepts expressed. The example is used to illustrate the 'instantaneous grasping of the combinatory possibilities' which are offered by the four terms of the proportional analogy.[100] In the grasping of these combinations, a 'rapprochement between the two ratio's' occurs, which establishes the proportionality.[101] Hence, the analogy between Ares' shield and Dionysos' cup is set up through an insight in the likenesses of the relations between the four terms. This insight has a productive character, since it establishes a previously unseen relation between the terms: a *predicative assimilation*. Ricoeur calls the schematized aspect of likeness between the terms an 'emerging meaning', as it were a proto-concept.[102]

Ricoeur compares the process of predicative assimilation to Kant's description of the process of schematizing in productive imagination. Like subjective judgements in this account, for Ricoeur the grasped insights are actively produced in the imagination, and, again like subjective judgements, there is no concept available to characterize the aspect under which the terms are likened. The insight in the metaphor then is not the passive viewing of an image, nor the routine application of an existing concept, but a productive act of bringing previously unrelated terms together under an aspect of similarity.

The second step that imagination performs is the *picturing* of the semantic innovation. This picturing should not be understood in the manner of Hume's faint impressions. The latter amounts merely to having an image of an absent thing, and would thus remain foreign to the *productive* process of predicative assimilation. Rather: 'Imaging, or imagining is the concrete milieu in which and through which we see similarities. To imagine, then, is not to have a mental picture of something, but to display relations in a depicting mode. Whether this depiction concerns unsaid and unheard similarities or refers to qualities, structures, localizations, situations, attitudes, or feelings, each time the new intended connection is grasped as what the icon describes or depicts'.[103] Thus, through the production of *icons*, rather than images, the schematization of the predicative assimilation is channelled as concerning a certain type of likeness,

---

[100] Ricoeur[1978] p 146

[101] Ricoeur[1978] p 146

[102] Ricoeur[1978] p 147

[103] Ricoeur[1978] p 148

whether this is the likeness between the use of terms, their referents or their general meanings.

The depicting mode is brought about by the 'iconic function' of the words. Ricoeur uses this notion in the definition of Paul Henle, who in turn borrowed it from Charles Peirce. An icon, according to Henle, is a sign that functions through similarity, rather than through some conventional symbolic relation. Words are conventional signs for an icon, i.e., they are not icons themselves, but 'present a formula for the construction of the icon', that is, an image that is bound to the words.[104]

Thus, although some image of a cup may be conventionally associated with the word 'cup', the image of a cup that is called up by the metaphorical 'Ares' cup' functions as an icon for the shield of Ares. It becomes an icon for the shield by virtue of its similarity to the shield. According to Ricoeur, the basis for this similarity was laid in the process of predicative assimilation.

The expression 'an image of...', then, is misleading. The icon in 'Ares' cup' is not the literal image of a cup, but rather a representation of the meaning of the term 'cup', presented in such a way that it resembles the representation of the meaning of the term 'shield'. An icon is the meaning of the word that is 'depicted under the features of ellipsis'; its nature balances on the border between sense and representation.

In the interpretation of the metaphor the icon is used to 'bring to concrete completion the metaphorical process'.[105] The icon is 'read on the image in which it is inverted', that is, the iconic presentation of the vehicle is read on the image of the target. Thus, the target is *seen as* the vehicle (Ares' shield is seen as Dionysos' cup).

The concrete description of the act of 'seeing as' Ricoeur derives from Hester, who attempts to extend the concept of 'seeing as' from perception to poetic imaging.[106] In the process of interpretation we create a *Gestalt* that encodes the aspect of similarity. Thus, if Ares' shield presents image A, and Dionysos' cup presents image C, the metaphorical meaning is constructed through first *seeing* A and C, and then constructing Gestalt B, that depicts the similarity between A and C. A metaphor thus presents as it were an 'ambiguous' figure which allows for diverse readings, such as Wittgenstein's duck/rabbit picture. We have the unrelated images of a duck (A) and a rabbit (C); only when we actually see the famous drawing (B), we will be capable of seeing a duck in a rabbit-image, or vice versa. Thus, by analogy to the perceptual example, the icon presented by

---

[104] Henle[1958] p 178

[105] Ricoeur[1978] p 149

[106] Cf. Ricoeur[1993] p 213, and Hester[1967]

the metaphor *Ares' cup*, then, presents an image of a cup that is pictured in such a manner that it can represent a shield as well. The vehicle-icon (the cup) can be seen in the image of the target, such that the target (the shield) can be seen *as* the vehicle. The iconic representation that does the trick is what Ricoeur calls 'picturing under feature of ellipsis' ; that is, a representation of only those aspects that are relevant for both target and vehicle. In our example, for instance, these may be aspects such as having a round form, being made from metal, being carried by, and being characteristic of a God.

The last, third step in the work of the imagination is that of establishing the reference of the metaphor. Here Ricoeur refers to Jakobson's concept of the poetic function of a text, which becomes predominant at cost of its referential function.[107] Jakobson claims that in a poetic text the attention of the reader is drawn away from its external references, and drawn to the text itself. Ricoeur agrees, but adds that this is done only in order to establish a secondary reference: 'Poetic language is no less about reality than any other use of language but refers to it by the means of a complex strategy, which implies, as an essential component, a suspension and seemingly an abolition of the ordinary reference attached to descriptive language. This suspension, however, is only the negative condition of a second order reference, of an indirect reference built on the ruins of the direct reference'.[108] Thus poetic language has a *split reference*; consisting of its usual reference, which is to be suspended, and a new 'second-order' reference.[109] Of this positive aspect of poetic reference Ricoeur writes: 'it suggests, reveals, unconceals -or whatever you say- the deep structures of reality to which we are related as mortals who are born into this world and who dwell in it for a little'. Thus: 'Image as absence is the negative side of image as fiction. It is to this aspect of the image as fiction that is attached the power of symbolic systems to "remake" reality'.[110] Thus, through the use of imagination in metaphorical interpretation, the metaphor does not acquire a new, direct reference. Rather, through the insight that the metaphor

---

[107] Cf. Jakobson in Sebeok[1960]

[108] Ricoeur[1978] p 151

[109] This point has led commentators to criticize Ricoeur as taking a referentialist position on metaphor, namely of implying that referents acquire similarity through the process of *rapprochement*, which would really be a position akin to the comparison-view. Cf. Indurkhya[1992] p 74. According to Ricoeur, the similarities in metaphor are created in imagination, i.e. they hold not between objects but between representations of linguistic meanings. Thus, a resemblance between semantic representations is the *product* of metaphor, and not metaphor a product of an existing likeness between their referents. Thus, the criticism holds only insofar as Ricoeur identifies meaning with referent. On the unclarities in Ricoeur's account on this subject, see the discussion in 5.1 below.

[110] Ricoeur[1978] p 152

inspires, a novel perspective becomes available to the interpreter: a potential restructuring of the whole system of references.

Thus, with Ricoeur's account, finally a conception of the 'truth' of poetry, or of literature is formulated, as an alternative to the traditional semantic notion of truth discussed in section 2.2. Further, Ricoeur, like Johnson, appeals to a Kantian theory of imagination, only now the subjective aspects of imagination do not suffer from an accompanying attempt to understand all metaphorical interpretation as resulting from a general conceptual capacity to deal with bodily experience, as we saw it did in Johnson's account in section 4.1. For Ricoeur, subjective productivity is paired to the possibility of reconceptualizing a view of the world. The revelation of 'ideological structures in classical poetry' we saw in Lakoff and Turner's account therewith becomes less a matter of anthropology, and more so of subjective reflection. However, as will become clear shortly, the appeal to Kant's theory of imagination in Ricoeur's writing is in itself not unambiguous; and especially so since he refrains from stating how language is understood whenever it does *not* involve metaphorical interpretation. That is, it is not clear whether normal, conceptual understanding for Ricoeur may involve subjective imagination or not.

However, Ricoeur's account of the different roles of imagination in metaphorical processing suggests a parallel with the different functions of imagination recognized by Kant, namely, the reproductive and the productive imagination. Ricoeur, as we saw, establishes a difference between the schematizing and the iconic functions of the imagination. The act of predicative assimilation, the schematizing function that Ricoeur defines, is compared to the Kantian productive imagination, since it enables the creation of a (non-pictorial) schema. Imagination in this act has nothing to do (yet) with depicting representations.[111] That is where the second, iconic, function comes in: it enables the interpreter to *see* the likenesses that are newly schematized. In the iconic representation of the metaphor the resemblances are represented intuitively. The iconic function then amounts to providing an image for the schematic meaning of the metaphor.

Kant's description of the schematic function in conceptual, determinate understanding is that it 'provides images for the concepts'.[112] Imagination mediates between intuitive presentations and a unifying conceptual understanding. It thus brings past and present perceptions together under an aspect of likeness given by a concept. Hence it is called the 'reproductive imagination'.

---

[111] Ricoeur[1993] p 199

[112] A140/B180, *Critique of Pure Reason*

The iconic function of the imagination performs a similar, reproductive function in Ricoeur's account, where it mediates between the iconic presentation and the schematic understanding. Here imagination brings images that are bound to the words together under a unifying schematic representation. Hence: 'I do not deny that this second stage of our theory of imagination has brought us to the borderline [...] between a semantics of productive imagination and a psychology of reproductive imagination'.[113] In the function of bringing images to concepts then, Ricoeur's iconic depiction in metaphorical interpretation seems compatible with the Kantian reproductive imagination in conceptual understanding, while Ricoeur presents the newly schematized meaning as the result of productive imagination.

There are some obvious differences between the imaging involved in Ricoeur's iconic picturing on the one hand, and the Kantian schematization of intuition on the other. Ricoeur claims that the images in iconic depiction are not intuitive presentations; he emphasizes that they are depicted under the feature of ellipsis, and are thus half thought, half image. The iconic depiction is both concrete and imaginative. As such it is responsible for the possible concretization of 'poetic reference': a new perspective on the structuring of reality, without actual reference to reality. For this type of description of reality Ricoeur also uses the term 'heuristic fiction'.[114] The poetic reference is opposed to the 'direct reference' of literal language, which suggests that any possible images in the literal understanding are directly related to (an unquestioned perspective on) reality. The primary candidate for mediating such 'directly referring' words to reality seems to be perception- indeed on the model of the schematization of intuitive presentations in Kant's account of conceptual understanding. In Kant's epistemology, the faculties of productive imagination and conceptual understanding are foreign to one another. For Kant, productive imagination is employed in reasoning from the particular to the universal, resulting in a creative 'subjective universal'. Concepts, by contrast, are 'objective universals', which require no creativity; their application involves a spontaneous concept-guided synthesis in reproductive imagination.

Ricoeur apparently assumes the same relation of mutual exclusion between the faculties of metaphorical and 'normal' linguistic interpretation: there is only a metaphorical interpretation *after* a semantic clash. The disruptive 'clash' indicates that the imaginative interpretation must be of a different nature than a more conventional conceptual processing. Thus, if Ricoeur indeed assumes a Kantian epistemology in the way indicated here, we must presume a radical difference between metaphorical and literal interpretation in his account.

---

[113] Ricoeur[1978] p 149

[114] Cf. Ricoeur[1991]

A parallel, then, is suggested between on the one hand the two types of judgement that Kant generally distinguishes, that involve different functions of imagination, and on the other hand Ricoeur's distinction between literal understanding and metaphorical interpretation. For Ricoeur's theory of metaphor, the parallel suggests that in productive imagination, concepts expressed literally by the predications used in metaphor are combined, and lead to newly produced 'emerging concepts'. This parallel indicates, then, that linguistic meanings involved in conceptual understanding are objective concepts, whereas the meanings that are actively produced in metaphorical interpretation can be identified as subjective concepts, which are formed on the basis of newly schematizing similarities between objective meanings.

However, this analysis goes beyond what Ricoeur claims or explicates. He refrains from a discussion on the role of imagination in literal, or conceptual understanding. He can do so, because he introduces metaphor as a linguistically, or rather, semantically defined object. For Ricoeur, we saw, metaphorical interpretation sets in as a result of a semantic clash. Thus, he assumes that the discourse that requires metaphorical interpretation is demarcated in an 'objective' sense, namely through its incomprehensibility in conceptual understanding. Having thus identified his topic of investigation, Ricoeur can elaborate his theory that here meaning is distilled through productive imagination.

I argue in the following section that the notion of a semantic clash cannot serve to define what is interpreted metaphorically. I argue that the realm of metaphorical interpretation, understood as an act of productive imagination in the way Ricoeur does, is not constituted by properties of discourse. The claim that what is recognizable as a metaphor acquires a productive interpretation, and thus involves a different type of meaning therewith becomes circular, for if the metaphorical is defined by its interpretation alone, it will indeed have a acquired a metaphorical interpretation. Hence, the distinction between metaphorical and literal understanding cannot be described in terms of the linguistic objects interpreted. The investigation of metaphorical interpretation therewith is no longer a matter of analysing discourse, but of analysing cognition.

5 Semantic versus cognitive realms of metaphor

5.1 Absurdity and interpretation: the semantic clash

Underlying Ricoeur's assumption of a semantic clash, is his more or less implicit reliance on traditional semantics- indeed that type of semantics, which Johnson dismissed as 'Objectivism in its purest form'. Ricoeur bases his understanding of semantics on Frege.[115] Regarding the understanding of literal utterances, he employs Frege's distinction between 'sense' and 'reference' himself. He then assumes a similar distinction for poetic text, between the 'structure' of the work and the 'world' of the work.[116] In this use of the Fregean distinction, Ricoeur assumes a parallel between poetic and 'normal' use of language.

Ricoeur does not discuss Frege's own remarks on poetic interpretation explicitly. According to Frege poetic language, insofar as it does not contain propositions, makes use of entirely subjective representations (*Vorstellungen*) and is therefore not part of linguistic meaning. Clearly for Ricoeur the distinction cannot be drawn in such a rigid manner, since on the one hand linguistic meanings form the starting-point of metaphorical interpretation, and on the other hand the emergence of a novel linguistic meaning may result from it. However, the opposition between the literal and the poetic is not disputed in Ricoeur's philosophy.

With his appeal to the literal absurdity of metaphors, Ricoeur explains a difference between metaphorical interpretation and literal understanding. This difference in modes of interpretation is related to the different types of discourse or 'genres' as Ricoeur calls them. Thus, the 'semantic clash' that precedes metaphorical interpretation becomes the defining feature of metaphor, which brings metaphor out of the realm of propositional meanings. However, this precludes the possibility of ambiguous utterances, i.e. utterances that may receive both a literal and a metaphorical interpretation. Ricoeur's definition thus underscores a limitation in the scope of metaphorical interpretation.

The point is related to the criticism above, in section 3.3, on the usefulness of a criterion of literal falsehood or contextual incongruity. As we saw above, patent falsehood does not provide sufficient reason for the interpretation of an utterance as a metaphor, nor is it a necessary requirement for such

---

[115] Cf. Ricoeur[1978] pp 150-151, and Ricoeur[1993] pp 73-74 and pp 217-218

[116] Cf. Gerhart[1994] p 223

interpretation, since the true sentence: 'The True Church is not a hippopotamus' also qualifies as a metaphor. Let us then understand a 'semantic clash' in a less restrictive way, namely as the absurdity which a literal interpretation gives rise to, such as when an utterance does not literally make sense in the context, even if it is a semantically well-formed sentence. However, even if we require only a 'pragmatic clash', there are still some metaphorical interpretations that are not covered. Some predications are both informative and relevant, but may still be interpreted metaphorically in a given situation, by a given interpreter. In fact, relevance of the utterance taken literally may even enhance its effect as a metaphor .

The remark 'Wolves live in herds', for instance, may be a perfectly informative and relevant utterance when encountered at the Natural History Museum. Imagine the following situation, in which a group of executives from multi-national companies are gathered for a party in the museum. A waiter, knowing this, on the way to the kitchen encounters a sign on which the above sentence is printed. 'Indeed!' he thinks, since the sentence presents a suitable metaphor for the gathering.

In this situation, the interpreter construes the metaphorical interpretation without being impelled to such interpretation through any absurdity of the utterance in the context. Rather, the metaphorical interpretation is prompted by the conceived *appropriateness* of the sentence encountered. The point of the example is that an interpreter can construe a metaphorical interpretation of maybe any utterance, provided he is capable of distancing himself from the literal meaning of the utterance, and has something like a suitable context for the metaphor in mind.

One may be tempted to contest the argument as follows: if the sentence is to be interpreted metaphorically, it has to be understood as referring to anything but wolves. Therefore it presupposes a conflict between the intended referent (the guests of the party) and the normal referent (wolves) and hence presupposes some falsehood or absurdity. This argument misses the point. The issue is whether all metaphorical interpretations are *triggered by* absurdity, and not whether conflicting meanings are a necessary element in the interpretation. There are more ways to construe a conflict of meanings than by passively encountering some literal absurdity in a context. The defining criterion, then, is not that the encountered text cannot be interpreted literally, but that it *is* interpreted metaphorically, involving either the active construction or the more passive recognition of an unusual, maybe 'conflicting' context of interpretation. Thus, the process of predicative assimilation that Ricoeur assumes as the first step in interpretation is not always triggered by the encounter of a conflict of meaning in an utterance presented to him. Rather, it can be the result of an

active comparison. Thus, in our example, it is his estimation of the gathering that impels our waiter to read the utterance as a description of the gathering. Hence, in Ricoeur's terms: the construction of the icon need not follow the semantic clash, and the 'rapprochement' need not involve a *process* of detachment, ellipsis and schematization, but may appear autonomously and instantly. But then, as remarked above, the question is how metaphorical interpretation is triggered, and furthermore, why it should replace a literal understanding.

Thus, the description of the process of metaphorical interpretation is not based on an 'objective' definition of metaphorical language. There are absurd utterances, and there are perfectly sound sentences; and to a certain interpreter, some of both present a metaphor in a specific situation, or state of mind. What counts as a metaphor to an interpreter, then, is the result of a personal act of interpretation, and not a matter of language independent from its interpretation. The implication of this conclusion, we saw earlier in the discussion of Davidson's position, is that metaphorical interpretation is not by definition restricted to the realm of utterances that are intended by their authors or analysts to be metaphorical, nor is one type of interpretation strictly tied up to one genre of discourse.

5.2 Conventions in metaphorical interpretation

The latter conclusion brings us beyond the scope of Ricoeur's theory. If there is, in the end, no formal criterion for metaphors, why should we distinguish metaphors from literal sentences? And how can we do so?

So far, we have encountered in general two features of discourse typical of what would count as a metaphor. The first was the presence of a subject/predicate structure, in which typically the subject-term is literal and the predicate is metaphorical. Crucial for the distinction between the metaphorical and the literal term was the second feature: a conflict in the interpretation, caused by the 'foreign', 'novel' or 'absurd' use of the predicative term.

This property of conflict in understanding was presented in all sorts of varieties. It appears throughout the literature as the 'semantic clash'. Ricoeur presupposes the absurdity of literal interpretation, Goodman describes it as a conflict between present and previous use, Aristotle as the substitution of 'foreign' terms, Black mentions literal falsehood and incongruity, and Davidson adds the patent truth.

Some of these descriptions, such as a general criterion of literal falsehood, were proven wrong. I argued that in some cases it is purely a matter of

interpretation whether a given sentence is a metaphor. In the interpretation, my argument was, the reader has a situation in mind in which the given sentence acquires a metaphorical appropriateness. Thus, the interpreter brings an utterance to bear on a context of interpretation, thereby turning it into a metaphor. The example was the prosaic phrase 'Wolves live in herds', which turned into a metaphorical comment on the gathering of a group of important business people. In order to do this, the sentence had to be considered apart from its literal occurrence as an informative commentary in a discourse on natural history. In a way, in doing this, the utterance was turned to fiction. What is fictional about this interpretation, is that the utterance is freed from any context: it is considered as language proper, and is then applied to another situation than the one for which it was intended. Thus, a perfectly sound literal sentence can become, in Ricoeur's terms, a 'heuristic fiction'.

With the interpretation of poetry, something similar happens: we read the language proper, and all of a sudden we are struck by its appropriateness for some situation. That is not to say that poetry is all about something, and that reading it demands us to find a 'something' for which it is an appropriate metaphor. Poetry has much more to offer: its sound, its typography, its rhythm and the choice of words, or the images it conveys. But as far as the theory of metaphorical interpretation is relevant for poetic interpretation, it is so for the possible 'about' of a poem, as we observed in the discussion on *The Sick Rose*. Metaphorical interpretation thus is one strategy to make a poem relevant to us: we read the poem 'as if' it is about something, and thereby get a better understanding of the poem, and of what we think it is about. For such interpretation, some terms are taken as a vehicle, and as embedded in a structure of vehicle-related predicates, and a target may be invented, either on the basis of textual indications, or on the basis of what the interpreter deems relevant. The interpretation, then, consists of treating the poem as a model for the conceptualization of a target. As we saw in the discussion on Indurkhya's theory of metaphorical projection, the construction of such a model need not be easy, as the source, that is, the vehicle, that should serve as a model may not be clearly or unambiguously described in poetry. This, clearly, is different for metaphors of the type 'Rose is a rose', where target and source are clearly stated, and it is different from the 'wolves live in herds' type of incidental metaphors, in that in this case the vehicle is provided in the statement.

What is common to both the allegorical interpretation of poetic imagery, such as observed in the interpretation of *The Sick Rose,* and the incidental metaphorical interpretation of an utterance, such as that of 'wolves live in herds' above, is the interpreter's *invention* of the target. A sentence may be turned into a metaphor if a suitable target is provided. In a sense the

interpreter here takes on the role of both author and reader: the sentence is encountered, but its target is created. Thus, the relevant context of interpretation is brought to the 'ready made' sentence, turning it into a metaphor *for the interpreter*.

With the mention of 'ready made' sentences, or 'language proper', we return Jakobson's poetic function of a text, which draws the reader's attention to the text *as text*. Only now, in view of the former discussion, it is clear that reference of the expressions in the ordinary sense is not entirely suspended by this poetic function. On the contrary: in dealing with the text as text, one strategy of making the words meaningful is by placing them in a fabricated context, and give them a metaphorical target. I call this context 'fabricated', because it retains an aspect of speculation on a possible context that, even if it is not fictitious, is newly construed *as a contex*t for the text. Thus, I agree with Ricoeur, that the referential function of a text is not lost when the poetic function of a text is dominant.

However, Ricoeur presupposes the literal absurdity of the encountered utterances. Such absurdity, we saw, may occur, and may provide a reason to engage in metaphorical interpretation, but it is not the only possible reason, nor is it sufficient reason to conclude that metaphorical interpretation is in order. Now if metaphorical interpretation is not brought about by literal absurdity, we may ask, how is it that people recognize an utterance as a metaphor? The answer, I think, is that although metaphorical interpretation is not restricted to literally absurd utterances, such absurdity may function as a conventional sign that metaphorical interpretation is in order. Its function, then, is similar to that of the reversed noun and verb in questions in English, for instance. A question need not have the word order of a question, but when it does, its nature is clearly indicated.

A phrase such as Shakespeare's 'Juliet is the sun' presents a metaphorical image that has a common ring to it, since it reminds of such qualifications as 'shiny', 'bright' or 'sunny'. Further its literary use dates back even further than Shakespeare, since it already occurs in classical literature.[117] Nevertheless the *word* 'sun' has not, over time, itself acquired a 'conceptual meaning' indicating its metaphorical use, as Ricoeur would have it. It is used, to the present day, as a perfectly standard example of a live metaphor.[118]

---

[117] The same image is used, for instance, in a comparison by Plautus (254-184 B.C.) in 'The Menaechmi'. It occurs in the following passage: *'(a girl's head appears through the partially opened door)* MENAECHMUS I: See, she's coming out herself! Just look at the sun! Compared to her bright body it's practically a shadow!' (Act I sc.3).

[118] Shakespeare's epithet of Juliet is used as a standard example in e.g. Leezenberg[1995].

Still, the reader does not on every encounter of this metaphor have to go through the phase of literal interpretation, and the subsequent recognition of its literal absurdity. Instead, we can assume that the interpreter turns to a metaphorical interpretation because he recognizes it as a (familiar) metaphor. Its obvious falsehood, or in another case a patent truth, may add to its recognition, as a conventional, rhetorical indication that metaphorical interpretation is in order; thus conventionality of a metaphor need not affect the type of interpretation it receives.

This point is even more relevant in poetic interpretation. The reader may recognize a poetic text through its stylistic features, such as figurative language, a typically poetic layout, or through contextual indications, such as by a title or sub-title of a publication. Thus, there are conventional signs that for a given text a poetic interpretation is in order.

Here it is even more obvious that conventional indications that another type of interpretation is in order prevail above the experience of a 'semantic clash', since absurdity of literal interpretation is hard to come by for each and every poem. In fact, the use of plain prosaic or informative text in a poem does not normally lead to a denial of the poetic nature of the text, and hence to a literal understanding of it. Rather, the knowledge that a given text is to be considered as poetry prompts the reader to give a poetic interpretation.[119] The conventions of the genre, then, appeal to a specific attitude of interpretation from the reader. This attitude of interpretation cannot in itself always be identified with the willingness to interpret metaphorically, for, as we already remarked, some poetry is not fit for such interpretation, and some interpreters are not inclined to interpret metaphorically.

The use of clearly non-poetic language in for instance Van Ostaayen's poem on a Singer sewing-machine, or in André Breton's list of entries of the name 'Breton' in the telephone book, as well as the tautology we discussed earlier by Gertrude Stein, deliberately do not conform to the expectations of a poetry reader who sets his mind on metaphorical interpretation. To him, these poems seem to present something like a 'pragmatic clash', because they use text which is too obviously prosaic to be poetic. Where a reader expects tropical metaphors, poetic imagery and symbolism, he now is confronted with tautology, commercial advertisement or telephone numbers.

---

[119] Johan Hoorn has investigated the effect of lay out on a reader. It turns out that a text is memorized differently, when presented in a poetic layout, e.g. divided by white spaces. The readers tend to remember more of the original formulations, and less of its actual topic than when the same text is presented with the layout of a newspaper article. Further, the subjects reported more use of imagery in interpreting a poetically laid-out text (Hoorn[1997]).

The effect of the use of such text is that the reader's expectations are turned upside down; he has the choice of adapting his expectations and hence his understanding of what poetry is, or of denying these poems their poetic nature. However the disruptive aspect of such effects wears out over time, as the by now familiar genre of the 'ready-made' in visual arts proves. After becoming familiar with the two mentioned poems, the 'pragmatic clash' of using all too prosaic language makes way for the recognition of a stylistic choice that guides the reader towards a different strategy of poetic interpretation. Van Ostaayen's poem forces the reader to consider it from typographic and phonetic angles, since its linguistic content hardly presents the occasion for poetic interpretation consisting of 'predicative assimilation'. Breton's poem can be read as a parody on conventional poetic form: the telephone book presents a typographically organized text with references to the poet; it is organized through rhythm, repetition and rhyme, and it contains autobiographical references.[120] Thus, in these cases, the use of text belonging to a conventional genre provides a lead for the reader, who, hindered in his strategy of metaphorical interpretation, is forced into other ways of looking at the poem.

The function of rhetorical means, such as literal absurdity, and of conventional indications of genre, such as a title indicating that a publication belongs to poetry, is in this respect similar. Both function as a conventional indication that some sort of interpretation is in order. This function should not be confused with their role in the actual interpretation of the utterance. To presuppose, for instance, that the interpreter always starts out interpreting a sentence as a literal sentence, and is then redirected toward metaphorical interpretation because of a found literal absurdity, is an underestimation of both our skills of interpretation, and of the pervasiveness of metaphors in language.

The question when an utterance or text is interpreted metaphorically has now received several answers. The first instance is where tropical metaphors are concerned, i.e. of the type 'Man is a wolf', or 'Rose is a rose'. In interpretation, the literal absurdity of the predication provides a clue that the sentence is meant as a metaphor. The second instance concerned those utterances which we may call 'pragmatic metaphors', where the utterance is interpreted metaphorically on account of some pragmatic irrelevance or triviality of a literal interpretation, such as in obvious statements as 'Man is not a wolf'. The third instance was given by those sentences which may meaningfully be interpreted literally in their context, but which are incidentally interpreted as a metaphor, such as the sentence 'Wolves live in herds' in the situation sketched above. Here the interpretation is prompted by the interpreter's attitude, guided

[120] See the epilogue for a more extensive discussion on ready-mades in visual arts and poetry, and their (destructive) impact on metaphorical interpretation as a strategy of interpretating artworks.

by the appropriateness of the metaphorical interpretation rather than by absurdity of a literal interpretation. Finally, the metaphorical interpretation of poetic imagery can be triggered merely on the basis of knowledge of the type of discourse or genre.
The common factor in each of these situations is the engagement in an active, consciously performed, imaginative reflection on the meaning of the words. Rather than presupposing a passive reader who is forced into action by a linguistic anomaly, we may acknowledge metaphorical imaging as a regular phenomenon in language, which the reader actively recognizes or construes.
With this conclusion the metaphorical character of the interpreted utterances and texts is situated in interpretation itself. The variety in utterances that may be interpreted metaphorically shows that these need not share any syntactic or semantic features. They do share a cognitive response: the incitation of the interpreter's imaginative reflection on the meaning of the words. Thus, 'metaphoricity', be it of standard tropical metaphors or of poetic images, of accidentally encountered utterances or of construed examples, is assigned in interpretation.

5.3 Conclusion

The starting point of our discussion of metaphorical interpretation was to determine how an interpreter establishes a meaning for a given image in poetry. We found that these interpretations depended greatly on the information that the interpreter deemed relevant at the time of the interpretation. This aspect appears, more or less prominent, in the theories on metaphor discussed above, since each of the authors presents an account of background knowledge that plays a role in interpreting metaphors.
In Black's theory the extra-textual knowledge that models the interaction between target and vehicle is called background knowledge, that is, a complex of associated commonplaces and implications. He remains vague on the topic, leaving us with many questions: how background knowledge comes into play, what kind of knowledge it consists of, and through which properties of the text it is interpreted thus. Goodman's analysis presents a more determinate account of the kind of associations that may pertain between words. Words are structurally related to others, since they are on the one hand embedded in a network of equivalences and oppositions, and on the other hand in a hierarchy of exemplifications and denotations. They evoke other 'labels' as a result of these structural relations. The problem with Goodman's account was that the relations mentioned are both unmotivated and non-verifiable, which leaves the

resulting interpretations of expressed labels that 'must apply' arbitrary or purely convention-based.

Lakoff and his co-authors give a general motivation for the origin of metaphors. Language, as cognition, is structured through certain basic conceptualizations. Metaphors are the result of an active projection of a 'basic' structure onto some novel bit of information. Thus, metaphors reflect a fundamental and general cognitive process. The knowledge used in conceptualizations is derived from other, basic, concepts, which are in turn derived from either cultural practice or bodily experience. The problem with this theory is that though it might explain the persistence of certain structural, conventional metaphors, it dismisses unconventional, unstable or personal interpretations, and thus misses a fundamental point belonging to poetic interpretation.

Indurkhya identifies metaphorical projection with the solving of a problem of proportional analogy. The understanding of both heuristic and poetic metaphors are based on a novel interpretation of previously processed perceptual data, stacked somewhere in the interpreter's mind. Novelty of interpretation amounts to a novel 'seeing' of previous perceptions. However, the status of these perceptual representations is unclear; the relation of perception to words is not explained, and the presented model of proportional analogy could not capture the dynamics of poetic interpretation.

Ricoeur provides another answer to the question where metaphorical meanings come from, in a more philosophical vein. He situates the interpretation of metaphor in the faculty of imagination. Through a schematized representation of the meanings of words we are able to construe meanings for words in novel predications.

This latter understanding of metaphorical meaning has greater appeal. First, the novel meanings are the result of a representation that appends to the words; which makes the resulting interpretation a matter of *semantic* understanding, and not one based on unspecified cultural (as Black would have it) or subconscious perceptual knowledge(Indurkhya, Davidson). Second, it identifies the interpretation as belonging to the imagination of the reader, which makes it a *personally motivated* interpretation (as opposed to both Johnson's and Goodman's appeal to general structures that hold between respectively universal cognitive schemes or between available labels). Third it emphasizes the novel character of the interpretation; which makes the interpretation *creative* (in contradistinction to Lakoff and Turner's theory on metaphorical meaning in poetry). Finally, on the basis of the modelling function of metaphor, Ricoeur establishes a meaningful notion of metaphorical reference to the 'real' world, and hence a notion of justifiability of a given interpretation, which generally lacks in the other discussed accounts.

However, the objections to the theory discussed in section 5.1 remain. Summarily stated, the problem with Ricoeur's theory is that it lacks explication of the iconic function of language in general. Ricoeur stresses the imaginative character of metaphorical interpretation to such extent, that its relation to 'normal' linguistic understanding becomes opaque. His theory of imagination leans on Kant's concept of productive imagination, but lacks reference to the paired concept of *re*productive imagination. Ricoeur's account of imagination thus remains incomplete as a theory of imagination, since its work in metaphorical interpretation is not brought into relation with a positive account of *other* tasks of the imagination, nor with the cognitive faculty of conceptual understanding. Thus, the special status of metaphorical interpretation is not explained satisfactorily.

Another conclusion presented above, was that with Ricoeur's description of metaphorical interpretation we do not arrive at a definition of metaphor. The semantic clash, which according to Ricoeur precedes metaphorical interpretation, may be brought about by semantic and pragmatic properties of the interpreted utterance. However, it may also actively be constructed by an interpreter upon any occasion at all. The single criterion Ricoeur gave for the starting point of metaphorical interpretation, namely the 'semantic clash', does not cover the varieties of utterances that are interpreted metaphorically. Hence, the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical cannot be attributed to mere semantic properties. Ricoeur thus presupposes, but fails to delimit a specific domain of discourse suited for metaphorical interpretation. The assumption of separate realms for metaphorical and literal interpretation therewith remains unmotivated.

The next chapters, then, are devoted to a discussion on the role of imagination in both metaphorical interpretation and conceptual understanding. Given the promising aspects of Ricoeur's approach, I consider Kant's theory of imagination in the following chapter, with the hope of finding a theory of imagination that may be used to characterize the process of metaphorical interpretation, as well from a perspective of creative interpretation, as in relation to the nature of conceptual understanding in general.

II Imagination

On Kant's theory of imagination and understanding.

Raison, raison, ô fantôme abstrait de la veille, déjà je t'avais chassée de mes rêves, me voici au point où ils vont se confondre avec les réalités d'apparence: il n'y a plus de place ici que pour moi [...] Œausse dualité de l'homme, laisse-moi un peu rêver à ton mensonge.
Louis Aragon [121]

1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we discussed the role of imagination in the interpretation of poetic imagery and metaphorical utterances. One question that was considered was how this process of interpretation differs from other types of interpretation. We saw that metaphorical interpretation of poetic text requires the interpreter to actively create novel interpretations of a text in the reflection on its interpretational context. In this reflection 'targets' , that is, what the text is about, for the text are considered. Metaphorical interpretation then involves the imaginary construction of an interpretational context.
Traditional semantics, as we saw, postulates a division of language into one part that is interpreted through emotional and imaginative representations, and another part that is interpreted on account of its assertoric force and its propositional content. Generally, semanticists consider the second type of language use as their subject. In our discussion of metaphors, we could find no strict division between the domain of metaphorical and non-metaphorical

[121] 'Préface à une mythologie moderne' in *Le paysan de Paris*.

language. There are, no limits to what may be interpreted metaphorically but the possibility of imagining a suitable metaphorical target for an utterance. Neither did we find any limits to literal interpretation: any metaphor may simply be considered a literal statement, be it a falsehood, truism or unintelligible utterance. Rather the metaphorical interpretation of an utterance is the result of an interpretational attitude. The use of tropical metaphor, such as a patent falsehood of the form ' X is a Y', is one conventional means to provoke such an attitude from the interpreter.

The challenge that awaits us now, is to explain what the relation is between metaphorical interpretation and literal understanding. Frege points out that the difference between an utterance with assertoric force and other expressions lies in the propositional content of the former. The propositional content is something like an 'objective' content of language, since, although it is not an object itself, it cannot be an entirely subjective representation of an object either.[122]

With this reasoning, some type of objectivity is assigned to the meaning of the assertoric utterance, in opposition to the subjective nature of for instance, poetic meanings. In this way, Frege's semantics appeals to the distinction between 'objective' and 'subjective' representations. We observed, however, that those utterances that give rise to 'objective' representations that are either truthful or not, cannot rigidly be demarcated from those that lead to subjective representations that have nothing to do with truth in the same sense. We could however distinguish attitudes in interpretation, resulting in metaphorical or literal readings of a text. Metaphorical interpretation involved, at least in the more creative interpretations, the construction of a (possibly imaginary) context to which the text could be related. A few features of the latter attitude of interpretation could be characterized. It involves imaginative reflection and a willingness to search for and construct an interpretation. As such, metaphorical interpretation seems to result from an intentional act of interpretation. Further we saw that the possible contexts of interpretation could (but need not) diverge to great extent. Hence, the words that are interpreted allow for rather flexible understandings, and even a single interpreter may exploit such flexibility in a range of subsiding interpretations. As the property of metaphoricity cannot be identified as an exclusive property that is shared by all metaphorically interpreted texts or utterances, other than that these allow for such an interpretation, I now turn to the working of interpretation itself, and more specifically, to the cognitive processes that make it possible. In the present chapter and in the following one, I explore several accounts of cognition and cognizing, and discuss the possible light these theories shed on

[122] Cf. Frege[1977a]

the differences between literal and metaphorical interpretation. The question at stake, then, is whether the difference between conceptual understanding and metaphorical interpretation is motivated by a different use of cognitive faculties.

In the previous discussion it was emphasized that we lack a theory of imagination, if imagination is the faculty put to work in metaphorical interpretation. We saw that Ricoeur claims that metaphorical interpretation differs principally from understanding since it is based on the creative function of imagination. His theory of imagination, however, was found to be incomplete, since it does not present an explicit comparison of this functioning of imagination with the role of either perception or imagination in conceptual understanding. His understanding of imagination explicitly refers to Kant's concept of productive imagination, but, as we saw, also exhibits parallels to Kant's analysis of the reproductive imagination. In this chapter, I combine the search for a theory of imagination with a more thorough investigation of Kant's theory of imagination, and then reinvestigate whether any claims on the difference between metaphorical and literal interpretations follow. As I proceed in this discussion, the theory of imagination and of understanding as derived from the works of Kant is abandoned. Nevertheless it is clear that the outlined understanding of interpretation proposed in the final sections of this chapter is based upon the insights discussed here.

2 Imagination and judgement: the Critical Philosophy

For Kant, the faculty of imagination performs a different role in the two types of judgement he distinguishes. The first type consists of what is called determinant judgements, judgements that concern objective representations. The second type consists of reflective judgements, that is, judgements that concern the subjective representation of some perceived object. The role of the imagination in either is different, although prominent in both.

In determinant judgements, imagination is identified as the faculty that brings 'appearances' to concepts, and hence enables empirical knowledge. These appearances may stem from sense-impressions in perception, or from inner awareness, such as dreaming or hallucinating. The differences between these two types of appearances are not apparent in imagination itself, but depend, rather, on formal properties that are recognized in the conceptual organization of the representations. Imagination, here, is the faculty that produces and reproduces intuitive presentations, i.e. representations derived from the senses. The representation in imagination allow an intuitive presentations to be recognized under a concept; that is, that to be recognized as an instance of a given law. Empirical concepts are recognized through the analogy of a present intuitive presentation to formerly processed intuitive presentations, and hence the presentation is determined to be of a certain kind. This reproductive function of imagination lies at the heart of Kant's epistemology, for without it, empirical knowledge would be unattainable.

In reflective judgements, imagination plays a different role. Here, it does not only present a singular intuitive presentation, but, because of the lack of its immediate determination, imagination also generates other intuitive presentations to which the singular presentation can be compared, and may possibly result in a new, 'ad hoc law', a mock universal, which helps cognizing the representation without objectively determining it. Thus, the difference between the two functions of imagination is sometimes referred to as that between the reproductive and the productive imagination. The latter, productive imagination is described only in the *Critique of Judgement*, and its employment, as we will see, is restricted by Kant to specific instances of judgement.[123]

[123] The quotations from the *Critique of Judgement* (abbreviated as CoJ) are derived from the translation by Meredith, unless explicitly indicated otherwise. The quotations from *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Kemp Smith's translation.

The difference between the two types of judgements can be characterized as a difference between two ways of determining a representation: in determinant judgements, a general law prompts the recognition of a singular representation; in reflective judgement, the singular representation leads to the tentative creation of a would-be general law.

Kant's understanding of imagination as the faculty that mediates between thought and intuition gives rise to several problems, which we shall address below. The basis for his understanding of the role of imagination is given in the transcendental argumentation in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. With it, Kant wants to explain how it can be that we have knowledge through perception, that is, empirical knowledge, and as such it serves as an answer to the sceptic argument that we are never certain whether our sense-impressions (and hence our knowledge) are not the result of hallucinatory delusions. He develops the transcendental argument, the determination of the necessary conditions under which we may come to possess knowledge of the world, without presupposing either form or substance in the world. Thus, in the transcendental philosophy knowledge of the world is the result of the *a priori* conditions of our faculties of intuition and thought.[124]

Concepts are divisible in empirical concepts, which are based on the combination of perceptual representations, and pure concepts, which are in themselves 'empty logical forms' of a highly abstract nature. The first are accidental, based on experience. The second are necessary, and both their form and their existence are deduced in the transcendental philosophy. The first problem that Kant has to deal with, is the connection between experience and pure concepts. This connection is first analyzed in the Transcendental Deduction, and later developed in the Schematism Chapter, which are discussed in section 3. We consider here the problems that arise from the assumption of representations of intuitive content on the one hand, and of *a priori* concepts that organize such content on the other. The main problem, we shall see, is that intuitive presentations have to be accessible as intuitive presentations, so that they may be combined with other representations, but that they cannot be cognizable without inherent conceptual structure. Thus, in order to recognize the same dog, I have to keep the first manifold containing the dog 'alive' in order to form a concept of that dog, but I cannot recognize it, yet, as a perception of that dog, since the concept is not yet available. Thus, some representation seems to be presupposed as an intermediary between the conceptual representation and the initial act of perception.

---

[124] The transcendental argument, under this description, does not present any proof of an external world, but merely shows how it is possible that we can reason on the basis of its existence. Cf. Stroud[1982]

In this discussion, most of the time, I shall ignore the possibility of concepts that do not require experiential content, that is, I do not look into the status of what Kant calls the pure concepts, until in section 5.2 I consider a different understanding of these concepts. In the Schematism Chapter pure concepts are called empty logical forms, as long as they are not brought into connection with intuitive content. Thus, for example, some mathematical ideas become problematic, since it is disputable what their intuitive content is.[125] Although it is an important, and relevant problem, in this chapter I am primarily concerned with the work of imagination in understanding, and hence, along with Kant's analysis of imagination in the connection between concepts and experiential content.

Another restriction in the discussion is that I am not concerned with Kant's proof of the transcendental form of concepts. The following discussion is not intended to defend an interpretation of Kant's intentions, nor does it claim any exegetical value for whom wants to understand Kant's writings better. Rather the discussion of Kant's works is used as a stepping-stone to develop an understanding of imagination that might be useful in the analysis of metaphorical interpretation. I summarize how the first *Critique* might be relevant in such a way in section 3.4; a further speculation on the functioning of imagination based on the third *Critique* is elaborated in section 5.

An important issue that Kant has to deal with in his epistemology is how the individual subject can conceptually determine novel experience. The first *Critique* presents a model of the recognition of intuitive presentations under a concept. It takes the perspective of defining the possibility of objective knowledge, and thus determines the necessary form of human cognition; the efforts of the individual in coping with the world are not considered. The second problem Kant has to deal with, then, is the relation between individual cognizing and the universal character of knowledge.

It is only in the *Critique of Judgement* that Kant considers the act of judging as resulting from a separate faculty of judgement. Here, he presents a model for judgements that are not determinant in the sense of applying the rules laid out by *a priori* laws; instead these judgements arise from the subject's reflective powers in imagination. Kant distinguishes two instances in which imaginative reflection gives rise to subjective judgement: aesthetic judgements and teleological judgements. Imagination acquires a different function in these judgements. In imaginative reflection a given intuitive presentation is actively

[125] Some interpreters consider the requirement of intuitive presentation in a way that reminds of Russell's distinction between knowledge through description and knowledge through acquaintance (Russell[1905]). For instance, Laughlan Chipman points out that for most of us the empirical concept of 'bone-marrow' has itself no perceptual grounding, and is therefore problematic (Chipman[1982]).

compared to other representations, as the subject attempts to tentatively produce a concept within the imagination. Imagination here is not reproductive, but productive: it is both free and creative. The role of imagination and subjectivity in judgement, as they are described in the third *Critique*, are discussed in section 4 below.

The role of imagination in reflective judgement has been taken to indicate a greater importance of imagination for conceptual determination than the first *Critique* attributes to it, and hence, as an indication that productivity in imagination is not necessarily restricted to the two types of judgement that Kant singles out.[126] Since we were driven toward a theory of imagination mainly because traditional semantics situates metaphors and their meaning in the realm of the imaginative, the suggestion of imagination's possible relevance for conceptual understanding or literal interpretation could provide us with an insight in the relation between the two. I explore the suggested interpretation of Kant's theory of imagination in section 4.5, as well as its consequences for objectivity in judgement. Finally I turn to the relevance of the faculty of imagination as it emerges from the discussion for our investigation, and outline a possible understanding of the function of imagination in both literal and metaphorical interpretation in section 5.

[126] Cf. e.g. Mark Johnson[1987] pp 147; or Sarah Gibbons[1994] esp. pp 82. The latter account is discussed in chapter 2, section 4.5, and the former in section 3.1 above.

3 Kant's theory of imagination in the first *Critique*

3.1 The synthesis of imagination: The Transcendental Deduction-A

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* imagination is described as 'one of the fundamental faculties of the human soul' (A124).
It is however only in a very specific, and technical understanding that we may see it as such a fundamental faculty. The faculty of imagination mediates between intuition (the faculty that provides us with impressions from the senses) and thought (*Verstand*), by presenting the sense-impressions in an apprehensible form to the conceptual mind. Imagination is thus seen as the internalized presentation of sensory information, in such a form that it is apprehensible to a conceptual mind. It is called the reproductive imagination.
Two chapters in the first *Critique* are specifically concerned with the role of imagination. They are the Transcendental Deduction and the Schematism chapters. The first addresses the reproductive function of imagination, the second addresses its schematizing function.
In the Transcendental Deduction, two questions are at stake. The first is how sense-impressions acquire the form of conceptual knowledge; the second is how that knowledge can be found to be true and part of a whole of organized knowledge such as science presents us with.[127] Kant addresses both issues by deducing the conditions under which the human mind may conceptualize any perceptual information. That is, he deduces the nature of the mind, such that the organized whole of scientific knowledge may be the result of its working, i.e. he deduces the pure transcendental form of knowledge. There are two versions of the first *Critique*; the first, A-version of the first *Critique* offers an importantly different account of imagination in the Deduction than the B-version. I will discuss both accounts and their differences, as well as the development in thought that can be read from them. Then I will turn to the schematic function of the imagination, as described in the Schematism Chapter. After that I will turn to the *Critique of Judgement*, in which an altogether different function is assigned to imagination.
The goal of this discussion is to show how the Kantian dualism between faculties of thought (*Verstand*) and imagination leads to a problem with respect to issues of representation in the first *Critique*, since, according to the Transcendental Deduction, only strictly categorized 'objective' representations can belong to a conscious mind. I shall argue that in the third *Critique*, where

[127] That is: such as for instance Newtonian physics presented at Kant's time.

the function of imagination is restated, Kant seems to acknowledge those problems, but does not provide an altogether satisfactory solution.
In the A-Deduction, Kant begins his deduction of the transcendental form proper to the mind with the basic level of experience: the impressions of the senses. From there he deduces the necessary conditions the human mind must fulfil, in order to arrive from purely sensory appearances at the level of empirical knowledge. There are three basic synthetic acts that must be performed on the sense-impressions in order to arrive at a conceptual understanding of experience:

1 Apprehension in intuition

First the impressions from the senses must be conceived as a related whole: we relate all the single momentary representations. That is, we create a synthesis of all the impressions we have at one moment, and so arrive at an apprehensible manifold.

2 Reproduction in imagination

Second we have continuity in our perceptions; that means that in order to connect one manifold to another, we must be able to reproduce former impressions, in order to relate them to present impressions. Thus we perform a synthetic act of reproduction; this act takes place in the imagination.

3 Recognition in a concept in apperception

Third, we form a structured unity of representations. Therefore we need to recognize them as of a certain kind, synthesizing different temporal representations in a concept. Thus, in the synthesis of apprehension different manifolds are brought together under a concept.

The synthetic acts on the impressions are guided by *a priori* principles, that is, principles inherent to the human mind. In the second section of the A-Deduction Kant explains of each synthetic act what its pure transcendental form is: that is, he determines the properties of the mind that must precede any knowledge from experience.
The pure transcendental synthesis of the imagination, according to the deductive argument, is the 'productive imagination'.[128] The necessary function of the imagination is to reproduce former representations, so that they can be

[128] The use of the term here refers to the transcendental form of imagination: it produces time to the mind. The 'productive imagination' is defined differently in the *Critique of Judgement*, where it indicates the production of a subjective law. See section 4.3 below.

connected to our present representations. A necessary condition of our form of thought, i.e. a transcendental property of cognition, must then be that we have the *a priori* capability of reproducing past representations, before we have any representations. The pure transcendental imagination then must produce *time* to our understanding, that is, the same form devoid of any empirical content. By virtue of this act the synthetic, productive imagination is 'the ground of the possibility of all knowledge, especially of experience' (A118)

Where the unity of representations provided by the reproductive imagination is time, the unity of apperception is given by the synthesis of representations in a subject. This unity of the manifold within the subject is synthetic, and thus presupposes a possibility of combining the appearances in the manifold 'in one knowledge' (A118). The pure synthetic unity of apperception then must be the act of relating all representations to one consciousness; for 'intuitions are nothing to us, and do not in the least concern us if they cannot be taken up into consciousness'(A116).

This synthesis of manifolds is subject to rules, for if not, experience would be a mere matter of 'accidental collocations' (A121), and would not give rise to any knowledge. Further these rules must be grounded in the pure synthesis of apperception, otherwise it would be 'entirely accidental that appearances should fit into a connected whole of human knowledge'(A121). The subjective consciousness, that is the formal unity of the synthesis of apperception, applies the rules to structure the appearances. These rules are the categories, i.e. the rules by which the subjective consciousness determines the form of appearances. Through this recognition concepts are brought to experience, thus they 'render possible the formal unity of experience, and therewith objective validity (truth) of empirical knowledge'. (A125)

3.2 The relation between imagination and apperception in the A-Deduction

In A 102 Kant writes that the pure transcendental syntheses of reproduction and of apperception are 'inseparably bound up to one another'. The unity of experiential knowledge in one mind presupposes a possible structuring of all representations, and that is just what the productive imagination provides: the temporal ordering. Thus the transcendental unity of the apperception presupposes the productive imagination.

The logical presupposition of the transcendental synthesis of imagination can been understood in different ways, as is reflected by the many interpretations

of it.[129] One reading of the description of the syntheses is that it provides a description of stages of conceptualization, starting with sensory impressions, and leading to a conscious conceptual determination of the intuitive presentation. In view however of the second version of the Deduction, the distinction between these three synthetic acts is usually considered as a distinction between different aspects that are presupposed by a single spontaneous conceptual synthesis, and not as a description of chronological stages of conceptualization.[130]

Upon the first interpretation then, the relation of presupposition between the second and the third synthesis is also understood as a temporal ordering of the actual synthetic acts. Such an interpretation then leads to the claim that the imaginative synthesis is an independent stage in the process of conceptualizing experience.[131] More concretely we can put it this way: the mind must represent the temporally structured flow of manifolds, before the different synthesis of conceptually associating the appearances is performed.

Upon such an interpretation, the synthesis of imagination is not only logically presupposed by the conceptualized representations, but, going by the differing formal conditions for the two syntheses, it also involves qualitatively different representations. The form of the appearances in reproductive imagination is determined only by our senses and by the single formal condition of imagination: time. Imagination subsequently presents these but temporally ordered appearances in the inner sense to the conceptual mind; however in the intermediary stage the synthetic representations in imagination have not yet acquired any status of objective conceptual determination. Thus, this reading implies the possibility of representations that are first of all inherently subjective, and secondly pre-conceptual.

Concepts are described as rules in the A-Deduction, and understanding is called the 'faculty of rules' (A126). When rules are objective, that is , insofar as they necessarily depend on the knowledge of the object, they are called laws. Empirical concepts then are the laws learned through experience, but are instances of the laws of understanding nevertheless, since 'they are only special determinations of still higher laws, and the highest of these, under which the others all stand, issue *a priori* from the understanding itself' (A126).

---

[129] For an overview see e.g. Makkreel[1990] He discusses at length the different positions on the relation between the different syntheses (while maintaining that the logical relation of presupposition does in no way imply the possibility of representations that are not recognized under a concept).

[130] A brief discussion of the 'spontaneous synthetic act' described in the B-version, is given below.

[131] E.g. Gibbons[1994]. Argumentations for a separate pre-conceptual synthesis of the imagination naturally focus on the A-Deduction. Gibbons however also cites passages in the B-Deduction that suggest at least an unclarity on this point on Kant's part. For a discussion, see section 4.5 below.

The representations thus determined by understanding are of a different formal nature than the associations in imagination: their formal condition is not that they have been perceived at some time, but that they have been identified by one consciousness as being of the same kind as other representations of former intuitions. Hence, conceptualized representations are the result of a determinant judgement, performed in the synthesis of apperception.[132]

Since the aim was to describe how objective knowledge is possible, the possibility of maintaining any other than objective representations in his theory should be highly unwelcome, since it would provide the occasion to doubt whether a representation is indeed objective or simply a result of some arbitrary association of representations. The solution to this problem in the A-Deduction is twofold. First, all representations that result from the synthesis in imagination have to be conceptualized. In A 122 Kant says that the rule-based affinity of appearances is a necessary consequence of the synthesis of imagination. The second, much stronger argument against non-objective representations, is his claim that without the attribution of the synthesis of appearances to *one* mind, these would belong to some 'empirical consciousness', in a so-called 'state of separation' (A122). The latter state, of conscious experience without self-consciousness, Kant maintains is impossible, since we are always aware (or can become so at any point) that it is us that have a representation. Hence: 'The abiding and unchanging 'I' (pure apperception) forms the correlate of all our representations in so far as it is to be at all possible that we should become conscious of them' (A123). Thus the subjective unity of the apperception is a necessary condition for any conscious representation. Kant concludes that any representation necessarily fits the categories of the subjectively conscious mind, or else we would not be capable of being conscious of it. In this way the order and regularity of nature, and hence the objectivity of knowledge is introduced by the subject (A126). The objectivity of knowledge is secured by the pure synthesis of apperception, where the introduction of the subject's awareness of any representation equals its conceptualization. In other words: only objective knowledge can be maintained consciously by a subjective mind.

---

[132]This point is made in Gibbons[1994]. In her discussion of the A-Deduction Gibbons emphasizes the distinction between the synthetic unity of appearances and the conceptualized knowledge; the former belonging to imagination, the latter to understanding. The study uses Kant's understanding of imagination and reflective judgement in the *Kritik der Urteilskraft* to reinterpret some passages in the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*. In view of other passages of the first *Critique*, the noted distinction takes a more subtle form than in the argument presented here. For instance when considering the schematic function of the categories, Kant claims that the synthetic unity produced in imagination is necessarily subjected to the transcendental form of the categories. The point to be made there, upon Gibbons' interpretation, is that these forms are produced in imagination, and thus establish priority of imagination over apperception. (Cf. the discussion in section 3.3).

The attempt to finally bring all empirical content, be it derived from syntheses in imagination, intuition or apperception, under the systematic ordering of the transcendental categories is clear. For if Kant would, in this context, allow for subjective representations apart from the 'objectivized' conceptual knowledge, the objective grounds of human knowledge and science cannot be secured. The argumentation shows that the assumption of a separate synthesis in imagination is deemed problematic, and yet it is not dismissed at this point. In the line of reasoning of the A-Deduction, certainly when considered as an isolated passage, that is not hard to understand. On the one hand, imagination is appointed as the origin of the formal condition for empirical knowledge, i.e. time; on the other hand it should not interfere with objective knowledge. Thus, two conceptions of imagination seem to play a role here: the first is its important innovative role of mediator between senses and mind; the second is that of imagination as a delusive source of mistaken beliefs, a conception that indeed pervades the history of philosophy.[133] To summarize the problem that is posed once more: on the one hand reproductive imagination must be capable to represent former manifolds in order to associate them to present manifolds and thus render time possible as produced as the transcendental form of knowledge; while on the other hand, the assumption of pre-conceptual, entirely subjective representations might give rise to a sceptic view of empirical knowledge. Possibly such considerations led to the second version of the Transcendental Deduction, in which the independent functioning of imagination is ruled out, in favour of the overall dominance of conceptual thought.

In the B-Deduction the order of deducing is reversed: it starts with the subjective mind, and works its way down from the 'intellectual synthesis' to the 'figurative synthesis'. Of course in this order it would be hard to leave any ground of synthetic, perceptual representations uncovered by the intellect; and indeed in this deduction the imagination becomes a 'function of the understanding' (B151). The original description of imagination as an intermediary between sense and thought is replaced by a description of imagination rendering a secondary, spontaneous synthesis, after the intellectual synthesis (compare apperception) has taken place.

Thus, in the second version of the Transcendental Deduction, the link between consciousness and self-consciousness is further emphasized. Since the transcendental form of all conscious knowledge is that its representations are

[133] For an overview see for instance McMullin[1996] on the history of theories of imagination and philosophical (dis)approval; for a discussion of the historical innovative value of Kant's theory of imagination see Mörchen[1970]; and finally, for its innovative potential for philosophy in our time, see Strawson[1971].

related to one mind, there cannot be any conscious representation of (empirical) knowledge that is not related to the objectivizing, categorizing subject.

It is only in the Schematism Chapter, that Kant addresses the intermediary role of the imagination in detail, with respect to how the categories apply to appearances. He describes the form the imaginative mediation must take with regard to specific concepts, through the transcendental analysis of the formal properties of appearances in imagination, that allow them to be recognized as belonging under a concept. The status of this description is a subject of much discussion. Some interpretations insist on its being superfluous after the Deductions, and even that by it, the pure transcendental deduction is set into a dangerously psychologistic daylight. Others claim it is the place where the objective of the Deductions is finally realized, and where the relation between the two stems of knowledge is finally established.[134]

3.3 The Schematism Chapter: the intermediating imagination

In the Schematism Chapter Kant describes how the categories are brought to bear upon the intuitive presentations in the inner sense. He calls the procedure of application of pure concepts the 'schematism of pure understanding' (A140/B179), and the formal conditions of sensibility to which the employment of the concept is restricted the 'schema' of the concept. Schematizing is a crucial part in the process of empirical judging, since it connects the pure *a priori* concepts to intuition. Further 'the schema of sensible concepts [...] is a product and, as it were, a monogram of pure *a priori* imagination' (A142/B181). Thus concepts are applied to intuitive representations through the use of imagination.

The argumentation is as follows. Kant has analysed the transcendental form of the synthetic unity of manifolds in imagination. The pure form of all concepts has also been deduced in the previous chapters. He can now go on to deduce the formal conditions of sensibility insofar a concept of understanding may be applied to it. The goal of the Schematism Chapter is then to describe how the transcendental categories can be translated in transcendental forms of intuition, and thus, how the 'affinity', or the objective ground of all association of appearances mentioned in the Transcendental Deduction can be explained (A122) as a condition of sensibility itself.

As we saw in the previous section, the association of appearances in the manifold was performed by the faculty of imagination. Also, understanding, or

[134] For an overview and discussion, see Allison[1983].

rather, the synthetic unity of apperception, was deduced as providing the necessary form of all empirical knowledge, even if the logical order is that the synthesis in imagination precedes that in apperception. The Schematism Chapter now explains how it is possible that understanding actually can be the lawgiver to this synthesis. It explains, in other words, how the pure synthesis of imagination already contains the pure forms of the concepts.

In order to do this, Kant argues that the pure form of the concepts should *a priori* be applied to, or determined in, the pure form of imagination: time.

Every representation in imagination is connected through time. Furthermore, time is transcendentally determined: it is both universal and *a priori*. Thus the transcendental form of concepts can be translated into the *a priori* possible temporal form, and thereby any representation will be determined through the concepts. Consequently Kant analyses the temporal, schematic form of the categories. The transcendental schema of quantity, for instance, is analysed by giving the possible divisions into homogeneous parts of intuition in time; the schema of modality is the way an object belongs to time, determining its persistence; and so forth.

The schemata of empirical concepts are derived from these transcendental forms of sensibility, just as the concepts are derived from the laws of understanding. The degree of abstraction of a schema can vary, as it does for a concept. Be it the concept of 'dog', 'triangle' or 'time', each receives its content through schematic imagination or there would be no objective meaning to it. Thus Kant defines the schema of a concept as a 'representation of a universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept' (B179/A140).

The image that a schema can provide for a concept can never be the representation of the 'sensible concept' itself, since an image could never attain the universality of a concept (A141/B180). For instance, in order for me to recognize a dog, I must have some general, schematic procedure appending to my concept of dogs, which allows me to 'delineate a four-footed animal in a general manner, without limitation to any single determinate figure such as experience, or any possible image that I can represent in concreto, actually presents' (B180/A141).

Thus, the schema is not the image represented. Kant writes: 'This schematism of our understanding [...] is an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze' (A141/B180). The schema of a pure concept, that is, devoid of objective content, can never be brought into any image: It is 'simply the pure synthesis [...] to which the category gives expression. It is a transcendental product of imagination, a product which concerns the determination of inner sense [...]' (A142/B181). And hence a

schema is 'only the phenomenon, or the sensible concept, of an object in agreement with the category' (A146/B186).

Schemata are the conditions the subjective mind brings to intuition; they determine the form of our possible experience, and therewith of our possible knowledge. In the Deduction all representations were related to self-consciousness; the possibility of consciously having an intuitive, non-conceptualized representation was denied. In the Schematism Chapter this restriction is consolidated by attributing conformity with the rules of understanding to the synthesis in imagination. Furthermore in the same chapter the rules of understanding are themselves restricted, insofar as they are to bring objective knowledge about, to where they can be schematically applied.

Thus, Kant here denies that pure concepts have any objective content. Concepts without the possibility of sensible form are pure logical form, and have no objective meaning whatsoever. The possibility of knowledge (in opposition to that of understanding) is limited by the possibility of application to experience. Thus objective concepts are subjected to restricting conditions. These are the schemata, which are not part of understanding, but are due to sensibility. The limited space of schematized representations is then the only possible source of objective knowledge.

Interestingly, he claims that a pure concept without any possible sensible determination would retain a meaning; however: it would ' acquire no meaning which might yield a concept of some object' (A147/B186). He continues with the example of the concept of substance: this concept, 'when the sensible determination of permanence is omitted, would simply mean a something which can be thought only as subject, never as a predicate of something else. Such a representation [...] tells me nothing as to the nature of that which is thus to be viewed as a primary subject'. In this passage, a concept of an object is directly equated to meaningful predication- and thus it suggests that the meaning of a predicate in language is the same as that of a determinant concept.[135]

Taking into consideration only the synthetic account of the A-Deduction the syntheses would appear as different stages in the conceptualization of sense-impressions. We could speculate that imagination had a different, autonomous position in producing intuitive presentations in inner sense, and that in imagination pre-conceptual representations could be contained. Kant excludes the possibility of such representations by attributing them to an 'empirical consciousness', separate from the self. Speculatively, this formulation leaves open the possibility of *unconscious* representations. Indeed, it seems all but a

[135] Cf. the discussion in section 4.4 below.

necessary assumption that imagination unconsciously maintains associations of appearances in order to allow for the synthesis of apperception that introduces the possibility of conscious awareness. With the description of the schematic function of the concepts this speculation is rendered senseless: the conformity with understanding is already produced in the transcendental imagination itself.

Following the Schematism Chapter we must then interpret the synthesis in imagination in such a way that the schematized form of representations is conform to the transcendental categories. Time itself is not of the conceptual order, nor is it an intuitive concept. It is a product of pure transcendental imagination, and the categories can be expressed in terms of temporal order. However, in view of the conformity of pure imagination with understanding, why maintain that understanding is of an independent nature? If the transcendental categories can be described in terms of productive imagination, then could the faculty of understanding not be described as an extrapolation of the faculty of imagination? The argument that pure concepts do have some meaning, even when they do not have objective content, illustrates what understanding brings to intuitive presentation such that it may result in empirical knowledge: it provides all possible logical forms of concepts. And even if we can deduce such forms only from our empirical concepts, that we can do so, and not otherwise, shows that they are *a priori* conditions of representation.

We can view the Schematism Chapter as placing the faculty of imagination at the core of the transcendental doctrine. It at once restricts imagination's form of representation, and the meaning of pure concepts. Nevertheless since pure imagination produces the necessary *a priori* form of appearances imagination seems to have acquired a determinant task that is not fully attributable to imagination alone. Hence, imagination merely renders representations with 'conformity' to the categories, and not with conceptual determination. The second version of the Deduction that regards the 'figurative synthesis' as a spontaneous agreement of appearances to the categories then seems to capture the role of imagination in the *Critique of Pure Reason* best: it simply postulates its schematizing function, indeed as 'an art concealed'.

3.4 Reproductive imagination and metaphorical interpretation

Now that the roles of imagination that may be interpreted from the *Critique of Pure Reason* have been differentiated, it is time to return to the initial problem, and see if Kant's understanding of reproductive imagination could help explain imagination's role in the process of metaphorical interpretation.

First of all, we saw that intuition, and the resulting representations in imagination, for Kant are vital for any type of knowledge. Thus, although the conceptual organization of the categories determines the possible *form* of any representation, imagination plays a role in each and every conscious thought we may have. However, it is inconceivable without conceptual form. Further, imagination remains a 'blind force', and is 'hidden in the depth of the human soul'. Kant's understanding of imagination as the faculty that brings content to concepts, and is thus active in each conceptual act is not a usual contemporary understanding of the word 'imagination', since mostly it is taken to imply the occurrence of imagery, or of creative thinking.[136] In the first *Critique*, then, it is used to indicate a fundamental, but invisible faculty.

The invisibility of imagination is in essence brought forward in the Transcendental Deduction, where consciousness or awareness is tied to self-consciousness and objective determination. Any representation that I am aware of, is necessarily part of a structured whole of conceptual knowledge, and I can only become aware of any representation in such conceptualized form. Thus, the possibility of becoming aware of representations in imagination is ruled out, and imagination's functions can thenceforth only be deduced from conceptually determined representations.

Kant thus investigates the conditions under which intuitive content can be conceptualized, and therewith establishes to what extent the intuitive presentations are consciously accessible. However, certain questions remain unanswered in this investigation. The first of these is how empirical concepts can be created and then revised, that is, how it is possible that representations that are objectively determined in understanding according to *a priori* laws can be altered consciously, after reconsideration. This point is of course highly relevant for progress in science: how can scientists discover new empirical laws and correct old ones, if these are merely the instantiation of *a priori* universal understanding? Kant addresses this issue in the *Critique of Judgement*; and I consider his answers in the following section.

The second question concerns the status of imaginative representations. According to Kant in the first *Critique* these representations cannot be consciously maintained unless they have a determinate conceptual identity. The intuitive content of conceptual knowledge was described, in the end, as a result of a 'spontaneous synthesis' of intuition and understanding, where understanding determines the form of all sensible presentations. However, since intuitive content of a concept involves the reproduction of previous intuitions, these must be represented somehow, somewhere, waiting to be

[136] The previously mentioned study Strawson[1971] presents a brief but insightful discussion on the relation between these and other understandings of 'imagination', including Hume's definition.

combined with other representations under a concept. Thus, some understanding of *pre-conceptual* representation in imagination seems inescapable within Kant's epistemology, even if these remain hidden 'in the depths of the human soul'. From the first *Critique* a speculation on a 'subconscious' storage of intuitive presentations does not seem far off. I return to this topic later, in the discussion of the third *Critique*, in which Kant analyses the possibility of subjective imaginative representations. We may note here, how the possibility of maintaining imaginative representations, as escaping objective determination, was presupposed in several of the approaches to metaphorical interpretation discussed in the former chapter.

As we saw, Frege does in no way deny that language expresses subjective thought, feelings and images. He does however deny that these have any importance for conceptual or propositional content that can be meaningfully shared between people. They form the subjective part of meaning. The division between imaginative and propositional content also appears in Davidson[1984] discussed above. Davidson assumes that images, that is percepts, and conceptual thoughts are intrinsically different, since there is a difference in appearance and in the sort of information that both may contain. The line of thought in this article was taken up by Rorty, who claims that in general most of our perceptions concern unsystematic, non-conceptualized noises. Conceptual determination then involves the process of recognizing and identifying such representations under a concept. Both Davidson and Rorty, then, seem to defend a difference between conceptual representation and non-conceptual awareness. This would imply a level of conscious representation in imagination, which is not captured by conceptual thought, and thus not (yet) part of objective knowledge, but part of some other type of conscious representation (which we may not rightly call 'knowledge'). Thus, the subjective mind is held to be capable of representing something other than fully conceptualized, objective representations.

In an encouraging paper, Strawson remarks that the conception of imagination by Kant is one that might well be considered in semantics, as it addresses how words are related to what we perceive by conceptualization of intuitive presentations; hence the strong division between images and words might prove less rigid than semantics usually assumes.[137]

Indeed, in the more recent cognitive approaches to metaphorical interpretation the notion of schema and of non-conceptualized representation play a role. Indurkhya proposes the representation of a 'senso-motoric data set'. Such perceptual data are represented in association with the concepts they

[137] Cf. Strawson[1971]. The article, of course, is directed against the type of semantics that was common at the time of publication.

instantiate, and which in turn are associated with terms in language. In the interpretation of metaphor these perceptual representations are evoked, and thus present the basis for a novel conceptualization. The assumption of this basic level of representation is however hardly motivated, since Indurkhya generally refrains from the articulation of conditions of such representation and of its accessibility on whichever level. The relations between words, concepts, and perceptual memory is thus not explained in this model but assumed as primary.

A philosophical account of the relation between words and perceptual representations can be read from the comparison of Ricoeur's theory with Kant's epistemology. Ricoeur is the only author discussed above who explicitly pays attention to the relations between language, mental images and concepts, and how these partake in a view of reality. In his view 'icons', imaginative representations that are half image, half thought, are inherent to the meaning of a word. In metaphorical interpretation these icons are evoked and thereby provide the basis for new combinations of imaginative representations. Thus, a word does not simply express a concept, but it is related to imaginative representations. Other than Indurkhya, Ricoeur does not interpret these representations as some sort of residue from former perceptions, since they may actively be construed on the basis of a newly formed icon.

In his theory Ricoeur emphasises the analogy of metaphorical schematization to Kant's notion of combination of intuitive presentations in a concept, when he speaks of the 'verbal icon'.[138] By this analogy, the icon provides a representational content to words, just as the schema furnishes a concept with images. Thus, although word-meanings are of an abstract, conceptual nature, they are mediated by imaginative representations that are not concrete images themselves. However, the icon functions differently than the schema from the first *Critique*, since Ricoeur emphasizes how the icon is 'contemplated', and may lead to a novel meaning for the word. Icons, for Ricoeur, are consciously maintained image-like representations that are re-applied in the process of interpreting. As we saw, schemata function as a blind force, mediating between sense and intuition, and only the resulting schematized representations are consciously maintained. The icon then must be something other than the concealed imaginative application procedure of a concept, which the schema is for Kant. Thus, the conscious character of the 'contemplation of the icon' is in conflict with the above definition of schemata in the first *Critique*.

Furthermore icons are not fully conceptually determined. They become determined in interpretation only insofar as iconic representations are constructed by the interpreter as part of a 'world-vision', that is, a

[138] Cf. 207 and further, Ricoeur[1993]

conceptualization of reality as a whole. Thus the iconic function of imagination produces schematized but not determinate representations, which could then not be the result of determinant judgement. Hence, Ricoeur's proposal of 'iconic meanings' is not captured within the framework of the first *Critique*. In the following sections, I consider whether the theory of imagination developed in the third *Critique* may suit this purpose better.

In the third *Critique*, Kant reconsiders the status of objective judgements as the sole constituents of empirical knowledge. He finds that subjective reflection on both the world with its empirical laws, and on the act of judging itself results in a different type of judgements: reflective judgements. These subjective judgements are not the result of the 'mechanical' application of universal laws that lead to determinant, objective judgements. Instead, they involve the reflective powers of the individual, who in this case designs the laws that apply to his particular experience. These subjectively designed laws are not automatically derived from the *a priori* universal laws, even if they must conform to them.

The process of iconic contemplation that Ricoeur describes may then better be compared to this process of reflective judgement, which Kant describes only in the third *Critique*. Here, as we will see below, the representations of the object judged are not fully, conceptually determined, but nonetheless they are the result of an act of schematization. In reflective judgement, representations are determined through 'indeterminate concepts', along rational ideas of the world, the supersensible or the aesthetic. There is a parallel, it seems, between Ricoeur's notion of 'world visions' that are at stake in metaphorical interpretation, and subjective judgements that are formed to organize the multitude of intuitive presentations that are objectively determined.

Below I discuss Kant's analysis of the 'concepts' that are applied in subjective judgements, and more specifically the notion of 'indeterminate concepts' that Kant brings up in the analysis of aesthetic judgements. The relation between determinant judgements as defined in the first *Critique* and subjective judgements as defined in the third *Critique*, it will become clear, is sometimes problematic. The notion of imaginative representations as non-conceptual representations recurs in this discussion, as Kant discusses the possibility of an 'internal intuition'. In the conclusion in section 5 I return to the general subject of this investigation, and consider to what extent the discussion of Kant's theory of imagination presented in the *Critique of Judgement* may help to characterize the process of metaphorical interpretation in terms of cognitive processes and representations.

4 The faculty of judgement and productive imagination in the third *Critique*

4.1 Systematicity of knowledge in the first Critique

In the first *Critique*, empirical judgements follow from the recognition of intuitions under a concept. Such concepts are empirical concepts, which are derived from the schematic application of universal laws to particular experiences. In this way Kant attempts to build a bridge between experiential content of knowledge, and its universal, *a priori* character. As we saw, in empirical judgements, the categories are applied in a concrete way; through schematic combination of intuitive presentations empirical concepts result which are less abstract than the categories themselves. The first *Critique* thus explains how universal laws can be recognized through the schematic application of the categories. So far, there is no need to postulate any other capability than the recognition and schematization of regularities of nature as experienced.

In addition to the single conformity of particular events to universal laws however, our empirical knowledge also exhibits systematicity: the empirical concepts and laws that we recognize are interrelated and organized. What is then not yet explained, is how empirical laws can be designed and connected with one another into an orderly whole. For if nature would be entirely chaotic, we would still recognize certain empirical laws, but would never be able to connect them in anything other than an arbitrary aggregate. Therefore, in the study of nature we presuppose that it is rule-governed or regular in itself. This regulation of nature cannot be derived from nature itself, for we have no knowledge of nature in itself, i.e. independent from our perception of it. Thus, in judgements, we assign certain regularities and systematicity to nature. That is, when we make judgements about nature, we are guided by the assumption of a regulative principle, and we judge our particular intuitions as conforming to such regularity. In the first *Critique*, Kant assigns such regulation to reason: 'Just as the understanding unifies the manifold in the object by means of concepts, so reason unifies the manifold of concepts by means of ideas, positing a certain collective unity as the goal of the activities of the understanding, which otherwise are concerned solely with distributive unity' (A644/B672). The regulative ideas then form the universal laws of reason (*Vernunft*), and perform their work on the universal laws of understanding (*Verstand*).

The ideas of reason in question are the idea of the soul, of the world and of God. These ideas, however, have no objective value, and hence do not introduce objects that are to be perceived. Rather, they are 'speculative Ideas', which do not constitute but regulate our understanding of the world. The regulative force of reason is summarized in the assumption of the logical principles that govern the formation of systematic unity: specification, homogeneity and continuity. The combination of these principles ensures that the particular concepts in understanding can coexist (hence specificity) but are combined under more generic laws (hence homogeneity). The principle of continuity then ensures that the concepts are interrelated systematically through gradual increase or decrease of the level of diversity. In other words: 'only through the process of ascending to the higher genera or descending to the lower species do we obtain the idea of a systematic connection in its completeness' (A658/B686).

This completeness however, is no more than a logical presupposition on our part, and has no objective grounds. 'We ought to believe that we have approximated completeness in the employment of the [regulative] principle, only in proportion as we are in a position as to verify such unity in empirical fashion- a completeness which is never, of course, attainable' (A692/B720). However, we necessarily adopt such principles of reason, providing us with the speculative unity of knowledge, since they enable the spontaneous determination of intuition as instances of universal laws.

The three ideas mentioned above, then present the unity that reason necessarily assumes in the fields of psychology (the soul), cosmology (the world), or theology (God). Thus, for instance, we view nature *as if* it was designed by a higher intelligence, and as such *as if* it has an end (*Zweck*). To assume however that the Ideas are not merely hypothetical, but constitutive (i.e. that nature in fact received its purpose from God), Kant argues, is evidence of either perverse or lazy reasoning. I will not go further into this argumentation; however, it does have many important consequences, questions about the existence of God being among the foremost. A consequence that interests us here, lies in the understanding of universality of conceptual laws. Parallel to the absolute unity of knowledge, the universality of concepts can only exist in reason, and never be attained through the understanding of intuition. Universals, then, have no objective status. Hence reason is the ultimate legislator of understanding, since it dictates the universals under which the conceptual unity in apperception is subsumed- which leads to the problematic notion of empirical laws as 'synthetic *a priori*'.[139]

[139] Cf. Gibbons[1994]. I often draw on Gibbons' analysis, which is discussed in section 4.5 below.

4.2 Knowledge of contingency in the third Critique

In the third *Critique*, Kant returns to the regulative principles governing the systematic unity of knowledge. Here however, he is not satisfied with the mere necessity of a systematic unity in our conceptual understanding as provided by reason. In our experience there are many particular intuitions that do not meet the described spontaneous conceptualization, for nature has a greater contingency than we can analytically determine.

We can conceive, for instance, of a systematic description of organisms in which grass is conceived as the means through which cows can sustain, so that they can serve humans as a meal. On the other hand, we can follow Linnaeus' order, in which herbivores serve to allow a greater diversity of weeds to grow, while carnivores serve to regulate the number of herbivores. The two systems position humans at a different point in a chain of causality. The 'mechanics' of nature, which understanding allows us to determine, cannot settle the differences between the two systems. Rather, the choice between the two depends upon our conception of nature as a whole.

In order to meet this type of cognizing, Kant distinguishes between two types of judgement: determinant and reflective judgements. The first type is the one encountered in our discussion of the first *Critique*: determinant judgements, in which universal laws are spontaneously met by intuition. These involve determination along such formal relations as 'all change has its cause', which amount to something Kant calls the 'mechanics' of nature. Determinant judgements are made under 'universal laws apart from which nature in general (as an object of sense) cannot be thought. These rest on the categories as applied to the formal conditions of all intuition possible for us' (183). In concrete empirical judgements, objects then have the capacity of 'being causes in an infinite variety of ways; and each of these modes must, on the concept of a cause in general, have its rule, which is a law, and, consequently, imports necessity' (183). However, due to our limited faculties of cognition, we may entirely fail to see this necessity and thus the 'infinite variety' delivers us with a confusing amount of specific empirical contingencies.

The way we try to find consistency in these empirical contingencies is by adopting the *a priori* principle of 'objective finality', that is, the principle that an object's possibility can only be intelligible for us by the assumption of its being designed according to a certain represented rule. That is: in service of our gaining knowledge, we assign a purpose to what we encounter. Since we are not capable of any objective knowledge of nature's purposes, we make empirical judgements on the basis of a subjective assumption of such finality.

This second type of judgement then is reflective judgement. Here the subject reflects on the particular in order to conceive of a universal under which it may

be subsumed. Through the assumption of a principle of 'finality of nature' as a guideline in our empirical judgements, we can make meaningful distinctions and generalizations in judgements on nature. Nonetheless, these rest upon nature itself, in other words: nature specifies itself. For instance, Kant mentions that when Linnaeus classified a lump of stone as 'granite', he could expect that the next similar lump would not exhibit different properties.

On the basis of subjective reflection, then, a principle such as that 'humans are in service of nature's diversity' mentioned above can be developed. But it is only in the light of the explanatory system of herbs-herbivores-carnivores (in whichever order of purposiveness) that the general concept of 'herbivore' makes sense.

Thus, Kant writes 'We may and should explain all products and events of nature, even the most purposive, so far as in our power lies, on mechanical lines [...] But in so doing we must never lose sight of the fact that among such products there are those which we cannot even subject to investigation except under the conception of an end of reason' (415).

An important difference between this approach and the one in the first *Critique* lies in the role of reason. The third *Critique* makes a distinction between subjective reasoning, which is the reflection on a possible general law that captures a given representation, and objective judgement, where the representation is judged as an instance of a given universal. Kant analyses two types of subjective judgements. The first is where the subject is concerned with the systematic unity of empirical concepts, which he had already touched upon in the discussion in the first *Critique*. The second type is where the subject is concerned with its own cognitive powers, in aesthetic judgements. They are each elaborated in the two books of the *Critique of Judgement*: the Critique of Aesthetic Judgement and the Critique of Teleological Judgement. In the first book, Kant analyses aesthetic judgements as a type of judgement that only involves the subject's capacity to deal with the sensible form of intuition. In aesthetic judgements the subject is only concerned with the pleasure of entertaining a certain representation, and not with the determination of an object represented. The representation, then, is judged only on the grounds of its suitability for our cognitive faculties.

In the second book, Kant investigates the teleological explanation of nature, and how the principle of finality is used in relation to determinant understanding. Thus, the object is determined only with respect to the subjective reflection on its purpose.

The two types of judgement are related through the subjective powers of representation, since neither determines the representation objectively. Reflection upon these representations, both in aesthetic and teleological judgements, is guided by the principles of reason. In teleological judgements,

reason provides the assumption of necessity of contingent appearances, through the *a priori* assumption of purposiveness of objects of nature. In aesthetic judgements, reason provides the *a priori* purposiveness of the form of representations with respect to our cognitive faculties. Reason, then, in the third *Critique*, is more than mere legislator of understanding, since in reflective judgement reason itself provides the laws to subjectively determine intuitive representations.

4.3 Reflective Judgement

So far, three types of judgement were presented that appear in the third *Critique*. First there are the determinant, or objective, judgements that are the result of the schematic application of the categories. These, as was put in the previous paragraph, appear now as judgements on the 'mechanics' of nature, involving mainly the formal application of the categories to intuitions, which cannot be thought in another form. They are a matter of recognizing certain representations as an instance of a necessary law. The second and third types of judgement are both instances of reflective judgement: teleological and aesthetic judgements. Teleological judgements involve subjective representations of the object as belonging to a certain empirical concept. The representations are subjective, since the empirical concept has only come into being on the basis of reflection on its place in the presupposed systematicity or organization of nature. An example was given above in the carnivore-herbivore-herbs system (which Kant discusses in §82). In such classification, a cow is judged as if it were designed for the purpose of holding this place in the classification, which allows us, for instance, to meaningfully distinguish cows from humans (and not merely 'mechanically'). Next to its subjective character, teleological judgement is also objective in a sense, since it is concerned with the determination of objects. However, this 'subjective objectivity' is speculative, and may be revised in the light of new empirical material. Generally, in reflective judgement, intuitive presentations are judged in such a manner that the judgement is in harmony with the whole of knowledge. Since the need for this harmony is but a subjective presupposition, such judgements are subjective.

The second type of subjective judgements stems from the faculty of *aesthetic* judgement, and so far these have remained largely undiscussed. Aesthetic judgements are merely concerned with the fact whether a representation is pleasant or not. If it is pleasant, this pleasure must be the result from a felt harmony between the faculties of understanding and imagination. That is, the representation is judged *as if* it were made for our faculty of judgement. If it

'fits' our possible conceptualization, a feeling of pleasure results. Thus, the harmony of our faculties is crucial in this type of judgements even more than in teleological judgements, since here the only goal of the judgement is to establish whether the representation 'fits' our cognition. In the aesthetic judgement we are merely concerned with the effect of the intuited object on our faculty of cognizing, and are in no way concerned with the determination of the object itself. Hence the intuitive presentation is never finitely determined in the judgement and receives no objective content. The subject is not concerned with what the object is, but is interested only in the effect of its representation.

Kant distinguishes between the judgements of the beautiful and those of the sublime. The latter do not interest us much here, since they do not deal with the relation between understanding and imagination, which is the topic of our discussion. They are in fact analysed as the result of the failure of such relation, a failure that prompts us to see the sublime as the manifestation of a possible greater mind or imagination, and that is where subjective finality comes in. Only the principles of reason (i.e. the idea of the supersensible) can explain the representation of something we cannot determine. The sublime is 'absolutely great', that is too big for our imagination and hence formless. The feeling that the sublime arouses is a sense of awe.

Judgements of beauty however lead to a pleasant feeling, based on the harmonious interplay between imagination and understanding that results from the representation of the beautiful object. Thus Kant speaks of a formal 'subjective finality' (221) or a finality of the object as perceived in it 'apart from the representation of an end' (236). The subject experiences the 'bare form of finality' (221): it looks upon the representation *as if* it were designed for the subject's representative powers. In other words, the subject reflects on the possibility of assigning an end to the representation, as a form we can cognize, and not on the end of the represented object. In judgements of the beautiful then, understanding does not dictate the law to imagination's representations. Rather, imagination is engaged in free play to try out different possible laws on the representation. Since the subject is not interested in determining the object, but merely in its formal representation, imagination exhibits 'only a conformity to law without a law' (241).

Judgements of taste, whether of the sublime or of the beautiful, are the third type of judgement that Kant discerns. They are the subjective judgements with no objective content whatsoever. The role of imagination here is extended from the reproductive role of answering to concepts, to a *productive* imagination

'exerting an activity on its own (as originator of arbitrary forms of possible intuitions)' (240).[140]

We can illustrate this productive role of imagination with Kant's appreciation of wild nature. In the same section (General Remark, §22), Kant explains why a neatly organized pepper-garden easily becomes boring, while the 'wilderness of Sumatra' would be of interest for a longer time. The reason is that imagination encounters a wealth of material in Sumatra to represent in its 'arbitrary forms', while the garden, made according to rules of understanding, runs out of different possible forms very quickly. Thus, the more possible forms can be recognized in intuitive presentations, the longer imagination may run free, and the greater our aesthetic interest in the presentation will be.

The definition of these imaginative representations in judgements of taste seems in conflict with the identification of consciousness and self-consciousness with objectivity in the first *Critique*. For according to the first *Critique* there are no conscious representations that are not fully determined through the schematic function of the categories. Now, in aesthetic judgements, we consider intuitive presentations under the aspect of *form*. Such considerations can hardly be conducted without conscious access to the representations that possess such form. Thus, here we find a type of conscious representations that lack objective determination.

The problem, then, is how in aesthetic judgement we can have a conscious representation that is at once subjected to the *a priori* conditions of conscious representation, as analysed in the first *Critique*, and is not conceptually determined, as defined by the third *Critique*. This question is directly addressed in the first General Remark (§22), where Kant explains the free imagination's 'conformity to law without a law', and hence the determination according to an 'indeterminate concept' (341). The conditions for conscious representation are fulfilled, since the representations are represented conform to understanding generally. Thus, Kant says that 'the freedom of imagination consists precisely in the fact that it schematizes without a concept' (287). But what does a representation schematized through an indeterminate concept amount to? Is such a representation mere material of imagination, and could it thus be identified with the notion of imaginative meaning that we encountered in Ricoeur's theory of iconicity? Does an indeterminate imaginative representation play any role in our understanding, in that it, for instance, at a later point may be determined conceptually? And, finally, does an indeterminate representation bear any connection to the yet unexplained

[140] 'arbitrary' is the translation of 'willkürlichen' ; which is sometimes also translated as 'chosen' (e.g. by Pluhar).

availability of former intuitions, the assumption of which we recognized as a consequence of Kant's analysis in the first *Critique*?
Some answers to these questions can be found in the third *Critique* itself. Otherwise, much depends on the interpretation of various remarks and on the reconstruction of Kant's intentions. In the next section, I first consider the relatively clear passages on both status and content of the representations in the free imagination. After that, I turn to two interpretations of the role of the free imagination in the whole of cognitive faculties. Finally, I speculate on a more radical theory of imagination, which, although starting from Kant's account of reflective judgement, turns the whole building designed in the Critical Philosophy upside down.

4.4 Free imagination and the formation of concepts

In the second Introduction Kant stresses that in aesthetic judgement a representation is merely judged upon the feeling of harmony (or discord) that it arouses, and not on its cognitive (i.e. objective) content (VIII).[141] It is thus only the effect of the representation that is judged. However, as Kant writes in the *Analytic of the Beautiful*, the feeling that a representation arouses is not arbitrary. The beautiful is that which, apart from a concept is 'cognized as object of necessary delight' (240). This necessity is deduced from the common ground of aesthetic judgements, which lies in the *common sense* (as in common sensibility, not common understanding) of individual cognitions. Furthermore, the judgements that result on the basis of feeling are themselves universal, that is, in the judgement 'this is beautiful' we claim a necessary agreement with others. In the Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgement Kant analyses the grounds for such a claim.
'The judgement of taste', he writes, 'applies to objects of sense, but not so as to determine a concept of them for the understanding [...]. [It] does depend upon a concept (of a general ground of the subjective finality of nature for the power of judgement), but one from which nothing can be cognized and nothing proved, because it is in itself indeterminable and useless for knowledge' (340). This indeterminable concept then is 'the supersensible substrate of phenomena' (341).
In other words, we assume that a world that we cannot understand as an object in intuition, must underlie our intuitive presentations. This assumption is

[141] The Introduction to the *Critique of Judgement* is called the 'second Introduction', since it is a replacement of another, much longer previously written introduction, that is referred to as the 'First Introduction'. The First Introduction has been published separately from the *Critique of Judgement*.

inherently subjective, since such a world can never be determined in intuition, but it is a necessary common ground between individuals since the assumption of finality is an *a priori* principle of reflective judgement.

What Kant has achieved now, is that the presentations in the free imagination are universal and necessary, since they are grounded in the assumption that imagination represents a non-phenomenal world as if it were made for our capacity of imagining (that is, the assumption that there is a world that causes the phenomena which we represent). Thus, representations in aesthetic judgement are 'indeterminately determined' by an idea of reason: the supersensible substrate of nature.

Kant continues this paragraph with a remark on the nature of ideas of reason. He opposes the *aesthetic* idea to the *rational* idea: 'Just as the imagination, in the case of a rational idea, fails with its intuition to attain the given concept, so understanding, in the case of an aesthetic idea, fails with its concepts ever to attain to the *completeness* of the internal intuition which imagination [in its free play] conjoins with a given representation' (343, my italics). Imagination's aesthetic ideas then, are 'inexponible', i.e. they cannot be reduced to concepts.

The term 'completeness' as unattainable in conceptual understanding occurred previously in the first *Critique*. There it was the completeness of empirical knowledge that understanding strives to obtain, but which is, in fact, never attainable. The thought of such completeness however was prompted by the ideas of reason (the ideas of the world, God, and the soul).[142]

Here, reason provides an aesthetic idea of completeness in the 'internal intuition'. That is, at some level we have a complete representation of our intuitions, but as soon as we try to understand (i.e. to determine) the representation, this completeness is lost. Understanding can only determine representations with respect to a certain interest, that is, it chooses and isolates those parts of intuition it recognizes.

In this passage some light is shed on one aspect of our earlier problem, the assumption of cognitively retaining undetermined, non-conceptualized representations. Here a faculty of representation is described that exceeds the representation of objective knowledge. However, the completeness of aesthetic ideas at this point only indicates that our intuitions are larger than what understanding makes of them. We still cannot see how such undetermined intuitions are recalled, and whether they could play a role in later conceptualizations.

Previous to the above quoted passage, Kant explicitly mentions that aesthetic ideas can be called up, but only through the work of 'genius'. In the making of

[142] See section 4.1 above.

art, an aesthetic idea can be captured, in that the artwork can evoke representations with the same intuitive completeness.

In this context (§49) Kant defines the aesthetic idea as 'that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e. a concept, being adequate to it' (314). He continues: 'The imagination is a powerful agent for creating, as it were, a second nature out of the material supplied to it by actual nature. [...][W]e even use it to remodel experience, always following, no doubt, laws that are based on analogy, but still also following principles which have a higher seat in reason [...]. By this means we get a sense of our freedom of the laws of association (which attaches to the empirical employment of the imagination), with the result that the material can be borrowed by us from nature in accordance with that law, but be worked up in something else -namely what surpasses nature. Such representations may be termed ideas. [...][These] seek to approximate to a presentation of rational concepts (i.e. intellectual ideas), thus giving to these concepts the semblance of objective reality' (314).[143]

Such representations then, as provided by the free and creative imagination, can be laid hold of and unified in a concept: a concept which 'is original and reveals a new rule that could not have been inferred from previous examples or principles' (317), but is universally communicable nonetheless. The production of such new, subjective but universally communicable concepts from the free use of imagination is attributed by Kant to the genius. The genius then is capable of rendering expressible some part of imagination that is not captured by the determinate concepts of understanding, be it in art, i.e., 'language or painting or statuary' (317).

The free imagination is captured in words and communicated by genius. The genius is capable of presenting new concepts, by expressing an undetermined part of imagination, that is, an aesthetic idea. The notion of 'genius' is

[143] 'Laws of association' throughout the present investigation are called laws of combination (under a concept), which is the terminology introduced in the first *Critique*. A specific characterization of the former however does appear in §59, where Kant describes how with imagination's laws of association concepts may be reinvoked through symbols. Hence, in its subjective role, imagination allows for concepts to be intuited indirectly, in a symbolic presentation. Some concepts are intuited through analogy: the concept is applied to intuition (e.g. a hand-mill) and then 'the mere rule' in reflection upon that object is applied to another object (the monarchical state).(352). Symbols (in this case the hand-mill) may be used to evoke concepts, which are then transferred to another domain; hence the account of reflective judgement seems to imply an account of metaphorical interpretation. Kant delimits the notion of analogy from that of similarity, for in symbolic presentations there is no likeness between the presentations themselves (e.g. between a living body and a despotic state), but 'there surely is [a likeness] between the rules of reflection upon both [representations] and their causality' (352) (that is, in the example, both are seen as a mere machine, driven by a single source of power).

confusing nowadays, since we only use it to indicate excelling individuals. Kant says that 'genius properly consists in the happy relation, which science cannot teach nor industry learn, enabling one to find out ideas for a given concept, and, besides, to hit upon the expression for them' (317). Thus, genius is more of a property individuals may exhibit, something, maybe, which today we would be inclined to call 'creativity'. Understanding 'genius' thus as a property that 'enables one' to do something, certainly helps us to think of it as less exclusive or rare. In fact, one could argue that the people in whom art evokes a free imagination, are at least capable of recognizing art as the expression of otherwise undetermined parts of imagination. We could say that they, in a way, are re-doing the process, and thus lay claim to a similar faculty of creative imagination.

The new concepts or rules produced by genius are inherently subjective, since they follow from subjective representation, and find a universal means of expression only on the basis of the common ground of judgement. These concepts are not cognizable (since they express no knowledge). Nonetheless they play a role in cognizing. Kant mentions how the concepts of the free imagination sharpen the use of cognitive faculties at several instances, for instance:

'In a word, the aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination, annexed to a concept, with which, in the free employment of imagination, such a mutiplicity of partial representations are bound up, that no expression indicating a definite concept can be found for it -one which on that account allows a concept to be supplemented in thought by much that is indefinable in words, and the feeling of which quickens the cognitive faculties, and with language, as a mere thing of the letter, binds up the spirit (soul) [*Geist*] also.' (316).

One function of expressing aesthetic ideas then is that it quickens the faculties (of understanding and imagination). Thus, although we obtain no knowledge from artistic expression, we do learn how to use our faculties of understanding and imagination. Interestingly, the above quotation is one of the few occasions where Kant mentions language. Language ties *Geist* to the concepts that are expressed. *Geist* is defined as 'the animating principle in the mind' (313), or 'the faculty of presenting aesthetic ideas' (314). Thus, language should not be perceived solely as the vehicle of determinate concepts, but also as a means of presenting a 'completeness of internal intuition'. Language, or at least language in its literary use, is capable of calling up parts of imagination that are not conceptually determined. We may infer that, for Kant, linguistic expression does not equal the expression of determinate concepts. Language may express imaginative representations, insofar as far as it is the product of human creativity. Thus, we have finally found a Kantian basis for Ricoeur's notion of

iconicity: it is the property of words to induce imaginative representations, in other words, it is the *Geist* that is tied to poetic language.
Nevertheless, nothing has yet been said about the possible role of these undetermined, imaginative representations for understanding. So far, free imagination has appeared only in non-objective representations, and its import for knowledge of the world was limited to the quickening of the faculties, that is, a facilitation of the relation between imagination and understanding. In the next section, two interpretations of the role of free imagination are discussed. The first allows free imagination only to operate within the limits of aesthetic judgement, whereas the second presents it as the preliminary of any type of judgement.

4.5 Two interpretations of the role of free imagination

In the literature, many different interpretations of the free imagination occur regarding its relation to determinate understanding. Here I limit the discussion to two authors. The first, Cassirer, gives an interpretation that remains close to the letter of the *Critique of Judgement*. As an interpretation, it is well known, and it aims at understanding Kant's motivations in the light of the whole Critical Philosophy. The second interpretation, by Gibbons, is more recent, and in many ways a daring one. She, too, interprets Kant's theory of imagination with a focus on the possible consistency throughout his writings, but focuses thereby on the understanding of subjective imagination in the *Critique of Judgement*.
Cassirer distinguishes three roles for the faculty of imagination:
'I think that, although Kant does not use the term "aesthetic imagination", we may distinguish between three functions of the imagination, namely, (a) reproductive imagination, which is not free since it depends on empirical laws, (b) productive imagination, which is not free either since it depends on the *a priori* laws of the understanding, and (c) aesthetic imagination, which is the principle that underlies our judgements of taste. It is both productive, not merely reproductive, and free, for it is independent of any determinate laws of the understanding'.[144]
Productive imagination then is for Cassirer imagination as it incorporates *a priori* laws of reason in intuition. This notion of productive imagination is the one that Kant describes in the Schematism chapter, which is concerned with the production of time, and which identifies the recognition of different temporal properties of intuitions with the subsumption under the categories.

[144] Cassirer[1970] p 15

'Aesthetic imagination' is equally productive, but is not subsumed under a specific categorical law. It acts merely in conformity with the laws of understanding, without tying the perceived object down to a determinate empirical concept. This conformity is the only limit of freedom in 'aesthetic imagination'. Yet even in aesthetic imagination, Cassirer emphatically quotes Kant: 'The understanding alone gives the law.' (241). Even if, for instance, the free imagination might project a form onto a given object that coincides with the conceptual understanding of that object, this free imaginative representation of that object cannot be referred to a definite law of the understanding, 'for the judgement which is made is a subjective and not an objective judgement'.[145] Thus whichever representations are formed in free imagination, they contribute nothing to knowledge, other than the above-mentioned 'quickening of the faculties'.

Aesthetic judgements then are an entirely separate type of judgement. The only reason that they occupy a prominent place in the *Critique of Judgement* is that from their analysis a new transcendental principle can be inferred, and with it a faculty of judgement, separate from the respective faculties of reason and of understanding. The principle in question is the principle of purposiveness, or the *a priori* assumption of the supersensible. Since this assumption turns out to be necessary for the possibility of such entirely subjective judgements as aesthetic judgements are proven to be, the assumption of the same principle for teleological judgements is justified, even though these contain an objective aspect as well. The analysis, in Cassirer's view, merely serves to justify that, regarding empirical judgements, the view Kant took of the regulative function of the Ideas in the first *Critique*, is now replaced by the assumption of a regulative principle belonging to an entirely new faculty: the faculty of judgement.

Thus, Cassirer sees a theoretical need for the analysis of aesthetic judgements, but denies any connection between the way these judgements are formed and the way empirical judgements are made. In his view the *Critique of Judgement* is essentially directed at teleological judgements, and the analysis of aesthetic judgements is merely a preliminary theoretical step.

By contrast Sarah Gibbons stresses the similarities between aesthetic judgements and other reflective judgement. She compares the act of schematizing with the act of the genius, i.e. the creation of new rules in free imagination:

'In art rules (broadly speaking) are created and discovered not abstractly, but *in concreto* through a singular intuition which exceeds conceptual analysis. Artworks understood as 'rules' differ from mathematical constructions or

[145] Cassirer[1970] p 219

schemata [...] by expressing an indeterminate number of ideas rather than by constructing or exhibiting specific concepts. None the less the similarities between these activities are significant: in all cases, productive imagination innovates by exhibiting 'new rules' in intuition, rather than by following recognized rules and simply subsuming intuition under concepts. Imagination creates and exhibits order and coherence in intuition, which then makes concept-application and rule-following possible. This capacity will be common to all judging under its reflective aspect. Thus, genius may be thought of as a heightened capacity for judgement'.[146]

Thus, Gibbons identifies the productive imagination of the first *Critique* with what Cassirer calls 'aesthetic imagination'. The consequence is that the form of imaginative representations can only be a matter of subjective judgement, which means that schematizing is not a conceptual (i.e. objective) act. Gibbons indeed infers that reflective judgement is always inherent to determinant judgement. She quotes the first Introduction: '[reflective judgement] seeks concepts for empirical presentations, qua empirical, [and] must make for this [end] this further assumption: it must assume that nature, with its boundless diversity, has hit upon a division of this diversity [...] that enables our judgement to find accordance among the natural forms it compares, and [so] enables it to arrive at empirical concepts'.[147] Thus, empirical judgements are not possible with the faculty of determinant judgement alone, they necessarily involve a moment of subjective reflection. Gibbons continues: 'Here, the distinction between reflective and determinant judgement rests on whether the judgement involves only reflection on appearances (and/or cognitive powers) or whether it includes, in addition, the application of a determinant concept which gives the judgement its claim to objectivity. In the latter case, the subjective function is not eliminated; it is only masked by the subsumptive act of the understanding'.[148]

She notes that Kant does not maintain this account consistently, but concludes that although Kant refrained from actually giving imagination a central role in the functioning of cognition, he 'consistently returns, however cautiously, to the examination of the connection between reason and imagination'.[149]

Reason, then, is stimulated by the 'extra-conceptual' function of imagination, that is, where imagination is only involved with the formal suitability of intuition for thought, and not (yet) with its conceptual determination. This 'pure' function of imagination is revealed in aesthetic judgement, where

[146] Gibbons[1994] p 110
[147] First Introduction 212 quoted from Gibbons[1994] p 82
[148] Gibbons[1994] p 83
[149] Gibbons[1994] p 87

imagination is merely concerned with possible forms of intuition conform to understanding's laws. In aesthetic judgement intuitive presentations are compared with the subject's cognitive powers themselves: 'In this case, we are not concerned with the determination of an object, even though the same capacities are involved as in schematizing'.[150]

The rigid separation of the three functions of imagination that Cassirer presents is then one that Gibbons rejects. In her interpretation, although formulated cautiously in consideration of Kant's hesitance on the point, imagination has one main function: that of presenting intuitions in a manner suitable for our faculties of cognition. Imagination then interacts with reason and understanding in different ways, accounting for the different status of its representations in different types of judgement. Its representations may be determined through application of the categories, in determinant judgements. Primarily, however, intuitions acquire form through subjective reflection. Reflection consists of comparison of representations with either the subject's own powers or with other representations. It always involves *a priori* ideas of reason (i.e. the assumption of a supersensible substrate), and may lead to the production of unifying concepts in reason. Imagination, then, first exhibits concepts of reason, and secondly, possibly, demonstrates the laws of understanding.

The differences with Cassirer's reading are clear. For him, conceptualization is a different process than reflection, and requires a different type of imagination. The latter assumes only *a priori* ideas of reason, whilst the former also employs *a priori* concepts of understanding. Aesthetic and determinant judging thus form two separate types of judgement, based on the legislation of different faculties, either understanding or reason. A third type of judgement, teleological judgements, stands somewhere in the middle, since it combines the laws of these two faculties.

Gibbons is inclined to assume a gradual transition between the types of judgement, in which the faculty of applying determinant concepts is dependent on the recognition of regularities discovered in the productive imagination in reflection. Aesthetic judgements are directed towards a different purpose than determinant judgements. They are not concerned with the determination of the form of the intuitive presentation at hand, but instead they are solely concerned with the process of recognizing form itself. As such, this activity must be performed by a joinder of imagination and reason, and should then precede each and every type of judgement.

The two interpretations, further, assign a different status to the act of schematizing. For Cassirer, the fact that the free imagination only represents

[150] Gibbons[1994] p 84

conform to indeterminate laws of understanding implies that its representations are not properly schematized, since schematized representations are objective. For Gibbons, the fact that imagination produces representations without determinate concepts implies that schematizing is an extra-conceptual function of imagination. Therefore any schematized representation contains a subjective element.

As a consequence of this difference, the two authors assign a different role to aesthetic judgement in cognition, and accordingly a different place to the Critique of Aesthetic Judgement in the Critical philosophy. In Cassirer's interpretation, aesthetic judgements are performed without our having a clue what they are about. They are some sort of by-product of our striving for harmony between the different cognitive faculties, since in aesthetic judgements the search for harmony becomes the purpose of the judgement. The only goal we have in performing such judgement is the experience of a sense of pleasure, derived from the satisfaction that an intuitive presentation suits our cognitive faculties. Thus, the mere existence of aesthetic judgements seems to carry some evidence that we are concerned with such harmony in cognizing throughout. Cassirer finds this sufficient explanation for the question why Kant devoted the first half of the third *Critique* to the faculty of aesthetic judgement. Cassirer's interpretation gives aesthetic judgement a marginal position, as it occurs only when the subject is as it were absorbed in the process of his own cognizing, without the least concern for the object that provided the occasion to the process. All that the subject seeks, is to experience some cognitive pleasures. This activity is hard to relate to the practice of aesthetic interpretation of art, and it seems to have little bearing upon the interpretation of metaphors that occur outside a narrowly defined poetic context.

This marginality is somewhat resolved in Gibbons' reading. Here the capacities used in aesthetic judging prove constitutive for the whole building of empirical knowledge. The faculty of imagination produces the regularities we need for the design of a systematic whole of empirical knowledge. In reflective judgements, imagination produces unity through the comparison of particular experiences. In aesthetic reflection we have the freedom of discovering, testing and reconsidering any such formal unity, without the need to stop at some point to arrive at a definite determination of the objects we reflect upon. Thus, to engage in aesthetic judgement is still to engage in creative thought for the mere pleasure of it; however, such creativity is indispensable as it is fundamental for the whole of knowledge that mankind possesses. Thus, Kant's remarks on the 'training of the faculties' in aesthetic judging fall into place as it employs and sharpens the very same skill that is needed for reflective judging,

and, as such, is a preliminary for understanding. Thus, any judgement involves the same cognitive skills as aesthetic judgement.

From my perspective, Gibbons' interpretation presents an interesting juxtaposition of objective and subjective elements in conceptual understanding, especially since the subjectively employed free 'aesthetic' imagination is revealed as the preliminary of any application of concepts.

As we saw, Ricoeur postulated at once the subjective character of imaginative meanings of metaphors, and the possibility of their gradual transition into conceptual, i.e. 'objective' meanings. On Gibbons' reading of Kant's theory of imagination, we can undertake an explanation of such transition in a Kantian vein, and explain in which respect Ricoeur's suggestions for a theory of imagination appeal to Kant's understanding of imagination. However, in doing so, we leave the realm of Kant's own articulated thought. The speculation on a dominant role of imagination, such that concepts depend upon it, cannot be attributed to Kant all the way, as will become clear shortly. Nonetheless, for the articulation of an epistemological account of metaphorical interpretation, it proves a fruitful exercise.

5 Cognition and metaphorical interpretation

5.1 Imagination and concepts

In a way, Cassirer's reading of the third *Critique* remains close to the whole of Kant's Critical philosophy, because we need not reconsider, upon his account, how the first *Critique* dealt with imagination. The texts on which Gibbons bases her interpretation are mainly texts which Kant did either not publish himself, such as the First Introduction, or texts which he revised at a later stage, such as the A-version of the Transcendental Deduction. Nevertheless, her reading makes it plausible that Kant at least was not entirely certain about the application of objective concepts in empirical judgements, and proposed his theory of productive imagination as an alternative. However, the suggestion that this additional account of imagination implies that all judgements, even the determinant ones, contain a moment of reflective judgement is not one that many interpreters will agree with.[151] Indeed, the lack of this assumption is sometimes seen as the cause of Heidegger's criticism that Kant lacked the courage to think through a more 'radical' account of imagination.[152]

The greatest innovation of the third *Critique* may well be the introduction of the notion of 'subjective universality', next to that of objectivity. In this section I argue that with the introduction of this notion, together with the extended role of imagination in the third *Critique*, Kant paves the way for an understanding of cognition that uproots the foundations of the epistemology laid out in the first *Critique*.

As we saw, the necessary and universal character of subjective judgement is ultimately based on the rational idea of common ground. The notion of common ground receives different descriptions in the third *Critique*. It involves not only the assumed substrate of the phenomenal world (340), but also the assumption that humans have similar faculties of intuition, imagination and thought, that is, that the effect of intuiting a certain object is similar for everyone (238, 293). If the latter would not be the case, of course, an assumed supersensible substrate would not ensure a similar representation between individuals. Thus, although essentially subjective, empirical laws are universal in the sense that others cannot intuit differently. Subjectively universal knowledge then, may change over time due to the consideration of different particular experiences, and in the context of different rational presuppositions

[151] Makkreel, for instance, opposes the theory of imagination in the first *Critique* to that in the third *Critique*. For his view and further discussion, see Makkreel[1990].
[152] Cf. Mörchen[1970]

regarding the finality of the phenomena experienced. The notion of 'subjective universality', then, seems translatable into a more contemporary notion of intersubjectivity.[153]

The introduction of 'subjective universality', next to the 'objectivity' of the first *Critique*, further reflects the increase of the importance of imagination. The *Critique of Pure Reason* exhibits a fundamental distrust of the faculty of imagination, ultimately assigning to it no more than a spontaneous obedience to the conceptual mind, and denying the possibility of a separate 'empirical consciousness'. Representations are not consciously accessible without understanding's determination. Imagination, the faculty of representing intuitions, only furnishes understanding with images for its concepts. In this role, it is entirely dominated by understanding. The dominance of understanding results on the one hand in a securely objective domain of knowledge; on the other hand, it fares badly in explaining the systematic connections by which we organize empirical knowledge, since it cannot explain the creation of universal concepts on the basis of subjective experience and reason alone.

In the *Critique of Judgement* the faculty of imagination has acquired greater responsibility. Here imagination presents a reliable factor among humans, in the form of an assumed conformity of their faculties of imagination. This faculty of imagination exhibits not only a conformity to the faculty of understanding, independent of its specific laws, but it even represents an 'internal intuition' of a completeness never attainable in understanding. This internal intuition provides a basis for reflection, that is comparison and analogical reasoning, which in turn may lead to the creation of rational concepts. In this process, understanding does not play its determinant role. Hence, imagination has become capable now of representing beyond understanding's ruling: conscious representations do not necessarily presuppose conceptual determination. Furthermore, with the recognition of an internal intuition, the role of imagination as the faculty of representation is not limited to reproduction in service of the determination of the intuited object or scene, since it can be evoked by symbols that are used in art.

Thus, with the notion of an internal intuition a kind of consciously accessible reservoir of imaginative representations 'associated' to the concepts is introduced. In the third *Critique* the faculty of imagination has thus gained the capacity to represent independently of conceptually determinate form. Its

[153] Intersubjectivity, that is, as the minimal requirement for communication: the assumption that other people are capable of understanding a speaker's utterances through the sharing of a language in a speech community (and hence a common 'form of life' (Wittgenstein) or a common 'frame of reference' (Quine)) .

extra-conceptual representations are the basis for the creation of concepts in subjective reflection. Thus, the assumption of accessible imaginative representations has a price, and it is paid in the form of the loss of objectivity of those concepts that result from reflection on imaginations' representations.

5.2 Speculations on the nature of concepts

Speculatively, after reading the *Critique of Judgement*, we may ask what remains of the initial dominance of the objective laws of understanding. The whole process of empirical judgement can be summarized without reference to 'objective universals' as follows. The formal limitations of intuitive presentations (i.e. conformity to understanding in general) are realized in the presentation in imagination. The creation of concepts is assigned to subjective reflection. The systematic organisation of empirical concepts in knowledge is provided by reason's subjective assumption of finality, and the universality of subjective judgements is provided by reason's assumption of common ground (intersubjectivity).

We may ask then, whether this description necessarily involves at some point an independent role for the objective laws of understanding. Is understanding's role not limited to the determination of mechanically processed representations? And is the determination of these not prepared in the schematic imagination with its 'conformity to understanding generally', and which, according to Gibbons' interpretation, is *extra-conceptual*? Is objective determination therewith not just a mere confirmation of what imagination already presents us with?

On the model of productive imagination, we could speculate that imagination presents such regularities in intuition as to give rise to comparison and unification, resulting in subjectively universal concepts. We could further speculate that all universals ultimately are the product of a process of reflection and hence a product of *abstraction* over the presentations in imagination, rather than that some of imagination's representations are the *instantiation* of the *a priori* laws of understanding. Speculating thus, we would conclude that the foundation of our concepts originates in productive imagination.

The application of determinate concepts, in this speculation, is thus understood as a 'facilitated' processing of representations in imagination. That is, any intuitive presentation that exhibits a familiar form, a form that has been encountered intuitively and processed in imagination previously, is recognized as similar to that previous representation in a 'reflective moment', and thus acquires the same conceptualization. This process of conceptualization is based on two capacities: first the capacity of recognizing similarity, and second the

cognitive representation of such conceptual identities that are constituted by the generalization of similarities. In this speculative model we would necessarily have to assume, in line with Kant's argumentation, something like a faculty of reason, by which unifying concepts are developed and employed in relation to each other, in order to preserve the possibility of a consistent and systematic collection of concepts, that is, an organized whole of empirical knowledge.

Understanding the conceptual system in this way, namely as based on the faculty of reflective and not on that of determinant judgement, we could also explain the three functions of imagination that Cassirer sums up.

First, the reproductive function of imagination could be regarded as the combining of previously cognized representations with a new representation, under a given aspect of similarity. Second, the productive function of imagination as the faculty that brings forth the *a priori* form of representations could be taken to indicate that the faculty of imagination itself imposes the form of representation, inherent to the structure of our perceptual and conceptual faculties. Any representation is thus bound by the possible forms imagination is capable of representing. Third, the productive 'aesthetic' function of imagination could be understood as the function of imagination that searches for a generalizable form of representations. In this function, through analogy and reasoning, new similarities are determined in such a way that a new concept, as a generalization of such similarities, may result from it.

In our speculative model then, every concept must be the result of productive imagination, that is, it must be the result of some repeated formal determination. That means that a concept cannot be understood as a static abstraction, but only as a generalization that, each time it is applied to a specific representation, may be adapted somewhat, since different aspects of the general similarity between the representations captured under a concept may be more or less prominent in any specific representation.

Such speculation has dramatic consequences for the hierarchic structure of mind as it is presented in the Critical Philosophy. The whole system of categories would be turned upside down, since categorical laws would be considered as the products of reflection on regularities in imagination. The system of categories itself would be regarded as a result of subjective reflection on the work of our own cognitive faculties, and would, in principle, be open for revision: they would not be *a priori* laws, but more flexible generalizations over experience. In other words, the categories would acquire themselves the status of subjective universals. The origin of objectivity is thus speculatively placed in the productive imagination. Objectivity, in this line of thought, is nothing but subjective universality with a well-established status.

The primary objection to this understanding of objectivity is, of course, that it assigns an intuitive origin to each and every concept. Besides the categories, other *a priori* universal laws would be deemed the result of reflection on intuitive presentations as well, such as mathematical laws.

So far, we only considered imagination's role in empirical and aesthetical judgements, which involve reflection on objects presented in intuition, and for these cases, we saw, concepts are formed in the process of reflection. For non-empirical, objective judgements, one might argue, the case should be different. These judgements may require a schematic presentation, as Kant tells us in the Schematism Chapter that for a thought to be meaningful, i.e. not mere logical form, it needs an intuitive presentation. But this intuitive content is constructed according to the laws of understanding. Thus, for Kant, mathematical objects for instance can only be conceived as the demonstration or instantiation of a concept of understanding. In the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant illuminates this point with an example. If we landed on an island that seemed uninhabited, but where we then encountered a regular hexagon drawn in the sand, we would revise our opinion on the island's habitation. The chance that nature produces a figure that suits our laws of understanding so well is too small, and therefore we would think it more likely that a human being produced it. Thus, from the drawn figure, we would conclude that the island is inhabited (370).

There is an analogy, then, between mathematical and aesthetic judgements, as far as in both the subject is interested in mere form. The subject is not concerned with an actual object that underlies the mathematical object, as it would be in empirical judgements; rather, it is concerned with the object's possibility for our understanding only (367n.).

Furthermore, presumably other than in aesthetic judgements, the cause of our reflections is not given by the perception of an object. Rather, the recognition of a mathematical object is deemed a result of our conceptual understanding, and cannot be conceived as a starting-point from where a concept could be created. Thus, mathematical objects would present a different case than empirical objects: they presuppose a law of understanding, whereas the latter may give rise to the creation of a concept in conformity to such laws. The role of imagination in mathematical concepts then seems limited to that of providing the object to the law, as was described in the B-version of the Deduction. Thus, the argument runs, at least in the case of non-empirical concepts, the objective laws of understanding are necessarily *a priori*.

In the case of mathematical objects then, the concept would be the *raison d'être* of the demonstrative representation. However, that we use such concepts, and as a result construe their objects, does not imply that these concepts are entirely independent from productive imagination.

Without going into the case of mathematical concepts specifically, we can ask whether imagination played a role in the origin of such concepts.[154] That is, just as we did in the case of empirical concepts, we can ask whether a previous process of reflection, of comparing representations in imagination and further reasoning on the basis of these comparisons, can account for the existence of such concepts. Concepts of mathematical objects would be understood as the product of such a process of abstraction over *forms* that we tend to recognize easily, in much the same way as above we conjectured that categorical laws must be the result of the abstraction over repeated recognition of representations.

The question of origin of objective concepts is not addressed by Kant, because he deduces them from the way we actually cognize. Nevertheless, we could speculate how 'objective' concepts could emerge in the same way as we create concepts for empirical objects: through analogical reasoning, generalization and abstraction. In our speculative model, they could be explained as the result of reflection on the most suitable form for our imagination, to paraphrase Kant's characterization of mathematical objects as being suitable for our understanding.

But that is only one part of a possible explanation of the origin of presumedly *a priori* concepts. For most people do not come into the habit of applying such concepts on the basis of subjective reflection. Not every subject has the capability of creating, for instance, all mathematical laws.[155] The factor that should be taken into account here is the process of learning to form and use abstract, objective concepts. In the process of learning, the individual becomes acquainted with conceptualizations that his teachers (parents, peers etc.) make. Thus, the individual does not invent ways to conceptualize the whole world by himself, but learns to proceed as others do. In the process of learning then, the subject is presented with regularities, with combinations and generalizations that come under his attention much the same way as objects do. Our first experiences of the world are guided, and we stand corrected if we respond in ways that indicate conceptual combinations that are not part of society's systematic knowledge. In other words, the individual is taught to think the same way as others do. Laws in the subjective mind, then, are not only the result of private subjective imagination's combinations, but also of society's enforcement to combine representations under a given law.

---

[154] To go into this matter specifically would mean to enter a discussion of theories diverging from Platonism to Intuitionism, which falls beyond the scope of the present investigation.

[155] In fact, this is a problem for any *a priori* account of concepts: the problem that not all subjects are capable of producing scientific laws, whereas these must be accessible to each of them. Even Socrates' slave, who could calculate the lengths of the sides of a triangle, did not invent this on his own initiative: he had to be guided into the problem before he could solve it.

We may conclude that some concepts in this way have acquired an abstract status to the extent that they can no longer be related to subjective reflection on intuitive presentations. The existence of such concepts however, need not be derived from the *a priori* nature of human cognition *per se*, but can be attributed to the relation of subjective minds to a historically grown, collective system of knowledge. The process of learning that each individual undergoes within a society ensures the continued existence of certain laws in the minds of these individuals. The above speculation on the subjective nature of universal laws could thus be extended by consideration of the latter's history.

Objective knowledge is therewith understood as an intersubjective body of knowledge that is adopted by the individual in his education. The subject's knowledge of the world then is not only dependent on the individual's mind, but also springs forth from the individual's dependency on other individuals in society. The assumption of common ground would not only be legitimized by the (assumed) fact that all individuals have the same faculties, but also by the assumption that they have *taught* us to use the same system of concepts. These remarks resound the thoughts of more contemporary philosophers, such as Quine's naturalized epistemology, or Wittgenstein's notion of 'form of life'.[156] However appealing a discussion of these distinctive echoes is, a more extensive discussion of these sketchy remarks lies beyond the scope of the present investigation.

Another perspective that is opened up by the present discussion, which I will not go into here, concerns the normative role of existing classifications in a general body of knowledge.[157] Some conceptual laws are so fundamentally embedded in the structure of all knowledge that they function as a paradigm for new insights. Only after a 'revolution' in thought, sustained by undeniable experimental evidence and what is recognized as thorough reasoning, can such paradigmatic insights be opposed, as we know from abundant examples given in philosophy of science.[158]

The normative function of existing concepts also plays a role in our use of language. Through the learning of definitions and cultural taboos, through being corrected or praised when first learning to speak, we develop strong ideas on how words ought to be used. The use of words is then subjected to general normative rules in a speech community. We may recall here how Davidson separates semantics and the practice of understanding natural

[156] Cf. Quine[1975] , and Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (241)

[157] I do discuss norms in use of language in sections 2 and 4 of the next chapter.

[158] An instance of such paradigmatic changes could be found in the development of quantum mechanics, where, the category of 'modality', according to which an object either persists or not, makes no sense. The status of an electron here is indeterminate: one moment it appears as a particle, and at another as energy.

language. Meaning, as a property of a word or sentence, reflected in a concept, can be said to be a theoretical ideal or an 'objectification' of the many different uses of a word. In actual use of language, often no general law can be formulated that applies to each and every instance of the word. In other words, the rules that were abstracted from previous usage, do not necessarily cover new uses. Thus, objective word meanings, or propositional meanings of sentences as sought after in the type of semantics discussed in section 2 of chapter 1, present the most perfect generalization of word uses possible: those that could enter into the dictionary. However, these cannot be fully identified with the practice of conversation. Word meanings, insofar they are concepts that are derived from the practice of language, then may at best provide an instance of what Kant calls the 'normal idea' of an empirical concept. It functions as an example, a standard of what may be recognized, but in itself need not be found in reality.[159]

To develop a full perspective on these matters from these speculations on the nature of imagination is, as said, beyond the scope of this discussion. Here, I am primarily interested in imagination's role in conceptual understanding and its relevance for metaphorical interpretation, the discussion of which we will take up again below. These remarks however do serve as a preliminary warning against identifying general concepts that arise from reflection with linguistic meaning, the possibility of which is again considered in the next chapter.

Thus, I have speculatively outlined a model of cognition that departs from Kant's writings of productive imagination and reflective judgement. In the suggested model, concepts are the result of reflection on imaginative representations, stemming from either perception or 'internal intuition'. Through analogical reasoning, and comparison of different representations under the aspect of similarity, conceptual identities are developed in the subjective mind, enforced by the availability of linguistically expressed concepts in a learning environment.

With such a model, it is possible to distinguish different ways in which a judgement regarding the conceptual identity of an intuitive presentation can be

[159] Kant mentions 'normal ideas' in the context of whether it could serve as a concept of beauty (which it cannot). He mentions, for instance, how an idea of an average sized, or normal man can be formed in imagination, on the basis of experience: 'if the mind is engaged upon comparisons, we may well suppose that it can in actual fact, though the process is unconscious, superimpose as it were one image upon another, and from coincidence of a number of the same kind arrive at a mean contour which serves as a common standard for all' (234). This *normal idea* is 'an intermediate between all singular intuitions of individuals, with their manifold variations -a floating image for the whole genus, which nature has set as an archetype underlying those of her products that belong to the same species, but which in no single case she seems to have completely attained' (234 CoJ).

formed. First, we combine the given presentation with certain representations because we learned to recognize their similarities, either through education, or through personal experience. That is, we recognize the given intuitive presentation as having a familiar conceptual identity. In this way we might recognize, for instance, a person as one we met before. Second, we combine representations because we recognize them as an instance of some previously construed or learned generalization. That is, we can construe a conceptual identity for a given presentation on the basis of analogy with previous conceptualizations, such as recognizing someone to be a human. Third and last, there is the instance where we have no previous similarly processed experiences to rely on, but where we determine the representation through an active process of combination and comparison with other representations. In this way, for instance, we could newly form the concept of a mammal, as applied to a whale. However, this process would basically be the same as that underlying all generalizations on the basis of intuitive presentation, whether of a given person, or of humans. It is the procedure of combination and comparison, which leads to the formation of a synthetic concept.

This process of conceptualization describes the working of productive imagination. The first type of concept application, that is, recognition of an intuitive presentation under a familiar concept, then could be understood as involving a reproductive function of imagination: a routine recognition on the basis of a previously produced conceptualization. The second instance of concept application lies somewhere in between recognition and production: the conceptualization is available, but was never applied to this instance. Hence, the productive aspect here lies in the recognition of similarity, which, as a general concept, was already available.

With these speculations then, we have definitively left the realm of Kantian epistemology, since in the above understanding of concepts, there is no place for *a priori* laws of understanding, and all understanding is attributed to the work of productive imagination. Although this understanding of the central role of imagination is foreign to the Critical philosophy, it is not entirely unfounded. Following Gibbons' interpretation, and her emphasis on the writings that were either not published or revised, we could interpret Kant's understanding of productive imagination as one of which he could himself not fully see the consequences through, since it was such a radically new conception in his time. Evidence for this interpretation we found in the dualistic nature of imagination's representations, which at one place in the Critical philosophy necessarily involve conceptual determination (the B-Deduction, Schematism), and at another may be taken to precede conceptualization (A-Deduction, First Introduction CoJ) or even are maintained independently from determinant understanding (CoJ 35, 49, 57).

There are several instances, where Kant indicates relations of transitivity between concepts of reason and of understanding, and between reflection and determination. In the Analytic of the Beautiful Kant writes on the possibility that a judgement of taste, when compared to other judgements of similar objects becomes a logical or universal judgement (215, 285). At another instance, Kant implies that determinant judgements can be withheld at will: a subject may distance himself from the conceptual determination of a familiar object, in order to reflect on its beauty (231). Thus, it is possible to abstract over the objective content of a determined representation, and to reflect on the representations it evokes.

These remarks, as Gibbons interprets them, point towards a primacy of reflective judgement, and may thus have resulted from Kant's reconsideration of certain parts of the first *Critique*. It should however be emphasized that the third *Critique* is not presented as a revision of former insights; it could be taken as a revision only in so far as it adds a separate faculty of judgement. Thus, the status of objective universals is not questioned in the *Critique of Judgement*, but it is complemented by the notion of subjective universality.

Whichever insights in Kant's own thought are revealed by Gibbons' interpretation of Kant's theory of imagination is not really of concern here. The radical understanding of productive imagination as underlying all concepts I proposed is certainly not one that I would want to attribute to Kant. That his work, and a contemporary interpretation of it, should give rise to the understanding of understanding here proposed, should then not be taken as an attempt at exegesis, but as the liberal appropriation of some of the notions proposed in his philosophy.

On the basis of my discussion of the *Critique of Judgement*, then, I have proposed a gradual transition between understanding as routine conceptualization and as the result of productive imagination with respect to the degree of creativity involved in the processing of a given intuitive presentation. I have further assumed imagination as the faculty of representation that allows us to recognize and conceptualize similarity of appearance and form. Further, I adopted such notions as 'representation', 'internal intuition' and the 'faculty of imagination', but have not explicated, as yet, how they are to be understood in my use. Thus for instance the understanding of imagination, which in the above speculations is identified as the central drive behind concept formation, is still based on Kant's description of the, ultimately, 'blind force' within cognition. I will attempt to explicate the notions thus adopted from Kant in the next chapter. However, before moving on to a new discussion, one issue remains to be illuminated in the light of my suggestions here, namely the one that led to the previous discussion in the first place: metaphorical interpretation of poetic text.

5.3 Metaphor and productive imagination

We may now distinguish between two different orientations of the process of reflection, as far as it involves productive imagination. Reflection, we learn from the two books of the *Critique of Judgement*, can be geared towards the determination of an experience at hand, with the purpose of finding a concept under which it fits; but it can also serve the mere pleasure of engaging in such a process. To arrive at a concept that captures the relevant aspects of an experience is thus one possible goal of the process of reflection. Another such goal is to engage the productive use of imagination *because we want to do so.*

In the first case, the novelty, that is singularity of the experience, is crucial. If we can generalize over the singular experience, that is if we can abstract over some aspect of similarity with previous experiences, then that allows us to conceptually determine the experience. Further repetition of the experience could even lead us to develop a routine conceptualization of the experienced phenomena, as described above. Here, reflection is oriented towards the comparison with other experiences, and thus concentrates on finding and fixing relevant similarities.

In the second case singularity is not of great importance, since we are not so much concerned with capturing the content of the experience, as with its meaning for us. That is, we reflect on the possible relevance it could have for our other conceptualizations, on its impact on our mode of representation, and on the sensations it evokes in us. Here reflection is concerned with production in imagination and reflection itself, and hence does not stop at the production of a common general concept. It is as much interested in possible contrasts, differences and extensions of any possible conceptual combinations. Thus, in the 'self-interested' reflection, the process consists of questioning previous conceptualizations and distancing oneself from them. The process of re-conceptualization in this sense does not end since it has no end, that is, it is not aimed at finding a final, useful determination of the experience.

This understanding of a self-interested reflection is a generalization of Kant's understanding of aesthetic reflection, in which the notions of 'subjective finality' or 'purposiveness without end' now recur as reflection for reflection's sake. Thus, in my understanding of self-interested reflection I do adhere to Kant's definition of the productive imagination insofar as it describes the

ongoing process of distancing from former conceptual determinations, of newly comparing, reasoning and combining representations.[160]

I cannot follow Kant in the idea that the productive imagination has no direct relation to conceptual understanding. On the contrary, I claim that this process is the very origin of all understanding, and that the only difference between conceptual understanding and self-interested reflection is the directedness towards the application of the produced concepts, versus the directedness towards mere conceptual productivity.

The process of applying a concept to some experience, then, is in essence the same as inventing a concept such that it fits the experience. Only in the first case, a routine processing of the experience in question is possible, since it is understood in a familiar way. However, in the case where we experience something new, and in the case where we are set upon newly experiencing something old, we consciously turn to the process of embedding the experience among other imaginative representations. The process of reflection *need* not end if we find pleasure in it, until we either settle on a definite concept, or find something else to direct our attention to.

The productive role of imagination, I suggested, consists of the presentation of material from perception or from an 'internal intuition' such that the subject may reflect upon it, construe new combinations of representations and generalizations of these. The subject may construe analogies with other representations, and represent these similarities in a unifying concept. A representation that is thus generalized exceeds the concept that is derived from it: the imaginative presentation is necessarily richer than the abstraction under an aspect of similarity or analogy. Thus, the representation cannot be understood as the mere demonstration of a concept, since it may underlie different concepts, under different aspects of similarity.

Language, we saw, was for Kant not strictly tied to concepts. Rather, words could function as symbols, recalling the imaginative representations that underlie the concepts that are expressed. This property of language, I concluded, could be interpreted as the iconic function of meanings that Ricoeur postulates. Through the words in a metaphor, then, representations from something like an 'internal intuition' are evoked in imagination, and serve as the material for renewed combining and comparison, that is, for the formation of new concepts.

---

[160] Kant mentions the possibility of a distancing oneself of former determinations as one possible attitude allowing for aesthetic judgement of a familiar, conceptually determined object: 'In respect of an object with a definite internal end, a judgement of taste would only be pure where the person judging either has no concept of this end, or else makes abstraction from it in his judgement.' (231 CoJ)

In chapter 1 however, I argued that there is no such thing as a metaphor to the extent that it guarantees a metaphorical interpretation. Hence I concluded that 'metaphoricity' is a property assigned to an utterance or text in interpretation, which may be triggered by formal or contextual aspects of the utterance, but also as a result of the interest on the part of the interpreter. The above description of concept creation on the basis of evoked representations, coincides with this insight that metaphors are the result of a manner of interpreting. The interpreter has to engage in reflection on evoked representations, and actively combine them in order to arrive at an interpretation.

This description of metaphorical interpretation in terms of concept formation cannot distinguish between concept formation generally and metaphorical interpretation: it simply treats either as an instance of the search for a new concept on the basis of representations in imagination. As such, then, this description does not account for a special use of cognitive faculties in either poetic or metaphorical interpretation. However, treating poetic interpretation as a form of aesthetic interpretation, we may now characterize it as a form of self-interested reflection, that is, as the very same process as conceptual understanding with a different orientation. Poetic interpretation need not be directed towards the end of finding a new conceptual determination of some representation. Rather, it consists of reflection on a representation for the sake of reflecting itself, and for the sake of the pleasure that results from the engagement in reflection. Poetic interpretation, then, involves in essence the same cognitive processing mechanisms as conceptual understanding. Only the goal of the process is different: we do not use the tools of conceptualization as a means to find our way among the world, but we use it as a means to explore our own thoughts and representations.

5.4 Conclusion

As the outcome of the above speculations, I suggested an epistemological model that unifies aesthetic interpretation with conceptual understanding. The difference between the two is not considered to be an essential difference between processes of conceptualization, since in either case it is based on recognition of similarity and reasoning on the basis of analogy. Rather in aesthetic interpretation the use that is made of the faculty of conceptualization serves a different end: here recognition of similarities and analogies in imagination generates more thoughts than fit in a single, familiar concept applying to an intuitive presentation.

To arrive at this conclusion, I adopted a notion of concepts as conceptualizations, that is, as adjustable abstractions of imagination's representations, resulting from reflective combination and comparison. In recent psychology and philosophy, several theories on concept formation agree in some respects with the above speculations. As these present far more developed models of cognition than the above speculations, they may add plausibility and substance to the understanding of concepts as based on experience and recognition of similarity suggested above.

In the next chapter two theories are discussed that present a perception-based model of cognition and representation. I relate these models to the suggested understanding of productive imagination and subjective reflection, and conclude with a further elaboration of the speculative model of interpretation and understanding suggested above. I will sometimes appeal to some of Kant's notions as they are analysed here, such as the assumption of common ground, the reproductive and the productive roles of imagination, and the notion of subjective universality. Further, the discussion that follows should clarify the sense in which I can make use of some of the concepts derived from Kant in the speculations above, such as those of internal intuition, imaginative representation and aesthetic ideas.

At this point, poetic interpretation is now characterized as an aesthetic process in a somewhat traditional, Kantian fashion, that is, as a process with a certain orientation, namely the interest in reflection for its own sake, and the pleasure that results from it. We still need to get a clearer view of what this orientation consists of, and of how metaphorical interpretation can be characterized in terms of it. In a larger perspective, we need to reconsider what aesthetic interpretation, as a process of (re)conceptualizing in which the interpreter engages himself at will, has to do with aesthetic interpretation under a more common description, namely the interpretation of art or of poetic text. These topics will be discussed in the final chapter. But first, I turn to the discussion of how the above speculative understanding of productive imagination may be considered the central drive in concept formation in experience.

III Representation

Grounding concepts in experience, language and imagination.

"If I wasn't real," Alice said - half laughing through her tears, it all seemed so ridiculous - "I shouldn't be able to cry". "I hope you don't suppose those are real tears?" Tweedledum interrupted in a tone of great contempt.
Lewis Carroll[161]

It is only the elasticity of our conventions that makes a link between disparate acts.
Tristan Tzara[162]

1 Introduction

In this chapter I attempt to further develop the speculations I presented in the preceding chapter. There, I speculated on a general understanding of concept formation on the model of Kant's theory of productive imagination and reflective judgement. I argued that the notion of objectivity in concepts was superfluous, and suggested that it be replaced by an account in terms of imaginatively produced conceptualizations. I distinguished a gradual transition from conceptual judgements made on the basis of routine processing, those that are performed on the basis of immediate recognition of similarities in an intuitive presentation, to judgements in which comparisons are formed between imaginative representations that lead to entirely new conceptualizations.
As a result, aesthetic reflection was speculatively understood as an instance of a more general cognitive capacity. Where Kant analyses it as the non-

[161] *Through the Looking Glass*, chapter 4
[162] 'Lecture on dada' in Tzara[1992]

determinant pondering over imaginative presentations, I suggested aesthetic reflection, and its 'free play of the imagination' is in fact the same process as conceptual determination. The processes of both aesthetic reflection and conceptual determination were thus speculatively identified as the combining of representations in imagination, and the difference between the two was considered to lie in the different interests that the interpreter takes in the process of interpretation itself.

With these speculations, many questions were left open as to how they should be incorporated in a model of cognition. Most importantly, the issue of representation remains undiscussed. As far as Kant informs us, representations are either derived from sensory impressions and reproduced in imagination, or they are part of an internal intuition, which manifests itself in the productive imagination. Imagination, however, is also consistently described as the 'blind force' hidden in the depth of our soul. Thus, the least we need to clarify is what a representation in imagination represents, and whether sensory impressions and representations derived from internal intuition are related. We also lack a specific account of the process how representations are combined in imagination, and how this should result in a concept. Further, the topic of how the understanding of linguistic utterances, and the interpretation of texts should fit into such a model, was hardly touched upon. So, I turn to these issues in the present chapter.

The model of cognition I speculated on should explain concept formation and application by the means of imaginative productivity. Concepts, in this model, would be produced through the combination of perceptual as well as imaginative representations. Not many contemporary views meet the demands that I have thus formulated. My view dismisses, for instance, the stance that concepts are part of a 'third realm' of objective entities. As I suggested that concepts are the product of subjective imagination, the notion of objective propositional meaning cannot take on the role of a concept in such a model. It also dismisses the assumption of an a priori or an innate system of concepts. Thus, the conceptual system is the result of experience and mere faculties of perception, representation and combination. Further, to presume a subjective, imaginative grounding of the conceptual system raises the problem that all mentalist theories have to face, namely the problem of intersubjectivity. The assumptions that Kant claims as *a priori* rational assumptions that allow for a notion of subjective universality, provide a guideline here. Hence the possibility of assuming common ground in the process of concept formation will have to be confirmed in the model we look for.

Part of the challenge is to find a theory of conceptual understanding that can incorporate an account of metaphorical interpretation as it resulted from the previous discussions. It should then be able to distinguish between creative

interpretations and routine understandings as a matter of degree, without presupposing a distinction between metaphorical and literal language.

Below I first discuss two recent models of cognition and conceptual understanding, which meet the requirements set above in different ways. Both see the process of concept formation as based on recognition of similarity, either of structure or of appearance. Both theories, then, assume that conceptualization results from similarity recognition and conceptual combination, which we saw are the tools of productive imagination. Further in either theory, concepts both pertain to, and are developed on the basis of intuitive presentations, or rather, in a more contemporary terminology, perception.

The model developed by Bartsch, discussed in section 2 below, presents concepts as similarity relations between situations, and hence the notion of a situation under an aspect of similarity provides the basic element in cognitive representation. For Barsalou, in a theory discussed in section 3 below, concepts are structural relations between perceptual symbols, which are a 'functional selection' of perceptual states.

In the discussion of both models, I focus on two aspects. The first is the role of imagination, and how the notion of imaginative representations, as derived from something analogous to Kant's internal intuition, may be understood next to that of intuitive or perceptual presentations. The second is the assumption of common ground, whether explicitly presented or not, and the extent to which this allows for an explanation of intersubjective concepts, at least where linguistic meanings are concerned.

I conclude this chapter with a proposal. I present an outline of a model of concept formation and representation, which is based to some extent on the models discussed. I follow Bartsch's model in understanding language as playing an essential role in the process of concept formation, and I use Barsalou's model of cognitive representation as based on perceptual processing. However, unlike the theories discussed, the resulting proposal positions Kant's productive imagination as the central drive in concept formation, as well as in concept application.

2 Dynamic Conceptual Semantics

2.1 Dynamic Conceptual Semantics: outline

The first model I consider is presented by Renate Bartsch. She proposes a logico-philosophical theory of concepts that is based on a psychologically realistic understanding of the process of concept formation. The resulting theory is called Dynamic Conceptual Semantics. First I outline the model in a general manner, and then consider some of its specific properties, and its relevance for the elaboration of my suggestions above.

Concepts, according to Bartsch, are formed through the organization of experience in the individual. The drive for conceptual organization in this model, then, is the spontaneous recognition of similarity between experienced situations, and the further recognition of similarities and oppositions within such natural perspectives of similarity. Cognitive development thereby depends on the experience of the outer world in two ways.

First, it depends on the perceptual information that is processed by the individual. With experience growing, the refinement of the conceptual system develops; thus, at any stage of development, the individual will have a different set of concepts. Second, the process of concept formation is dependent on the social environment of the individual. According to Bartsch a higher level of conceptual organisation is dependent on linguistic representation. The individual learns to express himself in language through a process of correction and approval within a speech community. Thus, Bartsch presents a dynamic and flexible model of conceptual organisation on the basis of its linguistic surfacing, but grounds it in the experience of an individual as a member of a social environment.

Concept formation as Bartsch sees it has different levels of sophistication and of explication. This is reflected in her classification of concepts in two kinds: experiential and theoretical concepts.

Experiential concepts

Primarily concept formation in experience takes place on a level of sensory impressions in a flow of time, which becomes divided and its parts become interrelated. The experienced situations are grouped by similarities, oppositions and contiguity relations. The resulting similarity sets (such as e.g. 'warm things') and individual histories (consisting of e.g. different experiences of the same cat) are used to classify new experiences. A concept is understood

as an equivalence class: a set of collections of situations gathered under an aspect of similarity. The formation of concepts thus consists of an evolving structure of collections of experienced situations. As experience grows, concepts grow. A concept *stabilizes* over time: when newly experienced situations can be recognized as being similar to a specific set of experienced situations without importing novel aspects of similarity, that is, when it can be subsumed under an already formed concept without destabilizing its internal similarity, then that concept is stable. The situations that helped establish the stable concept, that is, the learning instances for that concept, are satisfaction situations for the utterances in which the concept is expressed, without negation.[163] Satisfaction situations are those situations that add to the growth of the concept. The concept, then, can be represented by every stable collection of its satisfaction situations.

The formation of concepts goes hand in hand with the mastering of language. Language is learned on the basis of encounters with similar utterances, along with similarities in the utterance situations. These utterance situations, as learning instances, are then the satisfaction situations for the concept expressed.[164] In the learning of language compositionality plays an important role; after learning how similar words can recur in different utterances, concepts expressed by single words may be individuated. Language both depends on and furthers the structuring through similarity classes. Learning an expression through its different utterance situations is based on discerning relevant similarities and oppositions between these situations, whereas an utterance itself serves as an indication that there are such similarities between the present utterance situation and former ones. An expression comes to express a concept through the formation of an equivalence class of the utterance situations. However, since an expression is not used for a uniquely determined similarity relation, different sequences of satisfaction situations for the use of an expression are formed, namely it satisfies the expression used under a *perspective*, that is, in a type of context. Hence: '[A perspective] secures restriction of similarity to relevant identities between satisfaction situations and it creates a meaningful relationship of contrast and opposition' .[165]

---

[163] Satisfaction situations are defined with respect to utterances as those situations that make an utterance true or fulfilled.

[164] Satisfaction situations for an utterance need not coincide with the utterance situation, since the utterance may for instance be about a situation somewhere else, or it may contain quantifiers, or negation. However, before being able to understand such utterances, the relation between satisfaction situations and utterance first has to be learned, in situations where the utterance situation either is, or is closely combined to the satisfaction situation for the utterance (Bartsch[1998], p 25).

[165] Bartsch[1998] p 40

Perspectives, then, are pre-given, and they are not concepts themselves. The process of concept formation described on the experiential level 'merely presupposes the availability of pre-cognitive perspectives which are capacities, dispositions and directions of attention in actions [...]. They are enough in order to cancel out irrelevant similarities and select relevant ones. But they cannot be concepts in themselves'.[166] Examples given of such basic perspectives, then, include 'colour', 'form', 'touchable material quality' or 'behaviour'.[167]

A set of satisfaction situations is formed under such a perspective, the situations included in this set do exhibit internal similarity, and hence these are called similarity sets. A similarity set grows with experience. It becomes stable when newly added satisfaction situations for the uttered expression under the same perspective do not alter the degree of internal similarity within the set. A similarity set then converges to an ideal, namely a set with a stable internal similarity.[168] This is then called a *maximal* similarity set with respect to the expression (under a perspective). It is 'a complete cognitive reconstruction, i.e. the concept, of the situational property or situation type expressed by [the expression]'.[169] Hence, a stable concept expressed by an expression under a perspective reconstructs a situational property.

In Bartsch's account of concept formation, most of the notions used are elaborated formally and are more or less mathematically defined. Since such precision is not required for this investigation, as I am interested in a philosophical inquiry into cognitive processes rather than in a formal description suitable for semantic modelling, I will not go into the formal

---

[166] Bartsch[1998]p 42

[167] Bartsch[1998] p 41

[168] Technically, such a maximal similarity set is rendered as the equivalence class of the elements in a *sequence* of growing similarity sets formed for an expression *e*, under a perspective **P**. That is, a similarity set grows monotonously with newly added satisfaction situations, the process of which is formally rendered by a growing sequence of similarity sets. Each of these similarity sets in the sequence has its own degree of internal similarity. When a concept for *e* under **P** stabilizes that means that the next similarity set in this sequence has the same 'degree 'of internal similarity, that is, the situations in a new similarity set do not alter the established minimal similarity relations between situations in the previously formed similarity set. The *maximal similarity set* of all these similarity sets in the sequence then has the following property: any satisfaction situation (occurring in any previously formed similarity set in the sequence) may be added to the maximal similarity set without altering its degree of internal similarity. Hence, stability of the concept expressed by *e* under **P** is determined by a stable degree of internal similarity, and not by an unchanging collection of satisfaction situations. Thus, although I refer to Bartsch's extensional understanding of concepts elsewhere, this should not be understood as a for once and for all determined set of specific exemplary situations; rather, the constituents in the set may change, but if it is stable, the degree of internal similarity is supposed to remain the same.

[169] Bartsch[1998] p 43

definitions. However several descriptions of cognitive acts or phenomena do acquire a specific, technical understanding.

A concept, or strictly speaking, a representative of a concept, as we saw, is described as the reconstruction of a property by the formation of a maximal similarity set of satisfaction situations, with a stable degree of internal similarity. A concept that is still growing, that is, a similarity set to which new satisfaction situations can be added in such a way that the degree of internal similarity changes, is called a *quasi-concept*. Bartsch takes it that after sufficient experience a quasi-concept becomes a stable concept. Further, the introduced notion of perspective allows for polysemy: an expression may express different concepts under different perspectives, i.e. in different types of contexts. In this way, an expression comes to express a *polysemic complex*. I will elaborate somewhat on the notion of perspectives, as well as that of polysemic complexes below.

Given the extensional representation of concepts and of meaning, *understanding* is defined as the integration of new data in the structure of already processed data, while preserving the stability of concepts. In other words, to understand an utterance means that the possible satisfaction situation expressed by the utterance in its context of use can be embedded in the conceptual structure of collections of satisfaction situations, without altering this structure.

In a speech community, then, different speakers cognitively construe concepts (or strictly speaking, their representatives of a concept) for an expression; and as they have different experiences, the sets of satisfaction situations they encounter may be different. However, as the use of the expression is regulated within the speech community, there are social norms for when a situation may be understood as a satisfaction situation for an expression. Such social norms are experienced in the speech community, through the process of learning language. That is, one learns that some utterances are accepted by fellow speakers, while other utterances are corrected in its application to a situation, and thus one learns satisfaction situations for expressions on the basis of trial and error. The internal similarity of a set of satisfaction situations under a perspective, then, is formed conform to social regulations. Ideally, then, speakers in a speech community use language in conformity to one another, and hence, ideally, the concepts an individual speaker reconstructs on the basis of socially accepted utterances should be coordinated socially. In this sense speakers have common ground in the formation of concepts for expressions. First, they have the actual satisfaction situations, which are given in experience, and secondly, they have a socially regulated system of connecting expressions to reality. Hence, intersubjectivity of concepts becomes possible.

From an epistemological point of view, an intersubjective concept of a situational property would be the concept that speakers share, that is, the ideal

limit of convergence of the internal similarity of the stable concepts of all partakers in a speech community. And from a realistic point of view, Bartsch writes, 'the property is in the world, distinguished from the concept that is its socially coordinated reconstruction'.[170] Thus, intersubjective concepts are the social or intersubjective reconstruction of properties.

The above characterization of the process of concept formation on the experiential level presents several notions as primitive. The first is the notion of a perspective. Perspectives are pre-given 'similarity spaces', which allow an individual to construe similarity sets of satisfaction situations. Both the notion of similarity that is used here, and the notion of perspective are discussed in section 2.3 below. Further, the notion of a situation is a realistic one, as situations have properties that may conceptually be reconstructed. Thus, a realist ontology seems to underlie the given model of concept formation. I take a closer look at these issues in the same section.

Theoretical concepts

As we saw, concepts on the experiential level include concepts formed on the basis of experience, and linguistically expressed concepts formed on the basis of experienced satisfaction situations for an utterance. Bartsch distinguishes these from concepts formed on a second, theoretical level, namely theoretical, or linguistically explicated concepts.

Bartsch defines these in the following way: 'On the theoretical level, linguistically expressed concepts are defined by the characteristic semantic distribution of the expression, i.e. the sentential complements of the expression used as a general term in universally quantified sentences'.[171] A theoretical concept consists of a conjunction of predications, which express *features* characteristic for the term in a *theory*. The predications that explicate the concept expressed by an expression A then have the form of sentences like 'An x that is A is...' or 'All x's of the kind A are...'. Features are themselves concepts, which function in the description of other concepts. A theory, to be sure, is here not understood as a scientific theory, but more generally, as a set of general sentences that may coherently be held true. It comprises, for instance, any bit of coherent everyday knowledge thought to be true, such as a wolf being voracious or fiercely cruel. Thus, a theory may include what Max Black calls 'an associated complex of commonplaces'. Theories, in Bartsch's model, seem to represent another understanding of background knowledge in interpretation, a

[170]Bartsch[1998] p 44
[171] Bartsch[2002] p 50

notion we discussed in the first chapter, namely in this case consisting of 'a coherent set of general sentences held true'.[172]

Theoretical concepts may correspond to linguistically expressed concepts, processed in experience. But there are also theoretical concepts that are formed exclusively on the basis of relations between concepts in a theory, i.e. with no direct experience of their extensions but solely on the basis of coherence with other concepts. We sometimes assume theoretical entities because it helps to 'order and explain certain experiences'.[173] Thus: 'For those theoretical concepts that have no correspondent on the experiential level, entities are imagined as referents without directly being experienced'.[174]

In a way, I will argue, *all* referents of theoretical concepts are imagined, rather than being directly experienced. I argue that the formation of theoretical concepts can only be grounded in experience indirectly, namely through the productive combination of the experientially formed meanings of the predicates that constitute a theoretical definition or explication. As we will see, in Bartsch's theory such productive work of cognition is left out of consideration. I address this issue in section 2.2. The problem with the assumption of two levels of concept formation, further, is that linguistically expressed concepts are defined on either level, thus presupposing the possibility of a reconstruction of experiential concepts as theoretical concepts. I address this issue in 2.3, and then present an alternative understanding of linguistically explicated meanings in 2.4. The argumentation for my position however will have to wait until I have outlined another important aspect of Bartsch's theory, namely how stability of concepts on the one hand, and change of perspective on the other play a role in creating new concepts.

Common ground

In the process of concept formation, the step from forming *experiential* concepts to forming *theoretical* concepts is taken when the individual starts formulating and ordering general knowledge. This can be done in various ways: 'by generalization based on induction, on hypotheses and confirmation, or just by accepting general sentences as true, when they are offered by authorities in certain fields of knowledge'.[175] In other words, theoretical concepts may be the result of reasoning on experiential data, and it may be the result of adopting general knowledge as true. A theoretical concept, defined by feature

[172] Bartsch[2002] p 50. For the discussion of background knowledge in interpretation, see the conclusion in chapter 1.
[173] Bartsch[1998] p 77
[174] Bartsch[1998] p 77
[175] Bartsch[1998] p 79

explication, is further always relative to a theoretical context, that is, to a set of general sentences held true. Therefore a theoretical concept is, in the words of Bartsch: 'merely partial compared to the concept the word expresses itself, the meaning of which is learned by acquaintance with the denoted things in language use'.[176] A single experiential concept can be developed into different theoretical concepts within different theories, even when sometimes the same expression is used for these different concepts. In different everyday lives, for instance, the word 'water' may express different concepts, formed in such different environments as where you fetch it with a bucket from a well after an hour's walk, or where it is the stuff coming out of the hose to wash your car with.

In Bartsch's model higher levels of concept formation are thus inseparable from a socially guided process of language mastering. Nevertheless, the process of concept formation remains firmly rooted in experience. Hence: 'The role of the level of common experiential concepts, and the existence of commonly accepted background theories is essential for the development of socially co-ordinated concepts. They form the background into which different theoretical concepts can be anchored into a single experiential concept'.[177]

In view of the *experiential* grounding of the concept 'water', the theoretical concepts formed in different environments can be anchored in a single 'point of convergence'.[178] That is, even if the feature explications for the concept of water between two individuals are very different, their experiential concepts do converge at a certain limit, since they agree on the denotation of 'water'. However, the experiential concept of 'water' has far more information to it than merely a denotation, and this information is represented in the sequence of satisfaction situations by which it is formed. Thus, on the experiential level, concepts are richer (or at least less partial) than on the theoretical level. Moreover, experiential concepts represent the possibility for intersubjective agreement.[179]

If someone living in the desert moves to a place where water runs from the tap and where it is not generally considered precious, his experience will give rise to new satisfaction situations for the concept of 'water'. In this way greater convergence of the concept as it is formed in the experience of different individuals may grow. It is in this way that the social coordination of concepts can be ensured. The prerequisite for this assumption is, naturally, that the

[176] Bartsch[1998] pp 126-127
[177] Bartsch[1998] pp 86-87
[178] Bartsch[1998] p 88
[179] It should be added that, according to Bartsch, the 'background theory' , understood in a weaker sense, should allow for a certain 'detectable overlap' between different speakers from different cultures, and hence allows for communication. Cf. Bartsch[1998] p 87.

person from the desert recognizes the stuff coming out of the tap as 'water'. Hence, the assumption of common ground in the formation of experiential concepts precedes the possibility of social coordination of concepts, that is, it precedes intersubjectivity.

With the assumption of common ground, we may recall the discussion on subjective universality in the last chapter. For Bartsch, the experiential level of representation is organized into concepts, and these are, to some extent, expressible. Experiential concepts further provide a common ground between people who hold different theories to be true. Thus the notion of experiential concepts presupposes first a basic rational assumption that experience and its conceptualization at some point converge for all (that is, that we in the end all recognize water). Second, the assumption of an objective reality (containing, for instance, the denotation of 'water') underlies the model of experiential concepts. These same assumptions, we saw, formed the *a priori* ground for subjective universals in the *Critique of Judgement*. Subjective judgements were made in 'conformity' with the rules of understanding laid out in the Critical Philosophy. We may ask, now, whether experiential concepts in Bartsch's model similarly could qualify as 'subjective universals', and by which principles they are formed. For, so far, the formation of experiential concepts took place on the basis of recognition of similarity. How, then, is similarity processed, and in what sense can theoretical concepts be grounded in the same experienced similarities?

Creative understanding

The natural end of the process of forming of a concept, is when the concept stabilizes. That is, an expressed concept becomes stable when new satisfaction situations for the utterance can be understood 'smoothly', without changing the degree of internal similarity of the set of satisfaction situations. When encountering an utterance referring to a situation that cannot thus be integrated in our conceptual system, a number of responses to the utterance are possible. Under certain circumstances a stable concept may destabilize and get extended or narrowed down. These circumstances occur for instance when massive counterevidence is encountered, or under normative importance of a given situation that does not meet our conceptual judgements. But generally, Bartsch claims, understanding aims at keeping stable structures intact. When we encounter an utterance situation that cannot be processed coherently through similarity or contiguity within the set of satisfaction situations for that expression, we have three alternative strategies to follow, before we take the fourth option of 'undoing' or destabilizing a stable concept.

First, if we do not understand what is meant, we may discard the utterance as semantically unacceptable, that is, as not fitting into our conceptual system: the utterance is nonsensical. Secondly, we may discard the utterance as false, that is, as not fitting in our personal knowledge base. In this case, the utterance expresses something that contradicts something we know and believe to be true. The third strategy, finally, is to try to form a new quasi-concept for the expression on the basis of this particular utterance. To do this, we seek to combine the present situation with some satisfaction situations in the concept under a different perspective, and thus form a tentative similarity set of satisfaction situations.

An illustration of this third strategy is the first encounter with the metaphorical use of the word 'pig'. Consider the situation where a boy, let us call him John, comes home covered with dirt, and his mother cries out: 'You're such a pig!'. If we normally understand the word 'pig' to indicate a natural kind, this utterance does not fit in our collection of pig-situations. Rather than understand her as saying that John swapped between species, or that pigs are sometimes human, we take a new *perspective* on the utterance situation. A perspective can be seen as a 'similarity space', that allows us to consider similarities, either perceptually or in the theoretical feature-basis, under a specific aspect. In the example, the context introduces a new perspective, for instance the aspect of behaviour, since we know pigs to be filth seeking, mud-covered animals. With this perspective, we form a new quasi-concept for 'pig', in which both the situations of dirty John and of typical pig behaviour are collected.

The new perspective itself is derived from context, and as such precedes the concept. In other words, given a context it may make sense to not reject the utterance as unacceptable or false, but to change perspective, and form a new concept for the terms in a given utterance. Understanding a metaphor, in Bartsch's theory, is a way of making new concepts, on the basis of new perspectives: 'Metaphor and metonymy are new ways of continuing series of satisfaction situations for an expression on the experiential level, and they are also new selections from available features and contiguity relations on the theoretical level, according to *contextually introduced* perspectives'.[180]

Thus, according to Bartsch, metaphorical interpretation is concept formation under a new, contextually introduced perspective. Metaphorical interpretation of an utterance under a new perspective involves looking for similarity, either of appearance in situations, or of aspects and relationships explicated in theories. As such, metaphorical use of a term introduces a new quasi-concept for a term, and so requires its present utterance situation to be placed in a new

[180] Bartsch[2002] p 55 (my italics)

series of situations that are similar under the different or new perspective. Hence, in the example 'You're such a pig!', the perspective of 'natural kind' is replaced by the perspective of 'behaviour', and so a new quasi-concept for the term 'pig' is formed, including as a satisfaction situation the instance where the John was called 'pig'.

As metaphors bring about quasi-concepts, these may turn into concepts. In this way the metaphorically used expression may come to express a 'polysemic complex'. The expression can then be used in at least two ways: it may be used to express the previously formed stable concept, or to express the metaphorical concept. Metaphor making, in this account, is essentially the same process as concept formation; through a perspective change, a new concept is formed on the basis of old and new information.

In the theory of metaphor thus outlined, a metaphorical meaning essentially is part of a polysemic complex, or at least, it stands at the beginning of a newly formed additional meaning for the metaphorically used expressions. Metaphor therewith is only different from other utterances in that they require the interpreter to change perspective, since the metaphorical use of an expression is not understood with the help of its normal or standard meaning. Thus, the notion of 'semantic clash' takes a different form; it is not a semantic property of the utterance, rather it is a novel interpretation within a context, deviating from interpretation of the expression *in a standard context,* that makes an utterance a novel metaphor. Further, clearly, the theory provides an account of how metaphorical interpretation is related to conceptual understanding, since metaphor is considered an instance of concept formation, and is not based on any special semantic or syntactic properties. Thus, Bartsch's model presents a solution to some of the problems I signalled in the theories on metaphorical interpretation in the first chapter.

However, there are more issues at stake in a theory of metaphorical interpretation. The first is the role of context, or contextually introduced perspectives. For Bartsch, the meaning of a metaphor such as 'You're a pig' is grasped immediately from the context. That is, the child notices his mother's anger and *knows* it is directed at his behaviour. Thus, context presents a perspective for the interpretation of a given utterance such that it is understood by similarity to previous satisfaction situations. The notion of a perspective, is primitive in the theory of Bartsch and it presumes a 'natural' processing of similarities. In the first chapter I observed that the interpretation of poetic metaphor may involve the *construction* of a context for a given expression or text. That is, the context here is *not* 'naturally' given, but is produced in reflection. I consider the role of context in Bartsch's model somewhat more extensively below, in order to see whether it is possible to explain the reflective construction rather than the natural adoption of a contextual perspective

within this model. Crucial for the theoretical analysis of a basic or natural perspective, we saw, is that it allows for the recognition of a restrictive similarity between situations experienced. In the following sections, I first discuss the notion of similarity that is proposed on the level of experientially ordering satisfaction situations, and then turn to how similarity plays a role in the organisation of the concepts that are formed thus.

2.2 Context and creative interpretation

Consider, again, the example of the little boy who was called a pig. In understanding this utterance, the context gave rise to a new perspective, in which formerly processed situations could be integrated alongside the present utterance situation. The assumption that understanding aims at keeping stable structures intact is vital for this analysis of concept formation. If this were not the case, in a situation like this the hearer, if he accepted the mother's utterance as a satisfaction situation for the 'standard' concept of pig, could react by simply extending his concept of 'pig' to include John. If such were the case, the opposition between pigs and humans would no longer be accounted for in the concept 'pig' under the 'natural kind' perspective. That is, on the basis of this utterance situation, the expression 'pig' would no longer be suitable to indicate an opposition between pigs and humans. The aim for stability prevents this kind of conflation of concepts on the basis of a single utterance. Thus, stability of concepts is tied to regularity in the use of expressions, and hence, to the normative character of language.

As a consequence, a person has to possess a set of stable concepts, before he can understand and produce utterances *as* metaphorical, that is, as involving another than the 'standard' meaning of the expression: 'Only when conceptual stability is almost reached the difference between standard use and creative use of an expression comes about'.[181] In particular the source concept (that is, 'pig' under the perspective of natural kind) must be stabilized to a high degree; otherwise the new use of the expression would indeed be integrated into the concept, and the concept would be destabilized (i.e. John would become part of the similarity set of pigs under the perspective of natural kind).

In the first stages of language acquisition, children form concepts where perspectives do not provide restrictions on a concept. Typically, they form heap concepts, or chain concepts, where concepts formed under different perspectives overlap or are not distinguished. Thus, here, the satisfaction situations for an expression are related by similarity or by contiguity

[181] Bartsch[2002] p 56

established or seen under freely changing perspectives. Thus children sometimes involuntarily present what, coming from a full-fledged language user, would sound as a peculiar metaphor: for instance the word 'dog' used for a dog, for a toothbrush, or for buttons on a coat.[182] Typically, such an utterance coming from a child will be corrected by his teacher. And typically, Bartsch notes, when the child is educated to a further degree, it learns to restrict the use of an expression for concepts under a perspective; thus it learns to not use a word such as 'dog' for hairy things.

According to Bartsch, a metaphorical concept can be generated on the experiential level: 'It is [...] possible to create new concepts directly on the experiential level, which appear metaphorical, seen on the background of already conventionalized language'.[183] In this case, then, the interpreter should reconstruct a property shared by the utterance situation and the satisfaction situations of the metaphorically used expressions: 'The principle of conceptual reconstruction of a property is that such concept formation must be possible by means of information available at the time of interpretation'.[184]

In the discussion of metaphor in the first chapter we saw several views on similarities involved in metaphor: Aristotle's description of proportional analogy, Indurkhya's projective analogy, and we could construe a type of analogy in Goodman's account of metaphorical expression as well. These accounts have in common that no specific aspect of similarity, that is: no *specific* property, whether a relational or a phenomenal one, has to be cognitively reconstructed as shared by all constituents in order to motivate the construed analogy. An indeterminate cluster of properties, we saw, could be compared as well as determinate properties based on relational or structural similarities. In other words: the analogy between cross-conceptual applications of a term in these models seemed to have a greater indeterminacy than the notion of perspective presented here seems to have. Hence, in view of the previously discussed theories, the assumption that reconstruction of a situational property on the basis of similarity between experienced satisfaction situations under a perspective always provides the meaning of the metaphorically used expression, is not self-evident.

Consider again the example of John, and let us suppose he only knows of terms being applied under a sense of 'natural kind', and that his concept of pigs is stable enough for him to know he definitely is *not* a pig (that is, he has a background of already conventionalized language). According to Bartsch's analysis of metaphor, he would change to the new perspective from the context

[182] Examples derived by Bartsch from Vygotsky (Bartsch[1998] p 57).
[183] Bartsch[1998] p 106
[184] Bartsch[1998] p 106

of the utterance, that is because of his mother's angry voice, from his experience of his mother commenting his behaviour and so on. This would not imply that he actively compares the situation to his knowledge of pig-situations, for the comparison between the present situation and previous pig-situations would not have to stop at the recognition of a similarity in behaviour. There could be many other respects in which the utterance situation reminds him of pigs, such as the foul smell of his clothes or the fact that he is overweight; maybe he is wearing something pink, or made a typical sound when coming home. Thus, I find, a reflective comparison of the utterance situation and former pig situations would not necessarily be restricted to the perspective of behaviour.

Perhaps an example of an expression employed less commonly as a metaphor is more illuminating with regard to the role of context. Consider again the example of the child that calls a toothbrush 'dog'. Here, the teacher takes the child to use the word 'dog' wrongly, and corrects it. If, however, the child and the teacher had just previously been engaged in a conversation on the difference in quality of fur on dogs and cats, and now the child points to the toothbrush while saying: 'dog', the teacher's understanding of the child's utterance might have been quite different. Instead of taking the child to use the wrong word, the teacher would now appreciate the utterance as meaningful, stating that a dog's fur is less smooth than that of a cat, or that a dog's fur is comparable to a rough brush. In this latter situation a perspective of perhaps 'furriness' or 'feel' with regard to the use of the word 'dog' would have been established, and this would have given the local background for understanding the utterance.

In the case of John the pig, something similar must be the case. The context of the situation must provide a clue that his mother is not pleased that he has made himself all dirty, and the perspective of behaviour must, therefore, have been made clear to him in some way or other (for instance: his mother grabbing a towel and starting to clean him). If the context does not provide such a clue, it remains unclear why John would understand the utterance on the basis of a single aspect of similarity, namely 'behaviour', since others were to be found (such as from the perspectives of colour, sound, smell, and so on).

Metaphorical concepts, by Bartsch's analysis, are the result of contextual introduction, or of the availability in an explicated feature basis, of a given perspective. Hence, it seems, if a perspective is not available in this sense, the metaphorically expressed quasi-concept would not be formed, and the meaning of the metaphor would remain indeterminate. Bartsch is aware of such indeterminateness. She writes: 'the more we already know about the

satisfaction situation for the new use of [the expression], the more precise the interpretation can be'.[185]

I concluded in the first chapter that the metaphorical interpretation of poetic texts typically involves the *construction* of a context. As we saw, many such 'fabricated' contexts are possible: imagination might provide any number of associations suitable to construct a context of interpretation. The construction of a context, then, in Bartsch's model should be explained as finding a perspective under which the metaphor might be understood.

Bartsch indeed proposes that especially in literary texts the lack of a determinate context allows for the formation of several perspectives in understanding a metaphor: 'creativity [...] is nothing more than the generation of the concepts possibly expressed by [the metaphorically used term]'.[186] Thus in poetic interpretation a number of possible perspectives might be found, each yielding different concepts for the metaphorically used expression.

However, this account of indeterminateness is not entirely satisfactory. We saw that in all metaphors, and not only poetic ones, interpretation is not limited to a single perspective. For instance, even in the plain utterance 'You're such a pig' different perspectives *must* play a role in a single interpretation. The 'moral' of the metaphor here is that a human is *not* a pig, and thus that behaving like one is not a good thing. In other words, for the utterance to achieve its impact, an understanding of the word 'pig' under the 'natural kind' perspective is required in addition to an understanding under the aspect of 'behaviour', and hence the former is not to be dismissed in the interpretation. Thus, the meaning of the metaphor cannot be identified as belonging to the (quasi)concept pig under the contextually introduced perspective of behaviour alone.

The characterization of metaphorical meaning as one concept in a polysemic complex of concepts expressed by an expression then does not seem to reflect the interpretation of a metaphorically used expression. Especially when considering poetic interpretation, but also in reflecting upon the meaning of 'pig' in the previously used example, the process of forming a concept under a natural, pre-given perspective seems to be too limited to render the possibility of understanding an expression under different perspectives. The description of the infantile process of concept formation, in which different perspectives run through a single over-generalizing concept for the expression, seems to come closer to how meaning is produced in reflective metaphorical interpretation.

For instance, when we, as adult speakers (or as theorists), consider a child that applies the word 'dog' to a toothbrush, we are able to reconstruct the way the

[185] Bartsch[1998] p 110
[186] Bartsch[1998] p 110

child uses this word. That is, in reflecting on its utterance, we are able to see that the child does not form the concept under the standard perspective of 'natural kind', and we can reconstruct a different perspective, namely something like 'furriness' or 'feel' under which the child uses the word. Using the thus reconstructed non-standard perspective we could *imagine* a context in which this perspective could be socially accepted. That means that we are able to reconsider an initial understanding of the utterance under given perspective, and are able to reconstruct other perspectives in *reflection* on an utterance. Thus, in reflection, perspectives may be adopted and changed in the process of interpreting, as a matter of reconstructing the speaker's use of an expression in context. So, the reflective construction of an understanding of the use of the expression here seems to run through different possible perspectives, just like the child does when it tries out the word 'dog' for a toothbrush or for buttons on a coat. The difference between the two, of course, is that we as adults are very much aware of which of these possible perspectives belongs to a socially acceptable use of the expression, as we in our dealings with the everyday world are very much dependent on our capacity to produce and understand conventional use of language.

If reflection on the use of an expression under a perspective is thus possible, and if such reflection may lead to the formation of a new understanding of the expression in context, then that seems to entail that the pre-given perspective is not always immediately effected in the context, but that it may also be taken on consciously, namely in reflection.

Since perspectives are defined by Bartsch as pre-given 'similarity spaces' in concept formation on the experiential level, they have to do with the ability to process similarity in experience, as a matter of physical or perceptual capacities. Thus, pre-conceptual recognition of similarity, whether of structure or of appearance, is the basis on which stability of concepts on the experiential level rests. This has to do with the assumption of common ground: if the satisfaction situations for an utterance, from a realistic point of view, *have* the situational properties reconstructed in a concept under a given perspective, then stability of the expressed concept would depend on, first, the perceptual processing of these existing properties, and, second, on the social coordination of the expression as being correctly applied to those situations that indeed are recognized to have those properties.

However, if perspectives may be adopted consciously in reflection, then the assumption of immediate effectuation of similarity under a perspective in perceptual processing must be paired with another aspect of interpretation that is intentional, and not a basic physical response to the situation. This latter aspect is the aim in interpretation to reconstruct the way an expression is used. For this we need to be able to actively adopt perspectives in interpretation,

such that in reflection we may judge the appropriateness for understanding a given utterance under one or another perspective.
Bartsch does consider the possibility of cognitively reconstructing a perspective as a concept itself, on the basis of experiential concepts formed under that perspective. I consider how this is sometimes possible in her theory in the section below. I first look at the role of similarity in the formation of experiential concepts, and then discuss whether this understanding of similarity could be useful for the characterization of how perspectives may be cognitively reconstructed.

2.3 Context in interpretation and the interpretation of context

In the model outlined by the theory of Dynamic Conceptual Semantics, experience, that is, the perception of different situations initially provides conceptual distinctions. Nevertheless the issue how concepts are cognitively represented has not yet been touched upon. The first problem concerning the issue of representation, is that Bartsch explicitly refrains from discussing what it is that is represented in the mind.
In the introduction to Bartsch[1998] she remarks that Kant's notion of a schema is appropriate.[187] However, Bartsch prefers the definition of concept-representations as collections of satisfaction situations, that is a *formal* extensional definition, as opposed to a psychologically real conception: 'The notions of cognitive schema or conceptual network used in cognitive approaches are equivalent to the notion of concept as it is used above. A cognitive schema is an abstraction from a series of examples; it is a representation of what they have in common. Because we are hardly able to fully express what a schema is of, for example, a dog, I prefer the extensional representation of a concept by a maximal similarity set of a stabilising sequence of similarity sets of examples'.[188]
Bartsch's theory on concept formation is first described in logical or semantic terms, in the way discussed so far. She also discusses how the conceptual system developed thus might be modelled in a connectionist model of cognition, and hence how the conceptual system could be grounded in a neuronal model. Thus, some understanding of cognitive representation is developed in the description of the functioning of the brain. Bartsch is then very clear on the cognitive reality of concepts: '[...] there is in the brain a stabilization going on of the activation patterns caused by the previous examples provided in the learning process. The stabilized activation pattern is

[187] Bartsch[1998] Introduction, p 11

an indication of the examples of the corresponding concepts. In the brain we thus have concept indicators. Concepts or conceptual networks are not in the brain, though there are networks of conceptual indicators. We are not conscious of concepts, though we are of their examples'.[189] Since concepts on the experiential level are represented as the cognitive reconstruction of situational properties under a perspective, the notion of representation seems then to apply to what is derived from acquaintance with objects and events in experienced situations. Representation, in this sense, would be limited to reproducing perceptual presentations, and hence, in the terminology of the previous chapter, involves merely a reproductive function of imagination.

Bartsch further gives an explicit clue with her understanding of what it means to recognize similarities. On the experiential level, similarity is narrowed down to a relation of similarity between the causal effects of these situations which the individual undergoes. It is based on the awareness and recognition of bodily reactions: 'Similarity can be stated by an individual on the basis of identity of causal effects of identical quasi-parts of situations on the individual. These causal effects are purely physiological, i.e. bodily reactions'.[190] Similar bodily reactions are recognized under perspectives, and hence, perspectives on this experiential level are understood as physically distinguished types of experience. Within these perspectives, new concepts are created through oppositions. For instance, under the perspective of 'colour' different colours are distinguished. On this level of causally effected bodily reactions then, the 'acquaintance with denoted things' is represented.

This provides a form of ontological grounding, which is acknowledged also at other points. For instance, in a comment on Indurkhya, Bartsch writes: 'Strictly speaking, we have to admit that there is no creation of similarity. A similarity that is not there, cannot be created. Rather it comes into focus within the direction and selection which a context or a perspective provides'.[191] This observation is again confirmed in the description of how new concepts come about: '*Ontologically*, the property newly expressed by [the expression] exists, but *epistemologically* the corresponding concept is newly formed on the level of concept formation'.[192] In other words, our conceptual system, insofar as it is founded on experience, is grounded in reality; it is built on similarities that 'are there', waiting to be perceived. The extensional definition of concepts as sets of experienced situations is in perfect accordance with this realist view on

---

[188] Bartsch[2002] p 63
[189] Bartsch[2002] p 65
[190] Bartsch[1998] p 40
[191] Bartsch[2002] p 69
[192] Bartsch[1998] p 100 (my italics)

experiential concepts.[193] And along with it, the representations that fall under a concept are understood as selected bits of perception. The selection of such bits of perception as being relevant for understanding is then what a perspective effects, as a pre-given, non-conceptual 'similarity space'. Thus, an assumed natural capacity to focus on relevant similarities in a context allows, on the experiential level, for the formation of restrictive concepts.

According to Bartsch such basic, pre-conceptual perspectives may sometimes become *second order concepts*. That is, a perspective can sometimes be cognitively reconstructed as a second order similarity set over similarity sets that represent different concepts. The perspective under which a given concept is understood is thus formally characterized as a second order concept, that is, as a set of concepts: 'A perspective is a set of properties, namely the set of those that fall under it. It is a second order concept'.[194] However such second order concepts are not available in the process of concept formation at all times: 'In the beginning of concept formation, perspectives cannot be presupposed as second order concepts, i.e. as concepts of concepts. As such they can rather be reconstructed after first order concepts have been acquired. Basic, physiologically pre-given perspectives or similarity spaces [...] can then be reconstructed as second order concepts, and thereby, so to speak, recovered'.[195]

With the notion of a second order concept as the cognitive reconstruction of perspective, a somewhat complex organization of satisfaction situations results. For example, as we saw, according to Bartsch the term 'pig' has different satisfaction situations under the perspective of 'behaviour' (including dirty John) than under that of 'natural kind' (not including John). The perspective of 'natural kind' may then be reconstructed into a second order concept that contains many more concepts than that of pigs; for instance, it also contains that of humans of which John is an example.

---

[193] Bartsch calls her position one of 'internal realism' as described by Putnam (p 13, Bartsch[1998]). Putnam puts it thus: 'Just as the objective nature of the environment contributes to fixing the reference of terms, so it also contributes to fixing the objective truth conditions for sentences ' (p 85, Putnam[1983]). In further descriptions of his 'internal' or 'pragmatic' realism, Putnam refers to many authors when explaining his view. Meaning and truth are dependent on the use of words, in the sense of Wittgenstein's *Investigations*; and reality is identified with 'the world' as Goodman describes it in *Ways of Worldmaking* , which for Goodman serves as both a foundation and a limit to the truth of all possible 'world views' (Cf. section 3.3 ch1). Further, Putnam appeals to Kant's distinction between metaphysical and empirical realism: 'metaphysical realism' is discarded, while an 'empirical realism' remains possible. In a later work the view is summarized thus: 'truth is idealized rational acceptibility', which, Putnam emphasizes, should be taken to mean that rational acceptability is just as dependent on truth as vice versa (Putnam[1983] p 115).

[194] Bartsch[2002] p 51

[195] Bartsch[1998] p 41

Formally, a perspective reconstructed thus has a logical structure similar to that of a polysemic complex, that is, it is a set of concepts. The polysemic complex is a set of concepts that are expressed by the same expression under different perspectives, while the reconstructed perspective is a set of concepts that were formed under a similar perspective. Other than a polysemic complex, Bartsch writes, sometimes a reconstructed perspective may be logically rendered as a first order concept: 'For example with the second order concept 'colour' there corresponds the first order concept 'to have colour''.[196] However: 'Not all perspectives can be lowered this way [...] the second order concept 'set of health concepts' cannot be lowered in this way, since 'to have health' is not a genus proximum for all health concepts. If someone is ill, he does not have health, although 'to be ill' is a concept under the perspective health'.[197]

A second order concept reconstructed from a basic perspective however does not simply express a property which all concepts formed under that perspective must share, such as a hypernym would express in a taxonomic order. Bartsch writes: 'In order to reconstruct a basic perspective as a second order property later on, we need to consider similarity sets for different expressions used under the basic perspective, and can even extend this second order set by similarity sets for which there are no expressions used up to now [...]. An example is 'colour' as a second order concept. The basic perspective is the activity of the bodily apparatus for perceiving colours. Colours are not all similar to each other perceptually, rather they are similar functionally, namely as being perceived by us in the same manner. Under the relational perspective 'manner of perception' they form a similarity set of similarity sets'.[198]

What the concepts in a reconstructed perspective share is a 'common presupposed manner in which the concepts are internally related to the individuals they characterize'.[199] Thus, it seems, the reconstruction of a similarity between how different concepts were formed, such as expressed by 'boy' or by 'pig', is what underlies the formation of a second order concept such as 'natural kind'. Reconstructed perspectives can be rendered as the series of maximal similarity sets of different concepts formed under the same perspective. The reconstructed perspective formally is the equivalence class of all these concepts. Bartsch describes how second order concepts may sometimes be described logically as first order concepts. Hence in the first order-rendering of 'colour', the internal similarity of the set would consist of

[196] Bartsch[1998] p 76
[197] Bartsch[1998] p 76
[198] Bartsch[1998] p 41
[199] Bartsch[1998] p 76

the *manner* in which a concept, such as 'red' or 'green' is used to characterize individuals in the satisfaction situations in the concept.

The elements of a second order concept all are concepts. These, we saw, are described as cognitively reconstructed situational properties. But that means that second order concepts consist of the cognitive reconstruction of cognitive reconstructions of situational properties. Thus, to form a second order concept involves judging *cognitive representations* as being similar on the ground that they are formed under a given perspective. Hence, it is an act of forming concepts *about* cognizing itself, namely of ordering concepts by the type of similarity that is recognized between situations in a concept. This observation raises some questions, the most pressing being how the similarity between different concepts under a single perspective can be construed, if it is not, as in first order concepts, on the basis of similarity recognition in experience. I pursue this question, by considering how similarity was introduced as a primitive notion in Bartsch's theory, namely as something we recognize under a perspective in reality.

The recognition of similarity, we saw, was grounded in reality. On the basis of recognizing properties in the world, it was held possible to form concepts about the world. On the basis of how an expression is used in a situation, further, we form concepts on the first level. The realistic grounding of linguistically expressed concepts thus functioned as common ground: concepts formed by individuals could be held to converge ideally, namely as an (ideal) maximal similarity set of all satisfaction situations for an utterance accepted by all partakers in the speech community. Hence, intersubjectivity of concepts could be presupposed on the basis of, first, reality and the existence of properties in it, and, secondly, on the basis of conformity in the use of expressions in a speech community.

As we saw, a reconstructed perspective is based on the cognitive reconstructions of reality's properties in concepts, and not on directly perceiving reality itself. Its formation then requires something other than forming a collection of satisfaction situations of the different expressions that were processed under the same perspective, since this would be only a first order rendering of the second order concept.

A concept based on the similarity of 'manners to internally relate concepts to individuals', at least presupposes the possibility of an account of such manners, and this in Bartsch's model is precisely what is evaded. Internal similarity relations in a concept, which constitute the situational property reconstructed by a concept, are theoretically rendered in the form of an extensional definition, namely as the 'internal similarity degree' of an equivalence class of all the similarity sets of satisfaction situations. That is to say, the notion of similarity is itself never considered by Bartsch as a cognitively represented

abstraction (i.e., a concept as an abstract representation), but is always given in terms of a set of examples, or representants of the concept. The actual cognitive extraction of similarity is left to the neural machinery underlying acts of concept formation: the 'stabilised activation pattern'. That is, in cognitive processing, similarity between situations emerges from perceptual faculties and from a functionality of the brain: similarity emerges as a 'bodily reaction'.

It might be possible that second order concepts are formed on the basis of emergent similarities in 'manners' of perceiving, as a matter of physiological correspondence between activation patterns that function as 'concept indicators' for different concepts under the same perspective. However, if that is the type of similarity that constitutes second order concepts, then clearly such concepts are not to be formed on the basis of *common* ground, unless we assume that all individuals have similar (in the sense of ideally converging) activation patterns *for* activation patterns. Thus, we would assume that there are basic perspectives for reconstructing basic perspectives, namely, brain-internal modes of grouping stabilized activation patterns as being of the same type.

Rather than engaging in a fantastic hierarchy of different bodily capacities of generating similarities on a physiological level, I think it might be useful at this point to consider what the function is of assuming, sometimes, the possibility of a cognitive reconstruction of a perspective.

Along with the different levels of theorizing in Bartsch's theory, the notion of perspective seems to have two functions. The first is when it is used to explain how we do have concepts that can be characterized by similarity on a physiological level, and here it serves to distinguish a concept under a perspective from the cluster of concepts for which an expression may be used. Thus, with the notion of a basic perspective, Bartsch achieves an understanding of linguistic meaning that on the one hand explains how meanings are stable and socially coordinated (that is, under a standard perspective), while on the other hand the notion of perspective can explain the formation of a creative or novel interpretation of the expression in a context (that is, under a new, contextually given perspective). In this way Bartsch can explain how language is interpreted both on the basis of linguistic convention and on the basis of individual interest.

The second function of the notion of perspective is that it plays a role in the classification of concepts as belonging to a given second order concept. The notion of the *cognitive reconstruction* of a basic perspective, thus, seems to serve a different goal, namely one that allows for a systematic *semantic* classification of concepts as being of the same kind. In a sense, then, it seems to be intended to ground general concepts (such as human kind, or colour) in a manner of perceiving. However, insofar as a perspective can be reconstructed on the basis

of experiential concepts, we saw, it requires an account of recognizing similarity between the ways concepts are formed in perception. Such account lacks in Bartsch's model, since the actual process of formation of concepts basically is deferred to a physiological level of brain activation patterns. Thus, if general concepts would experientially be grounded in a class of different concepts processed under the same perspective, they would lack common ground. As a consequence, as far as their experiential content would go, general concepts would not be intersubjective, as Bartsch notes: 'agreement in judgements and objectivity of judgements are the public restrictions on concepts, which by themselves are subjective entities, explicated in cognitive theory'.[200] Hence, the use of expressions for concepts formed on the basis of subjective judgements on how concepts are formed subjectively would not be guided by social agreement on satisfaction situations. Their satisfaction would consist of correctly applying this concept in a similar manner as having applied another concept; while actually 'applying' a concept is an activity somewhere in the brain, namely of an example being processed as a representant of a concept. Thus, insofar as the reconstruction of a perspective is supposed to ground second order concepts in experience, it yields an inherently subjective representation of a general concept.

Clearly, we do have some intersubjective evidence of a concept being applied to an individual, namely when an *expression* is used for the characterization of that individual. Thus, in reflection on an utterance, we can characterize the expression 'pig' as being used under a 'natural kind' perspective to characterize an individual, or we may claim it is used under a different perspective. However, to be able to do so in a manner that is open for correction or approval in a speech community, we have to be able to use the second order concept of 'natural kind' in a manner that is likewise open for social correction and approval. That is, we *do* need an intersubjective concept (or at least an ideal of it) for such second order concepts. As we saw, the 'cognitive reconstruction' of the perspective on the basis of experientially formed concepts fails in this sense, and hence, an experiential understanding of second order concepts would not yield an intersubjective meaning for an expression used to characterize the type of understanding. For example the use of the expression 'natural kind' does not have common ground insofar as it is based on a subjective representation of the similarity between cognitively represented similarity sets of experienced satisfaction situations containing boys, pigs or whales.

What then, should be the type of similarity that constitutes such second order concepts? The function of the theoretical notion of perspective, to recall it once

[200] Bartsch[1998] p 241

more, was to narrow down the concept expressed by an expression to the way it is used in a context. The pre-given basic perspective allows for recognition of a context that makes a specific understanding of the expression used relevant. Hence, a second order reconstruction of a perspective would involve the characterization of how the context helps one to understand the meaning of the word. From a semantic point of view, as taken by Bartsch in her theory of concepts, an expression thus expresses a context-specific concept. To characterize perspectives formally as second order concepts allows for a semantic, systematic recognition of types of expressed meanings. In this way, it allows to some extent classification and prediction of what an expression means, even if only for the 'standard' uses of an expression. With the notion of a perspective, then, semantics, as the theoretical, general characterization of meanings of expressions in relation to satisfaction situations, is theoretically related to subjective concept formation, as a matter of individuals processing utterances in contexts.

However, perspectives are defined as cognitive, or physiological, capacities, and not as properties of a context. Hence, to classify concepts by perspectives in a systematic semantic way, either yields a *subjective* classificatory system of linguistic meanings for the individual that forms them, or it requires an account of how perspectives are related to the context in the sense of its real existence, thus grounding the notion of perspective intersubjectively. With the understanding of perspectives as a pre-given, non-conceptual similarity space, it seems that Bartsch aims at the latter. As we saw, the basic perspective is unconsciously effected by the context of the utterance, and is not a matter of subjectively reconstructing concepts as being formed in one way or another. However, that would imply that a reconstruction of perspectives as concepts involves the conceptual reconstruction of properties of the context, and not of the subjective manner of interpretation. Hence, perspectives would *not* be second order concepts containing the concepts that are subjectively formed, but they would be reconstructed properties in the context which prompt the interpreter to understand an expression in one way, and not another.

Now, if perspectives are not second order concepts, but situational properties of the context, then they are only contingently related to the situational properties that are reconstructed as concepts expressed by an expression. Consequently a characterization of concepts by perspectives would yield an account that relates one meaning of an expression to aspects of a context. Thus, a perspective would be a restriction presented to an interpreter in the utterance situation. The use of an expression would then yield a concept, based on both the utterance situation (that gives a perspective for understanding) and its former satisfaction situations (that are considered insofar as they are related to

the utterance situation (that is under my latter characterization of a perspective as a property of context).

However, if we understand the interpretation of an expression as being based on relations between utterance situations and former satisfaction situations, then the restrictive formal semantic definition of a concept as a maximal similarity set of satisfaction situations under a perspective seems to become impossible; for the notion of perspective can then not be characterized as a second order set that classifies concepts as being of the same type, but it is a property of context in relation to which an expression may be interpreted in one and not another way. Understanding perspectives in this way, an account of reflective interpretation can be envisaged, as being paired to a somewhat revised understanding of the process of concept formation as Bartsch presents it.

Understanding, we saw, is characterized as follows: in an utterance situation a perspective is adopted, as a matter of physiological response to the utterance situation. In my understanding, this would be due to the processing of a given aspect of the utterance situation. This perspective allows for the recognition of the utterance, in Bartsch's terms, as a representant of a concept. That is, it allows the interpreter to interpret the utterance in a cognitive representation based on a sequence of previously experienced satisfaction situations. This representation of previous satisfaction situations, then, would in my view be opened up by the recognition of a property of the utterance situation. To this extent, understanding an utterance may be regarded as a matter of physical, largely unconscious processing, and may possibly be modelled in terms of activation patterns, in some connectionist model.

However, this type of automatical understanding must be complemented with an account of reflective interpretation. That is, one may *consciously* turn to an aspect of the utterance situation, and consider how this influences the interpretation of the expression. By focusing on another aspect of the utterance situation, a different interpretation of the utterance can result. Thus, where we could not understand a child that calls a toothbrush 'dog' if we focus on how to name objects in the right manner, we *may* understand the child if we focus on another aspect of the utterance situation, namely, the property of having hairs. Hence, by consciously focusing on a different aspect of an utterance situation, we adopt a new perspective, which opens up a different representation of previous satisfaction situations for the utterance. Further, since the notion of a perspective now no longer *restricts* the possible cognitive representations of satisfactions situations that are activated, but rather *enables* such representations to be called up by focusing on an aspect of the context, the interpretation of an utterance is not restricted to a single perspective. Rather, if

we notice several aspects of an utterance situation, then several representations of satisfaction situations are called up at the same time.

For instance, some aspects of the situation of a mother shouting 'you're such a pig!' to her son will be the cause that John understands he is being scolded for his behaviour (since his mother starts to clean him, or generally shouts when he has done something bad), while other aspects (for instance recognition of the word 'pig', or the filth on his clothes) will be the cause of his understanding the word 'pig' in a more standard sense as indicating an animal. And if he would consider these different representations, that is, if he would reflect on the situation, then he would understand that the word 'pig' is used differently than he was accustomed to. From the example we can see that although the utterance may be understood immediately in its context, its recognition *as* a metaphor will be the result of reflection.

We may attempt to generalize this observation, with respect to the theoretical reflection on the use of expressions in semantics. The semantic characterization of a linguistic meaning as pertaining to some and not other uses of an expression is not what plays a role in cognitive understanding. Understanding is a matter of an individual being able to process an expression in relation to a context, in whichever way he may. Rather, semantic classification of an expression is an outcome of reflection on the use of an expression. Hence, the classification of a set of satisfaction situations of an expression as sharing a contextual perspective is a theoretical characterization of how properties in a context allow for a consistent, or similar use of expressions. To *name* such a set of similar uses as belonging to a perspective like 'colour', 'behaviour', or 'human kind' is to reflectively consider how contexts of different utterances may be characterized by a general term. And hence, when developing a semantic theory, such reflectively reconstructed and named properties of context may come to define the meaning of an expression in a context. But this is a reflective reconstruction of past use of expressions; its definatory or classificatory value for future uses, as well as for singular, irregular use of an expression, remains only an ideal. Thus, concepts or meanings indeed are not in the brain; rather, they are located in theory, as idealized descriptions of the practice of communication. What a theory that stipulates certain uses of an expression as correct or as conforming to former use of an expression does achieve, then, is the formulation of general, socially accepted criteria for the correct use of an expression in a given situation. And hence, although semantics cannot describe the actual, subjective process of cognitive interpretation, it *can* formulate general theoretical criteria of truth or appropriateness for the use of language.

In my above account of reflective interpretation, two questions remain unanswered. The first is raised by the observation that reflection is related to

aspects or properties of an utterance situation. It would seem, therefore, that such reflection is restricted to the perception of a situation. How, then, should the interpretation of poetic texts, which were considered to *lack* an immediate context, be explained in the above account of reflective interpretation? I consider this question in section 2.4 below, by relating my understanding of a perspective to linguistic or textual context. In this discussion, I will draw first on Bartsch's definition of theoretical concepts, and second on Goodman's theory of exemplification.

Second, in the above account I speak of representations of previously experienced satisfaction situations. This use of the term 'representation' is yet unfounded, for the notion of a sequence of satisfaction situations is derived from Bartsch's semantic definition of concepts under a perspective, and as such does not entail an understanding of what it means to cognitively represent situations or to recognize similarities. In Bartsch's theory, we saw, the discussion of cognitive representation of situations was limited to an understanding of brain activation patterns. In section 3 below I consider a different theory of concept formation developed by Lawrence Barsalou. Like that of Bartsch, this theory grounds concepts in perceptual processing on a neuronal level; however Barsalou attempts to model a psychological understanding of cognitive representation. In the discussion of his model I focus on this understanding of cognitive representation, insofar as it allows for a characterization of the process of both understanding under a perspective in the sense described above, and of reflection, including poetic interpretation.

2.4 Language and productive imagination

The notion of perspective, as opening up a specific understanding of an utterance, was newly understood above as a recognized aspect of the utterance situation, which enables a specific representation of a set of satisfaction situations for the present use of an expression. So far, then, a perspective was understood as a perceptually processed property of the utterance situation, which might seem to entail that understanding an utterance requires a perceptual processing of the situation in which an utterance occurs. However, as I argued in the first chapter, sometimes we interpret a text or utterance by ignoring the precise situation in which we encounter it. I will argue that a context of interpretation may be provided for by the textual or linguistic context, with or without considering other perceptually processed aspects of the utterance situation. For this, I first return to Bartsch's theory, in which linguistic meaning is defined on two different levels.

Up to now, the discussion was mainly concerned with Bartsch's definition of linguistically expressed concepts on the experiential level, namely in terms of maximal similarity sets of satisfaction situations formed under a perspective. The second level on which linguistic meaning is defined, is that of theoretical concept formation.

In her definition of theoretical concepts Bartsch's previously noted preference for extensional definitions recurs. A theoretical concept, to recall the definition, is theoretically defined through feature explication. That is, a collection of other linguistically expressed concepts is used to define its meaning. In its formal make up, this definition seems to coincide with the formerly discussed notion of exemplification, developed by Nelson Goodman.[201] In either, the content associated with a term is given by a collection of predicates that describe (aspects of) this content. For Goodman however, this set includes all descriptions of the term (even such contrived descriptions as 'uttered at half past six yesterday morning'). For Bartsch the definition includes only those predicates that are features characteristic of the concept given in a background theory held true, and which contain some kind of quantification over the expression that is explicated, such as 'all roses are ...'.[202] The differences lie first of all in the respective preferences of Bartsch and Goodman for 'features' versus 'descriptions'. Bartsch further restricts the features in a theoretical definition to those features held true in a theory, whereas for Goodman any description is right 'for a world it fits'.[203]

Goodman's terminology is motivated by his pluralist and nominalist position. The former perspective seems to agree with Bartsch's suggestion that many alternative theories are possible and may all be grounded in a 'real' world, although, other than Bartsch, Goodman refutes the idea of reality bringing an ontological structure to the conceptual classification of experience. His nominalist perspective motivates Goodman's rejection of cognitivist talk. Unlike Bartsch, he presents a theory of 'labels' without allusion to any cognitive representation, either of labels, or of the meanings they have. As a result of his position the notion of similarity that sustains the model of concept formation Bartsch presents, would be meaningless for Goodman. Instead, he claims everything can be found similar to anything, and hence, similarity is meaningless.[204]

For Bartsch, we noted, similarity is causally effected, and comes to the fore if we focus on the relevant aspect by adopting a perspective under which the

[201] See section 3.3, ch 1.
[202] Bartsch[2002] p 50
[203] Goodman[1978a] p 132
[204] Cf. Goodman[1972a and b]

aspect then can be seen. For Goodman, this is beside the point: if our goal is to find some similarity, such an aspect can always be found, since there are always ways of bringing two unsimilar events under a description, even if it is an uninformative one, such as 'it happened during my lifetime', or 'it was situated on earth'. In fact, any situation is related by contiguity of space and time to any other, and thus, similarity can be stated truthfully for any two situations or utterances. Thus, Goodman is quite right if his claim is understood as saying that a perspective yielding similarity can always be found. From this point of view, whether similarity is causally effected or not does not influence the fact that we can always state some similarity.

Thus, a crucial difference between Goodman's and Bartsch's points of view lies in the latter's qualification of features held *characteristic* of a concept; which entails that situations that are characterized by a given concept share a salient property, which we, as a matter of 'automatical' physical processing perceive and conceptualize under a perspective. In the use of theoretical concepts, salience depends on a theoretical perspective. That is, as Bartsch contends, a theoretical concept always depends on a background theory. For Goodman, we saw, a label is always used within a 'schema' of other labels. That is, its use depends on the oppositions and similarities with other labels that are relevant for the present use of a label. Hence, a complex of cohering predications is presupposed for the use of a predicate. For Goodman such schema is not a theory in the sense Bartsch defines it. For Bartsch, a theory is coherent, and, moreover, it consists of predications that can be taken as definitions, namely explicating descriptions quantifying over the expression used (hence if a theory contains a sentence 'a rose is a plant', then it does not contain a sentence like 'Rose is a rose', unless Rose is a plant). For Goodman, the label 'rose' is not thus tied to theoretically stated truth conditions, since he allows for more types of meaning than denotation, and hence for a different understanding of truth. The label 'rose' then may consistently be applied to all plants, as well as to Rose.

As one would expect, Bartsch explicitly distances herself from Goodman. She criticizes his nominalist position on the grounds that it can only deal with what is expressed in language, and misses aspects and relationships of the referents of the labels that are part of experience (general as well as individual), but are not expressed linguistically. Thus, Goodman's objection that anything can be made similar to anything can be countered 'by pointing out that similarity has to recognised under a perspective, under which identities and differences can be discerned'.[205] Thus, Goodman misses a cognitively relevant basic perception of similarity, which by Bartsch is explained as recognition under a perspective. Indeed, as I remarked in the discussion of Goodman's account of metaphor

[205] Bartsch[1998] p 9

above, his account in terms of labels runs into arbitrariness, because it lacks any motivation for the system of discrimination that different labels provide, other than that these labels are currently so used. However, the relations of exemplification and denotation that Goodman proposes do provide a useful characterization of cognitive representations of linguistic meaning.

As we saw, for Bartsch, meaning is defined on the experiential level, where expressions are related to satisfaction situations. It is defined on the theoretical level, by being related to descriptions in a background theory. Following Bartsch's twofold semantic characterization of linguistic meaning, we may then similarly consider the *cognitive* representation of linguistic meaning as consisting of two types of representations: namely, on the one hand, as representations of perceptually processed satisfaction situations for an utterance, that is, as formed by a representation of what the used expression may denote, and on the other hand, as representations of previously processed descriptions of the expression uttered. The latter representation of the meaning of a word, then, may be characterized as a representation of predicates exemplified in the sense Goodman describes it. Namely, it would consist of a contextually relevant selection of those predications that we have learned to apply the expression at hand, or that we have learned to be applied in connection to it. The 'theoretical' or rather, the linguistically expressed component of our meaning representation would then not represent a theory that should be both coherent and held true, but a less determinate complex of previously related predications. Such a complex would contain a selection from descriptions from definitions and fairy-tales, commonplaces and poetic phrases, practical communications and uttered fantasies; in short, all descriptions that constitute our experience as a partaker in a speech community. If a history of linguistic experience is thus somehow represented cognitively in connection to an expression, we may begin to understand the role of the linguistic context in the interpretation of an expression in an utterance.

Since I understood a perspective above as an aspect of context, that enables certain, but not other representations of satisfaction situations for the uttered expression, I may now understand the presence of a linguistic or textual context as equally providing a perspective for interpretation. By the recognition of certain expressions in the context, thus, the representation of a sequence of *their* meanings may be opened up. Thus, an utterance situation may provide a perspective by its perceptually processed properties, as well as by the recognition of other linguistic expressions in the utterance situation.

In this way, then, the interpretation of poetic texts may be explained, even if in such interpretation the specific conditions under which we read the text are ignored. That is, the 'utterance situation' as the specific situation in which we

encounter the text may be ignored, while we focus on the context that the text itself provides. With this understanding of textual meaning, we may also consider how terms for which we have never in fact identified a referent perceptually can be interpreted, namely by their explications and definitions. In focusing on the linguistic context, we provide for some representation of referents of textually introduced terms, on the basis of what we may represent as meanings for the expressions with which the term is introduced.

To interpret an expression on the basis of its linguistic context thus involves representing a combination of different, previously experienced satisfaction situations. It may present a new use of the expression to the interpreter, and so, the expression used may be understood creatively on the basis of combining representations of formerly experienced satisfaction situations. In this way, the faculty of representation allows for the production of new interpretations; hence, its work here can be recognized as an instance of what in the former chapter was called productive imagination.

Thus, the interpretation of an utterance on the basis of its linguistic context is on a par with the understanding of an utterance in an utterance situation. In either, interpretation depends on how representations triggered within the context of the utterance allow for a selective activation of represented satisfaction situations of the utterance itself. Insofar as we consciously construct the meaning of the utterance in interpretation, this is a result of how we may reflectively construct *and* name the representation of the properties that are considered relevant in the interpretation. To characterize a meaning, we at once draw on subjective representations, in the sense of cognitively represented combinations of experienced satisfaction situations, and we draw on our representation of socially accepted use of language, as we have learned to recognize and to produce it in the ongoing process of being corrected or confirmed in our utterances by others. Reflective interpretation, then, consists of recognizing similarities between cognitively represented, experienced situations, and newly applying what we consider to be a socially acceptable use of words.

Clearly, this summarized account of interpretation is incomplete in many respects. In the first place, it does not consider compositionality of utterances, nor the recognition of objects, events, or individuals in perception. It does not explain how representations may be triggered by a context or by an utterance. Indeed, it does not state what such representations are. In the remainder of this study, I will not concern myself with the first mentioned aspects, that is, compositionality and perceptual processing. With respect to the first, the theory presented by Bartsch presents in many ways what I could envisage in this direction, but for my different understanding of a perspective as outlined above, and my intention to consider understanding and interpretation from the

point of view of cognitive representation, and not in terms of a semantic theory. With respect to the second, I do not envisage anything. I can only acknowledge that my understanding of interpretation and understanding sets up some requirements with respect to a theory of perception, namely that perceptual processing entails an activation of representations of previously processed situations under an aspect of similarity. Hence, I do not only set up requirements for perceptual processing, but also for the working of memory. A model for activation of cognitive representations through perceptually processed similarity should account for the recognition of objects, of individuals, of events, and, last but not least, for the recognition of expressions. These assumptions regarding perceptual processing are not founded in any knowledge of the factual physical processes they should presuppose; however, the same requirements are set up by other theories of cognition. As we saw, Bartsch similarly assumes a physical processing of situations under respects of similarity on a neuronal level, and, as will become clear shortly in the following discussion, so does Lawrence Barsalou in his theory of perception-based cognitive representation.

To develop an understanding of the cognitive representation of situations, I turn to the theory of Lawrence Barsalou, which presents a more psychologically oriented model of concept representation. In the following sections I consider Barsalou's notion of representation, and see to what extent I may use this notion to sustain my understanding of the cognitive process of interpretation.

3 The Perceptual Symbols System

3.1 Perceptual Symbol Systems: outline

An approach to conceptual representation is presented in the work of Lawrence Barsalou. He presents a theory of cognition and concept formation based on perception. In a 'target article' presented for discussion, he models the fundamental role of perception and of memory in a 'Perceptual Symbols System'. This model, he claims, accounts for most of the properties of cognition and thus can compete with any system of representation that uses non-perceptual symbols.[206] In addition, Barsalou claims, it is in line with neurological and psychological findings on memory, imagery and perception in relation to conceptual processing.

In this model concepts and perceptual states alike are represented through *perceptual symbols.* Perceptual symbols arise from perception, and are used in conceptual tasks: 'Once a perceptual state arises, a subset of it is extracted via selective attention and stored permanently in long-term memory. On later retrievals, this perceptual memory can function symbolically, standing for referents in the world, and entering into symbol manipulation'.[207]

A perceptual symbol, as a functional selection of a perceptual state, is defined on the neuronal level, i.e. as a local configuration of active neurons. What is stored in memory is roughly a schematization of the perceptual state. Related perceptual symbols become organized into *simulators*, which organize perceptions in a structured manner, involving a process of abstraction over a collection of similar perceptual symbols. The simulator contains an underlying structure, in which perceptual symbols are integrated; this structure is called a *frame*.

As an example, Barsalou considers the perception of a particular car. This involves inspecting the car from different perspectives, and focusing on such aspects as wheels, doors and windows, getting into it and looking under its hood. 'As selective attention focuses on these aspects, the resulting memories are integrated spatially, perhaps using an object-centred reference frame. [...]. As a result of organizing perceptual records spatially, perceivers can later simulate the car in its absence. [...] [A]fter processing many cars, a tremendous amount of multimodal information becomes established that specifies what it

[206] Barsalou[1999]

is like to experience cars sensorially, proprioceptively, and introspectively. In other words, the frame for *car* contains extensive multimodal information what it is like to experience this type of thing'.[208]

The development of a rich frame for the simulator of a car involves different perceptions of cars. Once a first car is perceived, the perception of a second car involves a 'reminding', in which the spatially integrated set of symbols for the first car is retrieved. In Barsalou's words: 'the retrieved set of symbols guides processing of the second car in a top-down manner, leading to the extraction of perceptual symbols in the same subregions. [...] this might lead to the extraction of content information for the second car's shape, doors and wheels, which become connected to the same subregions as the content extracted from the first car. In addition, other subregions of the second car may be processed, establishing new perceptual symbols (e.g. antenna and gas cap)'.[209] The regions specified in the car frame can be filled in according to different paths leading to different 'content', derived from some specific car perceptions, or they may lead to another simulator for such things as doors, wheels or other parts that are schematized as objects or events in themselves. In these subregions other simulators may occur (e.g. for doorknobs, spokes etc.). Thus 'recursion arises'.[210]

In this way a field of related simulators is developed, within which a frame structures a given simulator and its subregions into possible specializations and other simulators. In the example, the car-frame has a subregion of wheels, which has subregions for tires and spokes; each of these may be represented in a simulator itself.

In comparison to Bartsch's model, a simulator would seem to correspond with a concept determined through natural perspectives; that is, in perception the given object is determined through its perceptual qualities. The further structuring of simulators through spatio-temporally organized frames correlates with relations of contiguity, which in Bartsch's model allow for the formation of historical concepts. Thus, so far, Barsalou's model seems to appeal to natural, i.e. perceptually determined classifications on the basis of similarity and contiguity.

Barsalou claims that all representations that are used in a conceptual system are derived from perception in this same way. That means that if the perceptual symbols system is to function as a model of cognition, it has to be as powerful as abstract symbol systems are in describing and explaining conceptual processing. Barsalou sets himself to the task of proving that his

---

[207] Barsalou[1999] p 577/578
[208] Barsalou[1999] p 586
[209] Barsalou[1999] p 590
[210] Barsalou[1999] p 591

model has the same systemic properties. These properties include: the ability to represent types and tokens, to produce categorical inferences, to combine symbols productively, to represent propositions and to represent abstract concepts.[211]

To start with, Barsalou explains productivity in thought as perceptual symbol manipulation. Simulators may be filled in with other perceptual symbols than the perceptual symbols on the basis of which they are constructed. For instance, the simulator for car described above, could be completed by filling in the doorknobs with a perceptual symbol of canary-beaks, which could lead to a representation of car with tweeting doorknobs. The car simulator could also be manipulated into such a way that it receives an entirely different form or function; one can, for instance, imagine a flying car. Productivity, thus, is the result of combining different simulators, or of filling in a simulator with perceptual symbols that are foreign to the original percepts underlying the formation of the simulator.

Productivity is vital for the system, as it plays a role in perception itself. It is a prerequisite for anticipation and filling in of perceptual information, and as such is related to making mistakes. An incomplete perception will be filled in with known simulations of similar objects. Barsalou refers to well-known examples of Gestalt perception tasks to illustrate this, for instance the task in which a figure with three orthogonal angles and one blotted angle is filled in such a way to construct a rectangular figure. Thus, anticipation in perception consists of a top-down conceptual guidance of perceptual processing. A specific perceptual state triggers a simulation (bottom-up), and the simulation guides subsequent perceptual focusing (top-down).

The recognition of a given perceptual state as being of a specific type allows one to make inferences about a situation. Generally, categorical inferences are due to connecting an individual to a given simulator. Even if the perception of the individual is only partial, its being bound to a simulator allows one to infer other properties, for instance when perceiving a car driving at a far distance, one infers the presence of a driver and of fuel. Such inferences are not necessarily made consciously, as they arise on the basis of the neural connections between different perceptual symbols: 'Although neural representations define perceptual symbols, they may produce conscious counterparts on some occasions. On other occasions, however, perceptual symbols function unconsciously, as during preconscious processing and automatized skills'.[212]

[211] Barsalou[1999] p 579
[212] Barsalou[1999] p 583

Simulations thus include conscious visualization, but one need not be aware of the perceptual content of a simulation. This fact is used to explain why some people do experience little or no imagery. According to Barsalou such people have little conscious awareness of the perceptual processes underlying their cognition.

In relation to language, the properties of abstraction and productivity play a central role. In general, simulators for words are formed in association with other simulators for events or entities, or with subregions and specializations. On recognizing a word, the cognitive system activates associated stimulators to simulate a referent. Furthermore, words associated with a simulator are also associated with the words for subregions in the simulator. In this way, the semantic field of a word mirrors an underlying conceptual field: 'As people hear or read a text, they use productively formulated sentences to construct a productively formulated simulation that constitutes a semantic interpretation. Conversely, during language production, the construction of a simulation activates associated words and syntactic patterns, which become candidates for spoken sentences designed to produce a similar simulation in the listener'.[213] Thus, language is represented by a complex of simulators in itself, structured by an underlying, associated complex of simulators for events and entities. As a result, all language has an experiential or perceptual grounding.

One of the reasons to engage in the strict reduction of linguistic meaning to perceptual content is Barsalou's rejection of the assumption of a 'language of thought', i.e. a system of mental symbols as the medium of cognitive representation. To assume such symbolic mental language, according to Barsalou, is both redundant and arbitrary. The proposed perceptual symbol system, of course, is neither. The proposed model presents a mode of representation that Barsalou terms 'modal', that is, the cognitive system uses the same mode of representation as the perceptual system. Furthermore, the perceptual symbol system uses the same mechanisms of combination, focal attention, schematization and representation as the perceptual system does. Barsalou claims that the perceptual symbol system is as rich as any cognitive symbol system: it displays properties of recursion, productivity, compositionality, and abstraction. On top of that, it is in line with neurological evidence, and can predict many phenomena that abstract symbolic systems can only explain post-hoc. An example of such a phenomenon is the spatial and temporal organisation of events or objects, which, as imagery research has shown, remains intact in cognitive representation.[214] Barsalou's notions of

[213] Barsalou[1999] p 592

[214] The cited research builds its conclusions on the basis of longer response times for objects that were imagined to stand further apart. Kosslyn[1994]

frame and of focal attention do not only account for these phenomena, but also ground them in the fundamental properties of the system. In an abstract symbolic representational system the same phenomena can only be accounted for by imposing an additional structuring. Barsalou emphasizes that in these models the resulting spatial/temporal structuring is not inherent to the representational system, but from a systemic point of view remains an arbitrary imposition, and thus illustrates the arbitrariness of such models of cognitive representation.

Before going into a more detailed critical discussion of Barsalou's model, I briefly recall its main properties. The model attributes the faculty of cognitive representation to a system of perceptual symbols, which are selective representations of the state of the brain during perception. They are formed upon selective attention in perception, that is, they consist of those aspects of perception that the subject is focused upon. Simulators allow one to recall the focal aspects of a perceptual state in a simulation. The underlying frame organises the different perceptual symbols in the simulator. As we have seen, simulators are the general, structuring representations of related perceptual symbols. Thus, Barsalou says, a simulator is equivalent to a concept.[215] However, the notion of a simulator is specified more precisely than that of a concept usually is. A simulator is located in long term memory, causing simulations of (parts of) a perceptual state in working memory. Furthermore it has a spatial or temporal structure (a frame) in which perceptual symbols or other simulators are integrated. A simulator, then, is an abstract, structured representation of a type of experience, which allows for the production of novel simulations through filling in with different perceptual symbols and manipulations on the structure itself. Simulators are organised into a field of related simulators; this field is mirrored by the semantic field that consists of words associated to different perceptual symbols and simulators. Syntactic properties of language similarly reflect the relations that may be produced between different simulators and symbols in simulations.

Productivity, be it in language or in thought, has thus been explained as 'symbol manipulation' on the basis of symbolic perceptual representations. Barsalou then claims that in symbol manipulation, the symbols remain inherently perceptual. At this point, it is the question what that exactly means. If it means that all representational content has been derived at some point from perception, this does not seem to be a very controversial point of view. Taken in this way, the model could be understood as providing an alternative for the thesis that innate symbolic systems determine or precede conceptual thought. However, as Barsalou goes on, especially in his response to criticism

[215] Barsalou[1999] p 587

published in the same journal, he seems to go further than that. He emphasizes the causal origin of concepts, and also emphatically claims that abstract concepts can be traced to their perceptual origin. With this argumentation the compatibility with the model presented by Bartsch ends. Bartsch equally expresses the intention of grounding concepts in experience and equally contests the innate language hypothesis. However, in this model, as we saw, the level of theoretical concepts is connected to experience through rational construction. In this way it could not provide for a determinate perceptual grounding of explicated concepts. The main reason for this was that the organization of explicated concepts relies on linguistic classification, rather than on perceptual classification. I argued that as a result a connection between the two levels of conceptualization can be construed on the basis of subjective reflection only. This did not, we saw, alter the general conception of the cognitive system, although it did have consequences for the representation of meaning on the experiential level. Barsalou, by contrast, claims that all abstract concepts must be motivated through perceptual processing. Language plays no role in the formation of concepts, other than that it mirrors the possible productivity in thought through association.

Barsalou's approach immediately calls up a host of questions. What does it mean to say that productively formed simulations remain perceptual? Does it mean one has to understand them on the model of *possible* experience? In that sense we can imagine how the image of a flying car with tweeting doorknobs could be deemed perceptual, namely that we can imagine ourselves perceiving something like it. We can doubt however whether such images are indeed perceptual from a physiological point of view. From a philosophical point of view we can further ask what makes us imagine such things, and whether the point of view that conscious representation is a counterpart of what goes on in automated processing anyway can account for a motivation of such productivity. And still further: could a perceptual content of abstract concepts, such as numbers or a concept like 'truth', be construed in this same way, i.e., through our being capable of imagining them as if perceived? Or is a different kind of perceptual content meant in these cases? Finally, Barsalou postulates the physical determination of representations in terms of neuronal activation patterns of perceptual symbols. If according to Barsalou representations are to be identified with physical states of the brain, does that imply that symbolic meaning is in principle physically determinable? And, since he additionally claims that concepts are causally effected, does that entail that our conceptual system is a natural result of our living in a certain environment?

It is not quite clear what Barsalou means by his claim that representation is always perceptual. It can be understood in several ways, depending on what he, on different occasions, counts as perceptual. The first sense of 'perceptual' is

relatively straightforward, namely that representations depend on those cognitive mechanisms that are *used* in perceptual processing. The second sense of 'perceptual' is that representations are *derived* from perceptual processing. That is that cognitive representation, from a material point of view, in general relies on perception. Barsalou however, seems to go still further than this, as he seems to imply that the *symbolic meaning* of all concepts is derived from perceptual processing, and hence is itself perceptual. I express myself carefully here, since this, clearly, is a controversial claim, especially with regard to abstract concepts expressed in language. As will become clear, Barsalou does state this view in a straightforward way; its implications, however, only come into full perspective when brought into relation with his remarks on the causal effectedness of concepts, which appear in a somewhat different context.

In section 3.2 I will consider the meaning of the term perceptual as it applies to the processes that Barsalou describes. For this, I consider a neuropsychological understanding of perception, that is, a general characterization of the cognitive system that is concerned with perceptual processing, in opposition to other types of cognitive processing. I thereby mainly draw on a discussion of the difference between conscious visual representations that are maintained *without* the presence of external stimuli (in imagery) and *with* the presence of such stimuli (in perception). This discussion took place within the framework of the so-called imagery debate, which will briefly be introduced.

In section 3.3, I consider the sense in which Barsalou considers concepts in and of themselves perceptual, and especially how symbolic meaning is construed as perceptual. Here, my criticism draws on philosophical arguments, and as such addresses a more fundamental problem regarding the perceptual grounding of symbolic meaning.

3.2 What is perceptual?

Barsalou claims that all representations involve perceptual processing systems on a neurological level. That is, he claims that in representations we use cognitive processing systems that belong to perceptual processing. Barsalou draws the evidence for this from the fact that those parts of the brain active in processing sensory experience are also active when engaged in conceptual tasks involving no sensory stimuli. In other words, Barsalou claims that perceptual processing is activated in other cognitive processes, and takes this fact to sustain the thesis that perceptual symbols are the medium of cognitive representation, even in non-perceptual processing.

Barsalou however mentions that in perceiving, brain functions may be used in a different manner than in thinking.[216] For instance in cognitive tasks the role of long-term memory is more prominent. Hence: 'Although perceptual symbols use perceptual mechanisms heavily, this does not mean that conceptual and perceptual processing are identical'.[217] In a comment on Barsalou's article, Aydede points out, that, although the areas associated with perception may be active during conceptual thought, we do not have sufficient knowledge of the brain to conclude that these areas can *only* perform perceptual tasks.[218] On the basis of the same evidence, one could, reversely, conclude that these same areas take on a different functionality in non-perceptual tasks, for instance a functionality related to non-perceptual symbolic representation.

Thus, mere activation of perception-related areas in itself presents no evidence on the perceptual nature of representation. The question is, then, how to establish whether perceptual processing in a physiological sense is involved in conceptual processing and cognitive representation.

Below, I discuss some neuropsychological investigations within the framework of imagery research, on the nature of representation. The choice of this framework is made on systematic and historical grounds. In imagery research the issue of representation has been addressed most directly, and the differences between representing and perceiving have been investigated thoroughly. Imagery is here defined as conscious visual representation, and in this sense differs from Barsalou's understanding of perceptual symbols and more complex representations, which are not necessarily consciously maintained. However, as we saw, Barsalou does explicitly relate perceptual symbols and imagery, since he regards phenomena of imagery as a 'conscious counterpart of perceptual symbols, produced by neural representations'.[219] Further, Barsalou draws on the findings presented in this area of research, especially for the motivation of the structure of frames, and for the dismissal of models using abstract symbol systems to characterize representation. Historically, these issues were at stake in the so-called imagery debate, in which Barsalou's position can be identified as being on the side of the proponents of the 'depictive representation thesis'. I outline the positions at stake below.

[216] Barsalou[1999] p 641
[217] Barsalou[1999] p 641
[218] Aydede[1999] p 611
[219] Barsalou[1999] p 583

The imagery debate

Barsalou situates his theory in a tradition of philosophers concerned with perception: 'For more than 2,000 years, theorists viewed higher cognition as inherently perceptual'.[220] He mentions many of the great philosophers of before the 20th century, as having recognized the essential role of 'images'. Remarkably he also places the 'nativist' Kant in this tradition. Less surprisingly, Barsalou claims that he continues in the tradition of Berkeley and Hume, founders of empiricism.

He remarks that his position differs essentially from these modern empiricist philosophers regarding the nature of representations. Barsalou time and time again emphasizes that thoughts drawing on perceptual symbols do not imply that one actually *sees* something. Representations that are used in thought are a functional selection of brain activation patterns that occur in perception; therefore a perceptual symbol cannot be identified with a picture (or a sound or a smell etc.). Representation is not perceptual in the same sense that a sensory experience is, but it is perceptual on the ground that it is causally effected in perception, and deals with percepts functionally encoded on a neuronal level. 'Whereas prior theories focused on consciously experienced images, perceptual symbol systems focus on neural states in sensory-motor systems. To my mind, this is the most exciting feature of this proposal, primarily because it leads one to think about the perceptual view in provocative new ways'.[221]

Barsalou thus emphatically warns against an interpretation of his theory that would claim that perceptual symbols are pictures or other sensory objects. Rather, they present coded information of sensorily processed information.

The neuronal 'code' however, as we saw, may produce conscious imagery as well.[222] Imagery, therefore, is considered as a surfacing of the otherwise hidden functioning of perceptual symbols, and thus may serve as one of the few cases where the functioning of these can be investigated.

The vast research on imagery seems to have influenced Barsalou's account in many respects. One example is that the notion of 'frame structure' can be traced to the findings of Kosslyn and others on the spatial organisation of information that becomes apparent in memory tasks. Areas such as the primary visual cortex (V1) are associated with perceptual processing, because of their activation during exposure to perceptual stimuli. Its areas of activation have been found to be topographically related to the environment, that is, scaled differences in angles of vision, size of the perceived object and so on correlate

[220] Barsalou[1999]p 578
[221] Barsalou[1999] p 640
[222] Barsalou[1999] p 583

with different locations of activated parts of the V1 area. According to Kosslyn[1997] this correlation appears to remain intact during imagery-tasks, that is, during the visualization of objects without external stimuli being present. In these tasks, a subject is asked to visualize objects with similarly scaled differences. MRI and PET findings suggest that spatial organisation in visualisations are again correlated to areas of activation in V1.[223] Thus, conscious visual representation seems to exhibit similar properties with respect to brain activation as does perceptual processing, including the internal representation of spatial relations.

From a general point of view, the issue in the imagery debate was the cognitive role of imagery, and the mode of representation of mental images. The main initial protagonists were Pylyshyn and Paivio. Paivio claimed that any basically creative cognitive act (such as problem solving) requires use of imagery.[224] Hence, visual representation must be a crucial aspect of cognition. He concluded that imagery could not be modelled in terms of propositional symbol systems, as these cannot account for the essentially visual quality of such representations, but that this requires a depictive system of representation as well. Pylyshyn, on the other hand, claimed that imagery is merely epiphenomenal in cognitive processes, and that propositional symbolic representation suffices as an explanatory model for all cognitive acts. His main argument against the assumption of a depictive mode of representation was that it gives rise to regress in the conceptual interpretation of percepts.[225]

Then Kosslyn and Schwartz, proponents of the depictive representational system, presented an implementational model of representation in which a functional coding of images was used, thus showing that a depictive mode of representation does not imply actual sensory representations within an additional 'internal' perceptual processing system, and hence does not necessarily involve regress.[226]

Further, Anderson presented a study in which the systemic qualities of both models of representation were compared. He concluded that on a model-theoretical level systems of propositional symbolic representation and systems of depictive representation can be translated into one another, and can be used to explain the same results.[227]

---

[223] Cf. Kosslyn[1994] pp 12 for a general overview of sustaining neurophysiological research, and pp 99 for Kosslyn's own conclusions. It must be remarked, that Kosslyn is careful not to draw definite conclusions solely on the basis of this apparent relation between activation in the cortex and imagery, as several other factors may influence such activation.

[224] Paivio[1971]

[225] Pylyshyn[1973]

[226] The model was presented in Kosslyn and Schwartz[1977].

[227] Anderson[1978]

These combined findings represented the so-called 'historical resolution' of the imagery debate (insofar as participants agree on its presenting a resolution, and not just a draw between either position). The resolution consisted of a systematic approach to a model of depictive representation, which at once emphasised the explanatory power of a model of depictive representation models, and showed that depictive representations are not pictorial representations themselves, but can be functionally encoded descriptions of images.[228]

Research following upon this stage of the imagery debate, involved neurophysiological research, which became possible with the invention of diverse scanning techniques, such as MRI and PET. With the help of these devices, it became possible to investigate the localization of the processes occurring in the brain during imagery tasks. Furthermore, the relation between perceptual processing and imagery was investigated, and specifically the extent to which imagery draws on the perceptual system.

The optimistic expectation that the imagery debate will finally acquire a real resolution in this fashion was expressed by Kosslyn in 1997 as follows: 'In a sense, the theory and methods developed by cognitive psychologists [...] have been lying in wait of something to really make the field take off. The connection to the brain appears to have been that extra something, allowing us to learn more from what we do best: designing tasks that require specific types of information processing. When behavioral data alone are not sufficient to resolve an issue, the tasks designed by experimental psychologists can be used to selectively activate specific brain systems while neural activity is being monitored and to study the consequences of brain damage - and these additional data can settle many issues'.[229]

Barsalou builds his model with a similarly optimistic approach to depictive representation, as he stresses that perceptual representations are non-sensory, functional encodings on the neural level. Thus, Barsalou's emphasis on the perceptual nature of representations as well as on the neurophysiological aspects of representation generally seems based on the findings of researchers inspired by the imagery debate.

However, Barsalou's claims are far more radical with respect to the assumption of a depictive mode of representation, since he proposes that *all* cognitive representation uses perceptual symbols. Kosslyn does not go so far as to claim that the depictive mode is the single mode of representation. Rather, he is concerned with the phenomenon of imagery and imagery-based reasoning. He thus uses the model of depictive representation to explain certain phenomena,

[228] Cf, for instance, Kosslyn[1994] pp 20
[229] Kosslyn[1994] p 407

such as the difference in response times in problem-solving tasks in which the subjects did or did not make use of visualizations. His theory work aims at implementing processes underlying imagery in the whole of cognitive processing. Thereby he does not deny the use or the existence of propositional representations, but instead, proposes how depictive and propositional modes of representation coexist and may make use of one another.[230] In the following section an excursus to the neuropsychological findings on the relation between imagery and perception is presented, and the discussion on Barsalou's model is resumed thereafter again.

Imagery and perception

In the research on imagery, the hypothesis that imagery draws on perception was a starting point for many studies on imagery. Consequently, the question whether perception and imagery are produced by a single perceptual faculty, that is whether either phenomenon is the result of the same cognitive mechanisms, has been investigated.

Kosslyn states that imagery-phenomena draw heavily on perceptual mechanisms, but that imagery is not 'merely a parasite, piggybacking on perception'.[231] Imagery-processes do use several mechanisms that also play a role in perception, and is, in that sense 'an integral part of how perception operates'.[232] For instance some of the so-called 'low-level visual' mechanisms, i.e. those primarily related to perceptual processing of external stimuli, are used in consciously maintaining a visual image. Further, in perception 'high-level' mechanisms are used, which are related to previous conceptualized representations in memory. Thus, whether perception draws on imagery, or whether imagery draws on perception is sometimes not entirely clear; it is the question, then, whether the two represent different cognitive processing systems. The research discussed in the following discussion compares the systems that must be used to maintain both types of representations, and thereby attempts to chart the differences.

Probably the most evident difference between mental imagery and perceptual processing that Kosslyn reports is the difference in quality between the visualized image and the perceptually encoded image. Other than in perception, in imagery a cognitive system is required for the maintenance of a mental image; mental images tend to 'fade' quickly, and have a different

[230] Eg. in type-token associations, or in representing spatial relations both categorically and coordinatively. Cf. Kosslyn[1994], pp 289 resp. pp 192.
[231] Kosslyn[1994] p 21
[232] Kosslyn[1994] p 21, for elaboration cf. pp 401

'resolution' of detail in the image: textures and detail tend to be underspecified (such as the number of stripes, or the hairiness of the fur in a mental image of a tiger). Such details may be filled in upon closer inspection, but then require specific attention, or even a 'zooming in'. Nevertheless, in the inspection of a mental image the same subsystems are used as in the inspection of a perceptually coded stimulus (i.e. a percept). These subsystems involve for instance the focusing on an aspect such as texture or colour, or shifting attention between locations within the image.[233] In imagery, like in perception, certain properties of the image remain invariant during inspection, such as the relative scanning-times of distances between objects set apart within an image.[234] However, there are other differences. For instance in imagery the shifting of attention is not stimulus-based, that is, one's attention is never 'grabbed' by another part of the image, but is directed intentionally at some part of the image. Furthermore, in (waking) imagery the identity of the visualized objects is always known to the subjects.[235] This especially seems a crucial property of consciously maintained imagery, since it suggests that mental images are tied to their conceptual guise. In other words, the objects in a mental image are always *seen as* something. An example of how this relates to the difference between perception and imagery is presented in a paper on the roles of imagination by Peter Strawson. He describes how he looks out of his window, and sees some yellow chalk marks on the wall of his backyard. However, after some time, he notices that the yellow marks are in fact roses. In an imaginative pondering on the event- that is, in this case, using mental imagery- he can call up either image: that of chalk marks and that of roses. But in actual perception, after recognizing the roses, it is impossible to perceive them as chalk marks again.[236] Thus, there is a difference between the acts of seeing an object as something in a mental image, and recognizing a perceived object to be of a certain kind. A mental image is fixed in the sense that a

[233] Kosslyn defines processing subsystems as functionally different aspects of general information processing. Subsystems indicate such processing as exemplar pattern activation, categorical pattern encoding, attention shifting, motion relations encoding and so on. The operations such subsystems must perform are described determinately, and corresponding activity in the brain is tentatively localized. From a behaviourist point of view, this means the 'black box' of information processing described through input and output of the system is analysed into smaller constituent black boxes. Kosslyn calls the goal of his theory to 'pull the bird apart at its joints, not to describe the musculature, vasculature, and neural enervation of the limbs themselves' (Kosslyn[1994] p 25).

[234] An example of an imagery task here would be to first ask the subject to visualize a ship, with an anchor, a motor and a keel, and then ask them questions about the different elements, requiring them to pass (parts of) the trajectory along the boat. One can then measure whether relative response times correspond to reported relative distances that are thus scanned.

[235] Kosslyn[1994] p 103. The reverse feature, otherwise typical for percepts, occurs in dreaming (generally considered to be a form of imagery), that is unidentified objects may inhabit dreams.

[236] Strawson[1971]

different conceptual determination of what was perceived requires the formation of another mental image. In perception, the example suggests, such reformation is possible to the extent that what is perceived can be made to conform to a concept. That is, when perceiving more details, such as leaves on the flowers, or when noticing that the yellow spots are not on but in front of the wall, the less detailed 'chalk' percept becomes excluded as a possibility.

As observed, imagery does play a role in perception, specifically in the anticipation of perceptual stimuli. For instance, according to Kosslyn, and as, indeed, mentioned by Barsalou, those subsystems that are used when an image is formed are also used when one expects to see a specific stimulus. Subsystems used to mentally manipulate an image (such as rotating it, deleting parts of it, placing new elements in the image and so on) are also employed during perception, namely when one expects to see specific consequences after performing an action.

Kosslyn reports that for instance motion transformations in visualizations, such as rotation or change of position, take place incrementally, that is, the transformation is imposed on the image in stages, allowing the subject to visualize the process of transformation. Interestingly, sometimes the subject is not capable of transforming the image incrementally; instead, he lets the old image fade, and forms a new image in which the transformation is completed. Kosslyn calls this 'blink transformation'.[237] These occur when an object is transformed 'a large amount'.[238] As an example he mentions perspective changes (such as zooming in or out).[239] [240]

---

[237] idem p 354

[238] idem p 402

[239] idem p 369

[240] The report of a difference between blink transformations and incrementally performed transformations relative to the 'amount' of transformation, suggests that in perception such 'large' transformations are not anticipated since they will not be imaged as a continuous result of a present representation. Thus, one might be tempted to assign incremental transformation a more 'realistic' nature. Indeed Kant suggested the difference between hallucination and perception consisted of the fixedness of temporal order: hallucinations or dreams have no *necessary* sequentiality, and can be imaged reversedly. Nevertheless, it is clear that one can imagine highly 'unreal' events in the most vivid, incremental ways, such as faces deforming or flying objects smashing into each other irreversably, as well as 'real' events being seen in an unrealistic manner (in slow motion for instance). In this light, it would be worthwhile to examine qualitative differences in imagery in relation to the effect of watching films, in which 'impossible' perspective changes and other transformations are perceptually realized through technical manipulation and recording equipment. In the early days of the filmmaking, the expectations of such effects were very high. For instance Walter Benjamin wrote: 'The film corresponds to profound alterations of the apperceptual apparatus' (Benjamin[1968]). Previously, in a similar vein, Germaine Dulac emphasized the 'optical experiment' as the goal of the avant-garde (Dulac[1932]). Cf. also: Charney and Schwartz[1995].

Other differences between perceptual and imagery processing are stated in research on patients with brain damage, who report impairments in either type of processing. In a paper published in 1984 Martha Farah considered the few reported impairments of imagery processing in the literature. In an overview of the available research she concludes that image-generation systems can specifically be impaired while visual memory and other recall processes may remain intact, thus resulting in loss of imagery along with an intact ability of object-recognition in perception. She concludes that these findings point to different possible ways of recalling and manipulating information about objects and their appearances.[241] That is, such information may be recalled without generating visual images.

In a later article Farah suggests, like Kosslyn, that image generation processes may be used in interaction with the matching of visual memory images with stimuli in perception. For instance, when stimuli are degraded, a subject may generate images to match the stimuli. Recognition of such stimuli is then accounted for by activating retinotopic representations (i.e. low-level visual representations) through high-level memory representations. Furthermore, imagery processes share several properties with attention-mechanisms in perception. Imagery may thus well be related to attention, helping to establish recognition of a viewed object. In this way, imagery processes may play a leading role in perception.[242]

Kosslyn considers two cases of impairments of perceptual processing while imagery remains intact. In the discussed cases the patients report loss of perception, while they can still perform imagery tasks. The mechanisms of vision and low-level visual processing seem intact, while higher visual memory processes functioned only in imagery but not in perception. Kosslyn analyses these as cases of deficiency in object recognition. Where perception requires an active matching of 'raw stimuli' with visual memory in order to recognize an object, viewing and manipulating mental images requires only the ability to recall former recognitions. Imagery may thus continue to independently recall existing representations in memory, even when new percepts cannot be processed in high-level visual processing systems.[243]

Combining these findings, it seems that imagery draws on high-level perceptual mechanisms. It may be used in the process of connecting high level visual memories retinotopically to bottom-up processed stimuli; however it is not the same as perceptual top-down processing, since it does not in itself entail recognition of stimuli. Instead imagery uses perceptual mechanisms to

[241] Farah[1984] p 269
[242] Farah[1995] p 124
[243] Kosslyn[1994] pp 329-334

view representations of identified objects, that is, conceptualized representations.

Imagery processes, according to Kosslyn, can be seen as a complex of cognitive subsystems, which include some but not all perceptual processing mechanisms, and may activate these independently from active perceptual processing (that is apart from 'bottom-up' processing).

In summary, following Barsalou's own lead that thinking is not perceiving, we might say that the manipulation of perceptual symbols in imagery does not have much in common with being in a perceptual state. First of all, the relative passivity of the latter state (i.e. the predominance of bottom-up processing and not of top-down organization) is distinct from the more active 'bringing something before the eyes', which requires different subsystems to maintain the image mentally.

Secondly, the elements that function in a visualized image need not be detailed, not in the sense of being out of focus, but in the sense that parts of it lack visualization. Parts can be added in the process of imaging, but the so-called 'image-resolution' is much less than in percepts.[244]

Third, the role of productivity in perception and in imagery is different. Anticipation in perception, 'filling in', and readjusting mistakes are something other than consciously altering a visualized image. In perception, visual transformations only take place in momentary anticipation of the results of a certain act. In imagery, the image is revised at will: it can be rotated, change colour or spatial structure and it can be filled in with foreign elements. Thus, visualizing, focusing, and transforming result from intentional manipulation, whereas percepts cannot be determined on the basis of intention alone, but require object recognition based on low-level retinotopical processing.

Reversely, in perception the stimuli can be recognized as being of a specific kind during the perception, and during perception mistakes in the identification of the stimuli can be corrected. In imagery, the visualized object and its parts are always conceptually identified, and conceptual identity cannot be revised while maintaining the same mental image.

Concepts and percepts

As we saw, Barsalou claims that imagery processes are the surfacing of an otherwise underlying unconscious processing of perceptual symbols that originate in perception. Although apparently the conclusion of the formerly discussed research is that perception and imagery use many of some of the same cognitive mechanisms, one cannot conclude from this that imagery

[244] Kosslyn[1994] p 104

processes exclusively use representations as effected in perception. Properties of visualized representations in imagery range from the possibility of voluntary manipulation to the predetermination of a conceptual guise of the representation, and these do not pertain to percepts as they occur in a perceptual state. Barsalou refers briefly to some of the above cited research under the heading 'implications for neuroscience', emphasizing how research suggests that common neural mechanisms underlie imagery and perception. He does, however, acknowledge that 'perception, imagery and cognition are not identical behaviorally', and might then not have an identical neuroanatomical basis.[245] Hence: 'The argument is not that perception and cognition are identical. It is only that they share representational mechanisms to a considerable extent'.[246] It leaves us wondering why representations should then themselves be called 'perceptual', if this merely alludes to 'representational mechanisms'.

Even if we assume that all cognitive representations are derived from perception, we must still conclude that representational content in imagery has passed several higher levels of cognitive processing, such as recognition, association, memory-storage, retrieval, and manipulation. The effects of any of these processes on the nature of what is represented have not as such been addressed in the former discussion, and with it the question whether the presumed perceptual character of representation is left intact has not been answered. And, with good reason, since to put it this way hardly makes sense.

What is defined as perceptual processing, is the process of external stimuli influencing the brain. What happens inside the brain, as a matter of selection, transformation, schematization, storage, combination or production, is a process we generally refer to as 'conceptualization', in order to distinguish it from the other process of external stimulation. To then call every neuronal configuration within the brain 'perceptual' if it somehow involves a connection to a state of the brain that was once triggered by external stimuli simply deflates the meaning of the word.

In view of the history of the imagery debate, one may sympathize with Barsalou's position that representations originated in perception somehow serve as 'symbols' in conceptual representation. Thus, it would seem a matter of theoretical economy to presuppose that a functional representation of percepts can fill in the role of symbols. Understood in this way, the model maybe adds further plausibility to the 'depictive representation thesis' in the imagery debate. However, as we will see in the next section, it seems that Barsalou has something different in mind when he attributes a perceptual core

[245] Barsalou[1999] p 607
[246] Barsalou[1999] p 607

to all representations. The sense in which perceptual symbols are meant to be perceptual in his theory is not explained by the suggestion that on a neurophysiological level cognitive representations may use perceptual representation mechanisms. The perceptual nature of perceptual symbols, in Barsalou's account, turns the *meaning* of conceptualized representations into a perception-based content, which, in the end, is traceable to its cause in reality. Thus, the in itself plausible assumption of a depictive mode of representation turns out to be a presumption about the perceptual nature of concepts, accompanied by assumptions about the causally effected relation between reality and symbolic meaning. And to sustain this assumption, of course, evidence of a neurophysiological correspondence between perceptual and representational systems is not quite sufficient.

3.3 What is symbolic?

The claim regarding the perceptual nature of representations in Barsalou's theory can be read as the claim that all neuronal configurations in the brain are formed through perceptual acts. That is, through perception the brain is taught to represent; it uses the connections and inhibitions thus formed throughout the brain in other tasks. This means that perception would be a *material* condition for subsequent cognitive representation. This conception of perception structuring possible brain activity also appears in connectionist theories of cognition, and indeed in some developmental psychological models of cognition. In fact, any epistemological model that denies the possibility of innate representational systems or transcendental knowledge is bound to perception as the material condition for attaining knowledge. We met with the same claim in Bartsch's account discussed in section[2]. Bartsch claims that concept formation rests on representing and structuring experienced situations, and as such these form a necessary condition for the process of concept formation. As we saw, this does not entail that all concepts are determined through perceptual means of classification. Attribution of experiential content to abstract, explicated concepts depends, I argued, first on the recognition of the expression in its utterance situations and, second, on the reflective reconstruction of possible similarities between the latter.

Barsalou takes a different view on this point. In his model each concept (i.e. each simulator) is grounded in perception, to the extent that *all* concepts can be decomposed into structured combinations and manipulations of perceptual symbols, that is, of selective functional representations of perceptual states. In other words, Barsalou postulates a determinate and complete perceptual grounding for all concepts. Linguistic explication of these concepts follows

from the association of utterances and events within perceptual states; language, unlike in Bartsch's approach, has no constitutive role in the formation of concepts.

In the following section, I discuss the possibilities of grounding the symbolic meaning of abstract terms in experience. I start out with analysing which knowledge about perceptual states Barsalou presupposes, and which he needs, in order to be able to bring it into relation to an abstract concept. Thus, the relation between the perceptual and the abstract is reconstructed in a 'bottom-up' fashion. Then I attempt to do the reverse, that is, I start out with an abstract concept, and analyse what we need in order to ground it in perception. Further I should once more remark that, although Barsalou certainly states the quoted opinions on causality, automated processing, and perceptual grounding, these remarks occur in different sections of his article. Hence, it could well be that the position on symbolic meaning, that results from combining his different statements, is one that Barsalou himself did not think through, and if he did, he would maybe not like it.

'Bottom-up': relating perceptual states to a concept

In the response to his critics, Barsalou defends a causal theory of categorization. That is, perception is basically seen as a transparent encoding of objects or events into brain states. Whatever the subject is aware of during perception, that is, whatever the subject focuses on in acts in perception, gives rise to neuronal configurations (perceptual symbols), which further mediate the content of the perceptual state. Barsalou writes: 'The critical claim of perceptual symbol systems is that these causally produced perceptual states, whatever they happen to be, constitute the representational elements of knowledge. Most critically, if the environment is causally related to perceptual states, it is also causally related to symbolic states. Thus, perceptual symbol systems constitute a causal theory of concepts'.[247]

Thus, 'symbolic states' are causally related to the environment. Given that Barsalou previously stated that the symbolic function of a perceptual symbol was that it stands for referents in the world, and further that utterances are associated with perceptual symbols within perceptual states, causally effected perceptual states therewith acquire a *semantic* function.[248] [249] But then, given the

[247] Barsalou[1999] p 638

[248] These features are described, and in part quoted above in section 3.1. Further: on the symbolic function of perceptual symbols, cf. pp 577, and on the association between utterances and perceptual symbols, cf. pp 592 in Barsalou[1999]

[249] This point is also made in Aydede's criticism of the Barsalou's account, cf. Aydede[1999].

definition of a perceptual symbol as a neuronal configuration derived from a perceptual state, we can also conclude that brain states mediate the reference of words. In other words, brain states, or rather, particular neuronal activation patterns, acquire symbolic meaning.

In an experiment by Tootell e.a. this notion of the brain as symbolic representational device was explored quite literally.[250] In the experiment a monkey was trained to focus on a picture of a schematically rendered globe (i.e. a circle with latitudes and longitudes). Next its brain was injected with radioactive sugar, which was to be absorbed by active neurons only. Thus, it became possible to make a photograph of the activated patterns in the monkey's brain. As the monkey was watching the figure, his brain was sliced, and in the V1 part a pattern of activation was recorded which literally (i.e. visually) resembled the pattern that the monkey had been watching the moment its brain was removed. The form of the globe represented by the activated patterns had a slight deformation, but otherwise perfectly represented the picture shown to the monkey.

However convincingly the experiment shows that the visual stimuli recur in a similar form on the primary visual cortex, it does not tell us much about the 'symbolic state' of the monkey. The symbolic meaning of the picture (representing a globe) is not to be found in its reproduction in the activated brain patterns in a monkey, as I shall argue shortly. Although the brain state corresponding to the perceptual state of watching a picture of a globe could be photographed and correlated to the stimuli, there is no way of telling whether the monkey saw a globe. Indeed it does not make sense to say that a monkey looking at a globe actually sees a 'globe', since it is not capable of expressing an interpretation of the presented picture as a globe. Of course, had the monkey been able to express such interpretation, he would also have been likely to express his ethical concern with experiments of this kind, and may well have left us in the dark on his primary visual cortex activity.

If this experiment and others involving research on human perceptual processing (such as are now conducted with the help of PET and MRI) provide substantial evidence that retinotopical images correspond topologically to activated parts of the brain, that brings a wealth of information on the neurobiological mechanics of vision. In that sense it gives information on the mode of representation, that is, on the plausibility of the thesis that perceptual stimuli are represented in a functionally depictive manner. It does not, however, give us more information on what the corresponding representations 'stand for'. The given correspondence between forms we perceive in reality and forms we perceive within a preparated brain tells us that we find this visual

[250] Tootell e.a. [1982]

form meaningful enough to recognize its occurrence, either in a picture, or in a photograph of a brain. Thus, while monitoring brain-activity we have found a new way to reproduce the external stimuli mediated in the brain, but not, I argue below, to reproduce their symbolic meaning.

Barsalou, we saw, stresses that his theory presents a causal theory of meaning. That is, perceptual states, rooted in experience of the external world, are the cause of any representation we may have. He therewith goes so far as to claim that categories themselves are causally effected: 'Simulators arise in memory through the causal process of perceiving physical categories'.[251] This process is elsewhere described as the automated processing of perceptual states in a system of perceptual symbols. Thus, 'physical categories' can come about unconsciously in one's mind. But, as we saw, Barsalou also holds that the neural representations can produce a conscious counterpart of this automated processing.[252] That is, to consciously interpret a given perceptual state as the perception of a specific kind of object or event must then be seen as a surfacing of an unconscious processing. Finally, Barsalou claims that utterances acquire symbolic meaning through their being associated with perceptual states.[253] So, putting all of these claims together, it follows that neuronal configurations mediate the possibility of a descriptive report, such as 'I saw a globe'.

Now, imagine how such configurations could be determined as mediating symbolic meaning in the first place. The salience of what might be found to be represented in the brain of some subject, I argue, will always depend crucially on additional information, itself not neutral on the topic of what is perceived. Hence, the idea that symbolic states could be revealed by inspection of activated neural configurations can be shown to be simply mistaken.

To begin with, the researcher who intends to monitor the 'symbolic state' of a given subject has to be predisposed as to what would count as a representation or encoding of external stimuli within the brain. That is, he looks for a sensible means of mediation. For instance, if apart from having a given brain state, the awareness of globes in this subject would also be accompanied by the production of a specific enzym in the intestines, this would probably not be measured by the neurologist, although it might make an essential difference for the representations involved. The hypothesis that the representation of the globe takes place elsewhere, *along* with having a particular topologically corresponding activation pattern in the primary visual cortex would then not seem not very plausible. A researcher would be thrilled to find a representation in terms of neural activation that matches his own image of the drawing so

[251] Barsalou[1999] p 638
[252] Barsalou[1999] p 583
[253] Barsalou[1999] p 592

well, so that he would naturally assume *it* to be the representation on some level of processing. For the argument's sake, we put aside the possibility of such biased monitoring and simply assume a thorough researcher, who brilliantly achieves a complete monitoring of all physical effects within a symbolic state.

However, even for such an unbiased researcher it remains impossible to achieve a purely physical determination of some symbolic meaning ('globe') as the result of monitoring the impact of a perceptual state (looking at the drawing). To find the neural counterpart of the perceived external stimuli, the researcher has to determine which external stimuli are represented in the brain. That is, he has to first be aware of these stimuli himself, and second he has to establish what the subject is seeing. As in the case of the monkey, we assume the external stimuli here are formed by a drawing of a globe, and the researcher attempts to register the activation patterns representing the stimuli; that is, he measures the brain's representation of the globe. Now if the researched subject always associates globes with, say, the smell of tobacco in a classroom, that association would be equally represented on the neural level, and thus would be measured neurophysiologically. It would however not appear in the subsequent symbolic interpretation of the neurological data on the basis of the researchers interpretation of the same visual stimuli (i.e. the globe). Thus, the correspondence between the frame of reference on the part of the researcher reading the brain, and the one on the part of the subject whom the brain belongs to could be only partial, i.e. respectively without and with the association of tobacco smell. Further, it could be the case that the subject focuses on an entirely different aspect of the external stimuli, for instance not on the drawing of the globe, but on the black spots between the lines, or on the resolution of the screen showing the picture. The neural monitoring device would then register an entirely different perceptual representation than the researcher thinks it measures. How is the researcher to find out about monitored associations or misdirected selective attention on the part of the subject? Since the focus of the eyes might be not determined physiologically to the extent that we know a person is focusing on the drawing and not on, say, the resolution of the lines in the drawing displayed on a monitor, the researcher would somehow need to acquire confirmation from the subject that he is indeed seeing a globe while focusing on the drawing. Regarding the possible associations triggered by the concept of a globe, such confirmation would be hard to obtain in an indirect manner. Certainly the researcher cannot investigate the entire array of experiences of the subject that formed his associations. Presumably the best way to find out is to ask the subject to focus on a given aspect, or to let him explain what he thinks while having specific

brain states, and maybe even to recount the memories connected to his learning to interpret a given form as a globe.

But then the interpretation of the neuronal correlate would essentially depend on the reports of the subject they belong to. So, in that case, the interpretation of the brain state depends twice on other acts of interpretation. Not only does it depend on what the researcher takes to be salient stimuli that the subject should represent, but it also depends on the researcher's interpretation of the reports the subject gives. In other words, if researcher and subject agree that the drawing represents a globe, henceforth the neuronal activation pattern is defined as symbolically representing a globe. Hence the attribution of symbolic meaning to neuronal states is dependent on the symbolic meaning of the concept that applies to the perceived stimuli. In other words, the symbolic meaning of brain states, insofar as we can establish it, depends on a system of symbolic interpretation as much as any symbolic representation does.

The causal effectedness of the perceptual states does not make a difference here, since we can only establish cause and effect insofar as we conceptualize them ourselves. Thus, if we place an object in front of a subject and register his perceptual state, we can only interpret his representation as caused by this object in the way we ourselves conceive the object as a cause. The step of interpreting the data then has already been taken when determining which stimuli will be represented in the subject's brain. The possible suggestion that causally effected perceptual states should allow us to establish a determinate symbolic meaning is therewith dismissed.

What the thesis that neuronal representations produce symbolic meanings tells us, is that if we were to determine such specific neuronal configurations as representing a perceptual symbol, the brain is a medium of perception, reflecting in some important way salient features we can also observe in reality. However, what the *meaning* of such represented perceptual features is, and whether other than previously established salient features are represented, cannot follow from neurological research in itself, since it depends on agreement of interpretation between the subject and the researcher.

The point made here can be taken more general than as a specific criticism on Barsalou's model. It addresses the explanatory power of formal systems that model reasoning and knowledge representation. It is not that such models do not convincingly show how reasoning can be represented in, for instance, a connectionist model, nor does it deny that neural processes might be modelled in a way that mirrors human reasoning. Rather, the argument is that we can only interpret them as such *by virtue of our attribution of symbolic meaning*. Maybe the point can be illuminated in the following way. If for instance a connectionist model systematically produces atypical inferences, it would be considered an invalid model, since it ought to model what we consider valid

reasoning. That is, our intuitions on valid inferences would not be considered a neutral theoretical premise that could be rejected on the basis of how a model designed to symbolize our reasoning behaves. Rather, our intuitions provide the ground for evaluating whether the model can be used to accurately symbolize the process of reasoning. Similarly, the determination of symbolic meaning of perceptual symbols, depends crucially on the premises of what they are supposed to represent. That is, only the concepts by which we determine symbolic content, could be recognized as meaningful representations, and hence, the possible symbols in cognition that we would allow for, are those to which our system of symbolic interpretation could be applied.[254]

Brain research, then, does not bring us outside the scope of symbolic representation, even if representations are causally effected in perception. The interpretation of the physically represented content will itself always use precisely the conceptual categories we want to lay bare in the physical mediation. The point may be irrelevant for the determination of the neurobiological processes that underlie cognition and perceptual processing ; however, where it comes to giving semantic interpretations, it is crucial. If one wants to recognize a symbolic meaning in representations achieved in perceptual states, then one must in advance assume a concept with such meaning. Interpretation as the recognition of meaning, it follows, cannot be reduced to an act of automated, physical processing, since it involves recognizing the concepts that are supposed to apply in the automated process.

'Top-down': relating abstract concepts to a symbolic state

Thus, starting with raw perceptual data, one does not arrive at an explicated conceptualized representation of these data without explicating the concepts that are used. Reversely, when starting with an abstract explicated concept, one cannot arrive at its mere perceptual content without using a frame of explicated concepts, as the discussion of Barsalou's theory of abstract concepts below shows. In determining the perceptual content of abstract concepts, the description of such content is always relative to a theory that provides for the descriptive terms, thus allowing only for determination relative to a

[254] Keith Holyoak states that the Physical Symbol System (PSS) hypothesis (namely that human cognition is the product of such a system) is a 'foundational principle of modern cognition theory'. His research agenda is then formulated as follows: 'the PSS that we seek to understand is that which is the product of biological evolution' (Holyoak[1998] p 9). In view of the argumentation laid out here, modern cognition theory would then be all about cognitive symbols and symbol-manipulation, and not about the determination of cognitively represented symbolic meanings, i.e. not with conceptual content.

background theory and not simply by drawing on what is presented in perception itself.

Barsalou's analysis of abstract concepts does not appeal to mere neurological configurations, but to the *content* of simulators (concepts), which are, we saw, supposedly formed through a functional selection of what we are aware of in different perceptual states. Thus, the semantic function that Barsalou attributes to neuronal configurations plays a crucial role in his theory of abstract concepts.

An example Barsalou presents of how an abstract concept has perceptual content is his analysis of the concept of truth 'in a core sense'.[255] He analyses truth as the matching of a simulation and a perceptual state. For instance when a sentence 'There is a balloon over the cloud' is processed, that leads to a simulation in the processing agent. Then the agent looks outside and perceives a physical situation, and attempts 'to map the perceptual simulation into it [...]. Analogous to the simulation, the situation contains a balloon and a cloud, and the balloon is above the cloud. On establishing this successful mapping, the agent might say: "It's true that a balloon is above a cloud" with 'true' being grounded in the mapping'.[256] Thus the simulation of the concept of truth in the subject involves first his establishing a simulation of the proposition, second, his being in a perceptual state representing the situation outside, but, third, it also involves an introspective task of judging whether the mapping between the two is successful.

Barsalou concludes: 'abstract concepts are perceptual, being grounded in temporally extended simulations of external and internal events. What makes these concepts *seem* nonperceptual is their heavy reliance on complex configurations of multimodal information distributed over time'.[257]

The example does indeed show how perception and simulation may play a role in the verification of a proposition. However as such it does not tell us much about the concept of truth itself. A simulator of the introspective experience of successful matching and mapping does not fully exemplify the content of an abstract sense of 'truth'. How, for instance, could such a simulator be of help in establishing mathematical truths about 20-dimensional objects? Or how should one understand Nietzsche's famous line 'If truth were a woman...'? Are such understandings of truth a simulation of successful mapping between simulations? Furthermore, the use of the word 'analogous' in Barsalou's analysis above is crucial; before establishing the perceptual nature of the abstract concept, the sense of perceptual analogy should be explained.

[255] Barsalou[1999] p 601
[256] Barsalou[1999] p 601
[257] Barsalou[1999] p 603

Analogous, presumably, here means 'just like' or 'same as'. In other words, the perception and the proposition show some similarity, both structural (i.e. spatial) and in content (i.e. the same type of entities). In introspection, according to Barsalou, this similarity is perceived, namely through the possibility of mapping, and results in the assessment of the truth of the proposition. Thus, constitutive for the concept of 'truth' is an act of internal reflection, which Barsalou deems perceptual. This, as we saw in section 3.2, in itself involves a conflated sense of what is perceptual and what not, but let us grant him here that introspection is, indeed, perceptual. The question now is, would the concept of truth therewith be perceptual as well?

Let us consider the symbolic function of this concept, that is, its reference to a similarity observed in introspection. The observed similarity itself is a relation between a perceptual state and a simulation. The perceptual state is caused by a state in the world, and is represented on the neural level, while the simulation is an activation of certain neuronal configurations. The observed similarity should then be a matter of correspondence (in the form of co-activating the same perceptual symbols for instance) between these neuronal configurations.

This correspondence, however, is not open to introspection. And, indeed, at this state in the science of neurobiology, it is not open to any inspection at all: it is theoretical conjecture. Thus the notion of truth that Barsalou explains as mapping in introspection depends on another, theoretically postulated notion of correspondence, namely between brain states.

If we then would want to establish the truth of this theory, we would have to verify the postulated notion of correspondence between brain states. So, following the given definition of truth, for this we would have to consider first what the proposition 'truth results from corresponding brain states' means, and then whether the simulation of its meaning can be mapped onto a perceptual state that neurobiology is supposed to make possible in the future (namely the observation of similarity between brain states). In other words: truth as an introspectively perceived relation would have to be considered itself a brain state, corresponding to the observed correspondence between brain states, in order for the concept 'truth' to mean something. However, then the regress in required brain states that the concept of truth supposedly refers to (i.e. the perceived relation between the simulation and the perception), and that which the proposition in which it appears stands for (i.e. the simulation of the relation between simulation and perception) is infinite. In other words, the definition of truth given here does not serve to verify the theory that abstract concepts are

perceptual. Hence, we would need a theoretical, more seriously abstract definition of truth to establish a perceptual meaning of the concept of truth.[258]
Concerning the problem of abstract concepts, Gibbs and Berg suggest in a comment on Barsalou's paper that abstract concepts need not be perceptually grounded themselves, but can be filled in metaphorically.[259] Hence, for instance, the concept of 'anger' would result from a mapping of diverse metaphorical domains, such as 'liquid exploding in a container' onto the domain of anger.[260] Barsalou rejects the proposal as a sum-total solution. First, because metaphors need a domain to be mapped onto which has to be represented concretely, and second because such metaphors as proposed 'hardly constitute an adequate concept'.[261] Yet he writes: 'My intention was never to underestimate the importance of metaphor in abstract concepts, especially those for which people have no direct experience'.[262] It seems then that a reductionist alliance is close by between the cognitive linguistic idea of a basic metaphor, and the perceptual 'neurologism' that confuses symbolic meaning with a functional representation of perceptual states. What is reduced in either account is the possibility of theoretical concepts: concepts that are grounded in theory, i.e., in explicit definitions and social conventions that govern the use of words regardless of the perceptual content these may be associated with in the individual mind.
It remains unclear how Barsalou otherwise would be able to account for abstract concepts 'for which people have no direct experience', unless indeed by means of associating perceptual data belonging to different concepts with abstract concepts. For certainly the causal effectedness of categories in perception is by itself not sufficient to explain how terms expressing abstract concepts could be associated with perceptual content. At the beginning of his article, Barsalou quotes Russell on the preoccupation of theorists with theory and words; he himself, however, seems to show signs of the reverse: reading Russell could well have reminded him of the difference between knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance.

---

[258] This argument is not the same as Pylyshyn's argument against depictive representation, which essentially claims that if depictive representations would be used, they would require 'a little man in the head' to determine their meaning. (An argument, by the way, related to that presented in Wittgenstein's *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (138-142) against *any* mentalist conception of meaning). Rather, the argumentation here given is akin to Frege's objection against a correspondence theory of truth, where the representation of truthful correspondence itself also must correspond with something, and again a representation of this, ad infinitum (Frege[1977a]).
[259] Gibbs and Berg[1999]
[260] Barsalou[1999] p 618
[261] Barsalou[1999] p 600
[262] Barsalou[1999] p 647

3.4 Subjective productive representation

As we saw, the neuronal basis of concepts does not allow one to interpret concepts in another mind, unless we assume these to be the same as our own. In general, shared symbolic meanings, such as linguistically expressed concepts, in this theory must be based on a presupposed agreement in interpretation. Barsalou's proposal that all representational content of concepts is perceptual thus faces yet another problem, namely, to explain intersubjectivity of concepts such that our different individual conceptual systems enable communication. The assumption that all my concepts must be based on my processing of a limited number of situations, carries no guarantee that the meaning of my utterances are shared by any other person, especially where the expressed meanings do not correlate with physically processed external similarities, such as in introspection.

In the light of this observation, we can better understand what role the assumption of causal effectuation plays in a theory that grounds concepts in perception. For, if concepts are formed as a result of a mere physical capacity of processing, then surely people who have the same physical make-up also form the same concepts. And then, sure enough, concepts have the same epistemological status as reality itself has. Intersubjectivity, or even objectivity, of the conceptual system would thus follow.

To assume a causal origin of concepts, then, is to assume an account of cognitive processing that oddly resembles the discussed account of the transcendental determination of concepts: we cannot but experience a situation as the instance of a given concept. However, for Barsalou there is no innate language or transcendental law from which a concept is to be derived. Instead we derive it causally, from existing 'physical categories'. Hence, the combined assumptions of unconscious processing and of a causal connection to reality, gives Barsalou's theory of concepts an objective ring.

In the Critical philosophy, we saw, Kant introduced subjectivity in the conceptual system with the faculty of reflective imagination. Subjective judgements were analysed to be formed through analogical reasoning and productive imagination. The assumption of transcendental determination of sensory impressions then resembles the position of automated causality, in that it does not leave any space for subjective judgement, or more specifically, for productive imagination. That is, it does not allow the subject to invent concepts that do not result from *a priori* rules of determination. Similarly, in the causalist view, no subjective concepts would result that do not conform to physical categories. It seems then, that this view on the perceptual grounding of all concepts, in addition to the assumption of automated perceptual processing, renders all subjective freedom of conceptualization impossible. Thus, in

Barsalou's model, insofar as it yields concepts that are causally effected in perception, we cannot process perceptual states other than we do, since we are not subjectively involved in decisions of conceptual determination. If linguistic meaning would also be grounded perceptually, in the way the causalist view prescribes, then words would have objective meanings.

For Barsalou utterances become meaningful through their ties with accompanying perceptual processing. That means that reflection upon the use of a word will consist in following the track of the symbols used, through accompanying simulators, to some activated perceptual symbols. Now if conceptual determination is indeed a matter of causal effect in perceptual processing of reality, meanings in the model would be objectively grounded in reality. In other words, the track from a word to the associated perceptual symbols, would be a straight highway, where causal relation-signs indicate which concepts pertain to which perceptual symbols, without leaving any room for subjective reflection or creative concept formation.

However, there is an account of subjective productivity in Barsalou's model, which is described as symbol manipulation. The only possible way then, to subjectively achieve new concepts in Barsalou's model, would be through productive manipulation, namely by combining different perceptual symbols in new manners.

A conceptualized representation, in Barsalou's theory, consists of a simulation of combined perceptual symbols. The simulation may be created productively, that is, perceptual symbols or even frame structures derived from other simulators may be used within a simulator's frame to achieve a new simulation. In this way Barsalou explains how we can for instance think of a flying car, or of one with tweeting doorknobs. Thus, Barsalou can account for creative simulations.

The thus produced representation cannot be thought of as itself causally effected in perception of reality. So, we have to assume a different reason for the subject to engage in productive simulations than in the case of conceptualizations formed on the basis of automated processing of visual stimuli. One reason could be that in a conversation someone mentions flying cars, another could be a situation in which we wished we had one, such as when being stuck in traffic. In both cases, to combine the concepts of flying and of cars amounts to the intentional construction of a simulation. Recall how a concept such as 'truth' according to Barsalou can be formed on the basis of mere introspection. By analogy, the formation of a simulator (concept) for 'flying cars' on the basis of, for example, different visualizations of one's own car flying over a traffic jam should be possible. On the basis of intention-guided simulations we would thus form a simulator for flying cars. Hence, we have formed a subjective concept.

The next question then concerns the *meaning* of an expression like 'a flying car'. That is, what sort of symbolic content would a subjectively produced concept provide for the expression? Recall that symbolic meaning for Barsalou is equal to being in the 'symbolic state' of perceiving a referent. When visualizing something like a flying car, then, we have some sort of perceptual experience of it. Thereby we are in a 'symbolic state' of knowing what the concept 'stands for', namely an imaginative representation. However if this is so, then, again, the claim of perceptual grounding has lost much of its bite. The symbolic meaning of an expression would simply consist of anything we can think of, that is of anything we might produce in imagination. To conceive of such representations as 'perceptual' does not seem to correspond to the way we normally define perception as the processing of external stimuli. Accordingly, the notion of 'causal effectedness' of meaning by perceptual states would have to be understood differently, since the conceptual system would be capable of 'causing' its own concepts.

Alternatively, the claim of perceptual grounding could be taken to mean that all symbolic meaning can be decomposed into perceptually processed elements of reality. That is, subjectively produced concepts only have a derived symbolic content. To be sure, as we saw in previous discussion, subjective concepts do not merely comprise conceptualizations of 'flying cars' and other fantastic entities but also more general concepts. These comprise, we concluded in the discussion of Bartsch's theory, second order concepts such as 'behaviour', insofar as these are based on subjective reflection on personally experienced situations. Likewise, in the discussion on Kant we saw that teleological judgements, such as a scientific explanation of biological diversity, fall under these subjectively produced concepts. Last but not least, subjective concepts include Barsalou's own introspection-based understanding of abstract terms, such as 'truth'. Thus, to claim that the meaning of these concepts would be derived from imaginative combination of what is encountered perceptually would mean that, first, each individual would have to produce these concepts by himself on the basis of personal experience, and, second, that such personal synthetic concepts are the same for all individuals, as they function as the symbolic meaning of expressions in communication.

Which of these would be Barsalou's final position on the nature of symbolic meaning remains unclear. If he indeed holds that all symbolic content is causally effected in the experience of reality, his account runs into problems of explaining a shared meaning of abstract terms and fictional descriptions. If he allows for subjectively produced symbolic meaning on the basis of productive imagination, then the claim that the symbolic content of all concepts is derived from perception in a usual sense does not hold, and thereby rules out an objective grounding for all concepts. So, either way, Barsalou's model is not fit

to explain intersubjectivity of linguistic meaning. Hence, with it, the possibility of communication remains either a mystery or a great coincidence.

4 Symbol representation: a proposal

4.1 Representing symbols: language as experience

The assumption of causal effectedness of concepts alone, we saw, cannot account for shared meanings in the socially coordinated use of language, since it cannot account for intersubjectivity of subjectively produced concepts. In this sense, then, the thesis of a purely perceptual basis of conceptual representation, stating that all concepts should acquire symbolic content on the basis of perceptually processed similarity, is untenable. It leads to a conceptual system that cannot surpass subjective concepts, unless all subjects produce concepts in the same way. To explain the uniformity in use of language, we would thus have to postulate a shared system of concepts by which people produce symbolic meanings. Hence, we would have to postulate a system of rules of understanding that pertains to cognition generally. And precisely with this postulate the empirical foundation of the conceptual system is cast away. We would return to an account of determinant judgement based on transcendental concepts, similar to that in the first *Critique*. The disadvantage of such a system lies in the rigidity of laws of conceptual determination, which cannot account for creativity or productivity in subjective judgements.

A way out of this impasse was already suggested in my discussion of Bartsch's semantic model of concept formation, namely, to consider how the learning of conventional use of language allows us to use words for subjectively construed concepts, in a way that is subjected to social approval or rejection. In the sections to follow, I outline an approach to model the conceptual system that retains the basic idea of experiential grounding, without, however, presupposing a direct perceptual grounding of *meaning*. The central assumption in this proposal is that language provides a regulated symbol system, the symbols of which become related to experiential content as well as to background knowledge in experience. Since expressions are associated to either perceptual or linguistic representations on the basis of experience, their cognitive representation embodies the learned social regulations in a speech community, as well as other regularities in experience. Thus, cognitively represented relations are based on intersubjectively accessible events, in that the experience that gives rise to forming such cognitive representations is in principle open to all subjects, even if, in reality, all individuals do have a specific and probably unique personal history of experience. Another part of experience is only subjectively accessible, such as for instance are feeling and

dreaming. Thus, the conceptual system encompasses cognitive representations and relations that are sometimes not based on common ground. Further, cognitive faculties depend on individual training and capacity. Hence, the individual's conceptual system embodies socially regulated use of language and phenomenal regularities in a way that depends not only on his perceptual faculties and experience, but also on his subjective skill of association.

This conception of language, as embodying social norms, is based on Bartsch's description of the process of learning language, as a continuous process of meeting correction or approval of new utterances with respect to their conformity with linguistic conventions. Language thus provides a rule-governed system of symbols, that is itself empirically given. That means that in experience we do encounter 'abstract concepts', insofar as they are expressed in language. Hence in a sense abstract concepts *are* intersubjectively cognizable, namely through their linguistic expression.

Like Barsalou, Bartsch adopts an empirical, experiential foundation in her theory of concept formation: experiential concepts arise from similarities between experienced situations. She thereby also takes an ontological stance on what experientially grounded concepts stand for, namely, a property in reality. However, I argued that similarity between satisfaction situations for an utterance could only be formed on the basis of conceptual combination of the past satisfaction situations activated by the perception of the context of the utterance. Thus, I argued, for concepts of any generality, the reconstruction of an experience-based meaning on the basis of similarity between satisfaction situations is an act of productive imagination.

However, sometimes an expression may be associated more directly with a salient, perceptually given aspect of the situations it is used in, yielding an experience-based representation of its denotation. For instance, the recognition of a face will be salient on a level of perceptual processing. If the perception of this face is accompanied by the utterance of a name, the two perceptually processed representations, of both face and name, become associated representations. Hence, upon hearing the name, representation of the face may be retrieved from memory by association, and reversely.

As we saw in the discussion of the metaphorical utterance in which 'pig' applied to a little boy, such associated perceptual representation is not always present. The experiential content of the use of the expression 'pig' , then, is formed on the basis of personal experience. I argued that any resulting attributed experiential content of the expressed concept is inherently subjective, and cannot in and of itself be understood as coinciding with an intersubjective meaning of the expression. That is, as far as an experiential meaning can be found, the representations that are retrieved in understanding

the metaphorical utterance do not share perceptual salience in the same way as when a name is associated to the representation of an object, or an individual.

I argued that an understanding of a shared linguistic meaning can be found in linguistic explications, which are in principle available to all members of the speech community. I characterized these as the predications, descriptions or definitions that are exemplified by the word, that is, those expressions which apply to, or are used in the context of a given expression. Thus, the knowledge exemplified by the expressions in the metaphorical utterance, consists of descriptions and expressions commonly used in utterances that include the expressions in the metaphor. Hence, in the example, such exemplified knowledge would be derived from for instance fairy tales or common stereotypical predications pertaining to pigs. With reference to such common knowledge, the meaning of a metaphor may explicitly be reconstructed. In the example, the utterance addresses an aspect of behaviour that has explicitly been predicated of pigs if not in the utterance situation, then in the cluster of previously processed utterances related to the word 'pig'. Thus, the mother's utterance could make sense even to those children, of whom John might be one, who have no perceptual experience of pigs whatsoever, but know all about pigs eating garbage, fleeing from wolves, being stupid and playing in the mud.

Generally, when learning language, we copy behaviour, by tentatively applying the expression to new situations, all the while meeting approval or objection. For abstract terms, such as mathematical terms, or for general expressions such as 'behaviour', we learn that the conditions of successful application are presented by their relation to a linguistic environment, and thus to 'theoretical' explication, rather than that they must be accompanied by salient perceptual similarities. In this way, language plays a role by being part of the utterance situation that is perceptually processed. What Bartsch describes as a higher level of concept formation, namely feature explications and background theories (as bits of everyday knowledge held true) are part and parcel of what is experienced. In other words, I understand linguistic data as being processed on the experiential level. In this way the thesis that concepts originate in experience may be held, without attributing a perceptual, objective ground to all symbolic *meaning*. That is, not the meaning but the symbol itself is perceptually processed.

With this conception of the perceptual ground of symbolic systems, namely that the symbols and not their meanings are perceptually processed, we have some ground for the elaboration of a representational model of concept formation and understanding that in some respects departs from the two models discussed above, and relies on them in others.

In this account I presuppose two basic notions, namely of representation and of association. Representations are cognitive representations formed on the basis of perception. They are what perceptual processing may present as salient, while recurring percepts allow for recognition of what is perceived under an aspect of similarity. Hence, we may form representations of objects, of a person, or of an aspect shared by these, such as colours, smells, or movements. Associations, for all the negative connotations that the term gives rise to, are relations between representations, as processed in perception. Thus, they include recurrent event structures as well as accidental co-occurrence of objects, or events. Again, recurring processing allows for recognition of such relations as being similar.

Language, then, is perceptually processed on the basis of parts that are recognized as similar (sounds, words, sentences); of associations between these (recognizable sequences of sounds, words, sentences); and on the basis of associations with other representations processed in relation to an utterance (that is, other utterances, events, individuals, objects).

Barsalou's perceptual symbols system is useful for the approach envisioned, in that it can model the formation of both representations and the associations between them. We can construe a model using his terminology in the following way. Simulators, to recall, are structured concepts formed on the basis of perception, and perceptual symbols are the representations derived from perception that are stored in memory. Thus, the notion of a perceptual symbol, as the cognitive representation of selected aspects in perceptual processing, coincides with what I call a representation. Next, Barsalou's notion of a simulator presupposes the possibility of forming structural relations between representations, which is what I intend to capture with the above notion of association. It is however not the same, for Barsalou understands a simulator as a concept, with which I disagree. As I claimed above in section 2.3, concepts are theoretical reconstructions of meanings, and as such are only an idealized, reflective reconstruction of what is cognitively represented. In this I agree with Bartsch, who claims that concepts do not exist in the brain, while examples can be pointed out as their representatives.

The central assumption of my proposal would then be, in Barsalou's terms, that first language itself is represented by means of perceptual symbols, and, secondly, that some simulators do not acquire a frame on the basis of information derived from the utterance situation minus the utterance itself, but rather on the basis of the linguistic context. That is, a simulator for an expression may have a frame purely built on the place the expression occupies in a linguistic environment. The structure of the frame would be formed by a growing number of processed utterances as well as utterance situations, and would allow for the association of the expression with a complex of possible

predications in relation to the expression. To put it differently: an expression in an utterance may be processed perceptually as being structurally related to the occurrence of other expressions in the context, throughout different utterances.
Clearly, this should not be considered the only way of representing expressions, for expressions may also be embedded in simulators that involve other perceptual information from utterance situations. In this way, we can conceive of a representational structure of simulators for different aspects of utterance situations: for some expressions, for instance for abstract terms, simulators are formed on the basis of linguistic context, rather than non-linguistic situations. Such expressions, then, are cognitively represented as belonging to several linguistic contexts. Hearing the expression, then, essentially activates other linguistic 'perceptual symbols'.
For other expressions the conceptual embedding involves non-linguistic data as well. For instance for a name that is ostensively introduced, the simulator might include representations of the ostensively indicated object. In this way, interrelations between linguistic representations and non-linguistic representations could be modelled on the basis of the representation of expressions in different conceptual embeddings. The connection between simulators formed through language learning and simulators formed through other experienced situations would thus be represented. Thus, a model in terms of simulators and perceptual symbols could be envisioned that generally conforms to the dynamics of concept formation on the basis of both language and perception, as I argued for in the discussion of Bartsch's theory.
As I said, the notion of a simulator does not conform with my position, since it presents a cognitive reality to concepts. A concept is a reconstructed meaning, which is only to be stated in language. And language, I propose, consists of recurrent sounds and signs that are processed perceptually. With this observation, I depart from the assumption of transparency of linguistic symbols, that states that a symbol refers to, or carries with it its meaning, such as that a word *expresses* a concept. In a way, to consider symbols as perceptually encoded objects themselves is congruent with semiotic approaches, since here too, meaning is never seen apart from the physical symbol or sign that is its carrier. Instead, in the semiotic approach, meaning emerges as a property of a sign only in view of its structural relations to other signs. And this, I argue, is how a cognitive representation may allow for the production of meaning: by its relations to other representations.
In the following section, I consider how a conceptual model, making use of the notions of representation and association or relation and refraining from the assumption of concepts or meanings as entities or representations in cognition. My terminology, then, is psychologistic, in that I do make assumptions about cognitive processes. My understanding is largely based on the model of

cognitive representation presented by Barsalou. Like he does, I assume that functional selections of perceptual states are stored in memory, and can be retrieved by activation in perceptual processing. Representations, as such, are not stored in memory; they are only formed upon activation. Thus, representations are not static brain-states that may or may not become conscious. Rather, as a reaction to perceptual processing, representations are activated, and may trigger the activation of further representations. Whether a representation enters consciousness is then a different matter than either storing them in memory or activating them by retrieval. These processes, I assume with Barsalou, are guided by attention, which need not entail consciousness. What a representation exactly is, is then hard to say. In a physical sense it is, as Barsalou assumes for 'perceptual symbols', a configuration of neuronal activity. However, I find it somewhat simplistic, and on philosophical grounds untenable in view of my argumentation in section 3.3, to assume that something like 'red' is an isolatable brain activity. Rather, then, I refrain from any conclusions of what a representation should be on a neuronal level. I prefer to think of a representation as an aspect of the situation perceived that is shared by whatever it activates in the brain. Hence, the perception of a red flag and that of red meat must be somehow similar in that they share a form of processing, and thus are stored in memory as similar on a neuronal level. Perceiving the one may then activate the representation of the other. Still each of these representations is related to different representations, such as, apart from the most obvious perceptual differences, representations of the words 'meat' and 'flag'. Perhaps the only thing such representations share is their being associated to the word 'red'.

Thus, similarity is understood as the result of different acts of processing that make use of (partially) the same activation patterns, and thus allows one representation to be associated with another. Hence, in a sense a representation is a similarity set in the sense Bartsch defines it; however, I do not consider such sets as sets converging to a concept, that is as stabilizing, nor do I relate them to properties in reality, since they emerge from a mechanism of perceptual processing only. Rather, some relations between elements in a similarity set are so strongly associated, that they allow for a generalization over what is perceived in different situations under the name 'representation'. Hence, the recurring perception of a face forms a representation of a face, or the repeated recognition of a word forms the representation of that word. Therewith, the use of the term 'representation' is a generalization over recurrent parts in perception that share a largely similar activation pattern. In the following discussion, I then assume a basic terminology of representations and associations; it should however be kept in mind that representations are a heuristic generalization over similarly processed parts of singular perceptual

states, and thus could also be rephrased in terms of associations between aspects of perceptual states.

In this way, then, I further make assumptions about human memory, and consider it a latent reservoir of what may be retrieved, under attention, and therewith allows for the production or construction of representations. Thus, the process of retrieval is assumed to be a form of structured association, by paths that are formed on the basis of previously processed relations. Although I do assume that such relations are initially cognized in perceptual processing, I consider retrieval as not only being based on perceptual processing, but also as *presenting* or forming a relation between retrieved representations. Thus, by coincidental activation of retrieved representations, associations between them are formed imaginatively, and not perceptually. In this way, an explanation of conceptual productivity may be envisaged.

In section 4.3 I reconsider the reflective process of reconstructing meanings for an expression, that is, the process of interpretation. Continuing on the discussion of Bartsch's notion of perspectives above, in section 4.4, I especially discuss the role of context in interpretation. In section 4.5 thereafter, I discuss the relation between the approach proposed here and another previously discussed model of cognition, presented by Indurkhya. Finally, in section 4.6, I reconsider in what sense the outlined approach may be thought of as a generalization of Kant's understanding of aesthetic reflection.

4.2 Conceptual networks

As a consequence of my above understanding of concepts, namely as structures by which representations are associated, the notion of 'conceptual content' or 'symbolic meaning' acquires a different understanding. A concept here would not 'stand for' something in an ideal sense of being a transparent symbol, such as a name that refers directly to an object. Rather, concepts emerge as cognitive representations *in relation* to other cognitive representations. That is, a name becomes meaningful if it is connected to the representation of a face, or to a description of someone's acts. For instance, when perceiving a face, it is processed as being the same (or similar to) previously perceived face. The perceptual processing thus activates the representation of the face, and this representation allows for the activation of the representation of a name. The representation thus activated may then become conscious. Similarly, hearing a name allows for retrieval of representations of linguistic context ('the writer of Waverly') or of a face.

Relations between representations are based on experience, such as perceptual processing of structured utterances, or of phenomenal conditions, such as

temporal and spatial relations. Thus, contiguity provides for structural relations between cognitive representations. Further, recognition under aspects of similarity allows for generalization in two ways. First, there is perceptual similarity, that is, of appearance, which allows one to recognize objects as being the same, and hence, to form a representation of similarly perceptually processed objects throughout different situations. Individuation, then, is initially assumed to be the result of perceptual processing. Secondly, there is structural similarity, based on recognizing a given (object of) experience as having the same structural relations to other representations as another. So far, then, we use the basic types of similarity that Bartsch describes in the formation of concepts on the experiential level.

To achieve the latter type of generalization of contiguity relations, basic conceptual relations should then in themselves be capable of being generalized, resulting in structures such as event structures, or syntax.[263] These general structures can then be thought of as frames, in the terms of Barsalou. In his model, simulators, can be filled in with representations; either productively, as in the example of representing a flying car, or in conceptual processing of experience, such as in understanding one event as the cause of another. In this way, then, the distinction between simulators and simulations that Barsalou proposes comes in. To recall, a simulation was defined as a given instance of a concept, namely by filling in a simulator. The perception of an object for instance, would trigger the activation of a simulator, and this would trigger structurally related representations. Simulators, then, may alternatively be understood as a trained cognitive *capacity* of associating specific representations to one another, rather than as 'empty' structural concepts that are represented in themselves.

Conceptualization or simulation in Barsalou's terms, amounts to 'filling in' a simulator. In perception, according to Barsalou, this was based on recognition of objects in agreement with a given simulator, such as recognizing that something is a car on the basis of perceiving its four wheels, a hood and a driver's seat. On the basis of the simulator, inferences were possible, such as that in a distant moving car, a driver is present. Recognition of an object was

[263] The process described, of recognizing structures merely on the basis of experience and not by learning explicit rules, is recognized in psychology as 'implicit learning'. This notion is described in Kubovy[1998], after experiments reported in Reber[1993], Schellenberg[1996]. In the experiments in question subjects learn rules through memorizing sequences of letters with an implicit grammar. The subjects have no knowledge of the rule-governed nature of the memorized subject, nor do they know that in fact they are trained to learn rules. The subjects presented with implicit grammatical structures did much better in reproducing the letter-strings than the subjects who were given random strings. The explanation given was that through the memorizing of the data, the subjects formed an expectation towards the structure of the next string, on the basis of an implicit process of learning rules.

based on focal selection during perception, that is, attention. Hence, when recognizing an object, this activates a simulator, and therewith other perceptual symbols are activated. In other words, the inferred representations ('it's a car!') are triggered through attention (focusing on the perceptually given wheels and so on). Thus, retrieval of representations stored in memory is described as a process guided by attention. Describing this process, without mention of a specific simulator or concept, we can then rephrase simulation, or conceptualization, as a specific path of association and retrieval. That such a path may be followed does not require any fixed general structure pertaining to the conceptualizations of an activated representation. Perception is not limited to activating a single representation, for we focus on more than one recognized aspect of any given situation (that is, our perception is not limited to seeing the colour of something, but we also see whether it has wheels, a hood and so on). Thus, considering conceptualization as a path of retrieval, many different representations may be retrieved in perception that form a complex, ad hoc network. Representations in such a network have different relations between them; some are perceived, and some retrieved, but all are triggered through focusing in perception, that is through attention.[264]

As we saw in the discussion on imagery research, the production of a consciously maintained visual image is tied to its conceptual identity. We may tentatively understand this on the model of attention based retrieval, that is, on the basis of a specific path of association being triggered, resulting in a complex of representations that are related by previously processed contiguity. Thus, in forming a conscious image, we follow such a path of retrieved associations. If our focus of attention shifts, we take another path, and hence the visualized image breaks down. In perception, this is not the case: while changing focus of attention we remain in the same perceptual state, as the perceptual input on a physical level remains the same. Hence, conceptual identity changes as the retrieved network of representations changes; but the perceptual stimulation remains constant.

When hearing an utterance, the recognition of an expression (as a perceptual datum) triggers several representations. These include representations of related expressions, as well as specific perceptual representations derived from utterance situations. The thus co-activated representations may have been

[264] Previously (in section 3.4), when considering the imaginative production of representations, such as forming the image of a flying car, I called retrieval an intention-guided process. If I was right in calling it so, that would presuppose a relation between intention and attention. It is way beyond this discussion to discuss possible conceptions of intentionality, or indeed of attention; however, if intentions are to be understood as 'horizons of understanding'(Husserl) then the two somehow seem to coincide. Indeed, Barsalou's use of notion of 'focus' in perception in itself presupposes intentionality.

processed at some time in relation to each other. Thus, for instance when somebody says: 'Cars have doorknobs', the retrieved representations, both linguistic and perceptual will be connected in obvious ways, on the basis of both semantic structures, and perceptual representations of cars. Now when someone says: 'Instead of doorknobs, this car has canary beaks', the representations involved will become associated by a familiar path of association, but with new representations. That is, on the model of the relation between 'doorknobs' and 'car', 'canary beaks' will be brought into relation with cars.

The proposed model, then, is based on conceptual associations that are derived from perceptually processed relations of contiguity, and hold between representations of aspects of situations that are processed as being similar in the sense explained in the previous section. Conceptual associations structurally relate representations to one another in a conceptual network. In this way, the envisioned approach does not presuppose a hierarchy of concepts in which the one concept stands for, or, in set theoretic terms, contains another, right down to a bottom line of basic represented perceptual content. Rather, representations of events, feelings, symbols or objects, are interrelated in many different ways. The same utterance can be processed in different situations, and can be associated in memory to different aspects of these situations. If some aspect recurs more often than not in connection to the utterance, the association between the cognitive representation of the utterance (the sounds or words) and this particular aspect (for instance a person) is reinforced, and henceforth if the one representation is triggered, the other might be so, too. Similarly, words are processed as being related to others, within a specific order (based on the syntactical structure in the utterances), and can thus be brought into relation to again other words.

Consider an example of how we could achieve to use an expression for something. When we are in a garden, and look at a flower, the perceptual representations of a colour, of a specific form of the leaves, of a scent, of the expression 'flower', and so on may be activated. Some of these will be represented in association to the expression 'rose'. If the latter associations are strong enough, we recognize this flower as a 'rose', and may call it such. Related expressions, for instance the expression 'lily of the valley' may also be activated, but appear not as prominent in the network of associations as 'rose'. Thus expressions, associated to a complex of perceptual representations that are similar in some respects but not in others, may be triggered but are either not found to be as strongly associated as the word we then utter, or are cancelled out by other representations in their associated network, for instance

when the flower in the given situation does not have bell-formed flowers, such as lilies of the valley do.[265]

The strength of conceptual structures between representations then also depends on experience, for instance on frequency, on emotional impact, or on normative importance of the occasions in which representations are processed in relation to one another. Thus, like the theory Bartsch presents, the model proposed here can be understood on a probabilistic model, since experience provides for representations, and for relations between them that are enforced on the basis of frequent co-activations of representations, or on the basis of the weight of a formed association on the basis an important experience.

So far, the formation of associative relations between representations was considered insofar as these were formed on the basis of perception. However, since the formation of such association depends on the simultaneous activation of different representations in both perception *and* retrieval, it is not restricted to the relation between representations that are directly activated in perception. Associations between representations can be formed imaginatively, as well as on the basis of perception. When two representations are under attention at more or less the same time, both trigger a network of conceptually related representations. Somewhere in these networks, an overlap in the associated representations may be recognized. Hence, on any degree of strength of associative relation to the representations under attention, an aspect of similarity might be found somewhere in the associated networks of representations. Hence, an associative bond between representations may be formed on the basis of their being retrieved in relation to one another.

Different representations under attention (for instance the representations of a toothbrush and of the word 'dog') are related through a common part in their associated networks of representations (that is, some representations associated to 'dog' are evoked by the perception of the toothbrush). Depending on the personal experience of a speaker, such a common association within these networks may be very remote or distant (for instance, when the network of representations associated to 'dog' includes the expression 'fur', which is related to 'hair', which overlaps with a representation in the network triggered by the toothbrush), or it may be very prominent (such as when the word 'dog' is associated foremost with previous experience of a dog, and the recognition of the hairs of a tooth brush triggers the previous perception of a dog's hairs, and hence triggers the word).

---

[265] As such, Quine's understanding of 'stimulus-meaning' could be interpreted in this proposal as a representation that is associated with an utterance on the grounds of such overlap in connected representations, including both representations connected through similarity and through opposition within the conceptual network (cf. Quine[1960] pp 32-33).

Understanding then amounts to the recognition of those representations that are conceptually related to both of the co-activated representations (in the example, to representations of the toothbrush and 'dog'). Understanding in the sense of recognizing an association between two representations, also reinforces or even establishes such connection. Thus, representations that are not processed as connected on the basis of experience but that are related in understanding may *become* associated to one another. That is, co-activation of representations, whether coincidental or not, and whether based on perceptual processing or on retrieval, may result in an associative bond between them. Hence, understanding is based on the use of productive imagination, namely the subjective association of different representations as belonging to a given expression.

In the case of the child that associates 'dog' to a toothbrush, the child will learn how to use the word 'dog' properly. The connection between the two representations will become weaker, or more remote. That the child is corrected in its use of the word, then, implies that it learns to not express the word in relation to a toothbrush; it does not entail that the association between the two is undone. Thus, it learns an additional aspect of the word 'dog', namely, in which situation its utterance leads to an utterance of the form '*not* a dog'. Hence, the association between the word 'dog' and the toothbrush may be supplemented with the stronger association of 'not a dog'.

4.3 Contextual restraints

The notion of a perspective, in this account, could be understood as given through attention, that is, the focal selection in perception, and the guided path of associations. Like perspectives, which Bartsch in the terminology of Husserl called 'horizons of understanding', this implies an aspect of intentionality. However, in Bartsch's model, to take one perspective cancels others out, since according to this model a situation is processed under one perspective, or, in the case of an indeterminate context such as in literary interpretation, several perspectives may be developed next to one another.

In my approach, the horizon of understanding is not to be identified with either a single property or a single feature processed in the context. Rather, recognition of perceptually salient appearances, or of linguistic expressions enables the retrieval of different networks of representations, and may enforce an overlap between such different associated networks of representation. It does not, then, lead to a conceptual categorization of associated representations in a given situation, rather, some representations emerge as more prominent.

The restrictive character of the notion of perspective defined by Bartsch can thus be understood as a normative impact of context on association, that is, on having learned what type of utterances are appropriate or meaningful in a given situation. For instance, when discussing the role of Italy in international politics, it would be very inappropriate to utter 'I love espresso', on the basis of a prominent association between 'Italy' and 'espresso'.[266] Discourse, then, should have an impact on whether associated expressions can be uttered. This can be explained as a result of representing expressions on the basis of processed contiguity relations in utterances, which can be understood as semantic relations between representations. Thus, the expression 'espresso' would not be represented in close relation to expressions such as 'conservative', 'post-communist', or 'lucrative weapon trade'. And further, if a speaker does produce an inappropriate utterance on the basis of such prominent associations, his utterance will be disregarded, or rejected in the context, in a similar way to how a child is encouraged to not normally use the word 'dog' for toothbrushes, even if it finds them closely associated.

Another difference between this approach and Bartsch's Dynamic Conceptual Semantics, already mentioned above, is that an associated network of representations cannot be conceived of as a determinate similarity set of satisfaction situations in which new situations are embedded. In my view, conceptual processing consists of ad hoc, situation-guided construction of a flexible network of associated representations that is formed in relation to the processed situation, including any utterances. Conceptualization of a situation would then depend on the possibility of retrieving other representations, and not of including it in a set, or of subsuming it under an abstract concept within a hierarchic organization of concepts.

Abstract concepts, such as the higher-order concepts that Bartsch describes, in my approach are taken to be represented as linguistic expressions that especially enable the formation of an associated network of other linguistic representations. Thus, 'behaviour' is an *explicated* feature, which is predicated of, for instance, 'lion' and 'pigs'. The representations evoked by these terms would then include different explications (such as derived from fairy tales, or

[266] The example is, gratefully, derived from a discussion with Remko Scha who found the notion of 'association' somewhat misleading. The emphasis on contextual normativity, in the sense that it provides a lead for retrieved associated representations, hopefully prevents the reader from understanding the word 'association' in a more common sense of connotations, namely as evoked peripheral thoughts, images and feelings. Although my use of the word covers these instances, it emphatically includes associated feature explications, definitions and other representations, which in other theories are supposed to be what concepts or meanings consist of. In the here proposed approach, then, the use of expressions in accordance with such general definitions is based on having learned to utter some and not other expressions in specific contexts, on the basis of reinforcement of some utterances through social correction and approval.

the ones learned when learning to recognize the picture of a pig), and of percepts (such as the picture learned in assoiation to the word). Abstract concepts, in my view, are representations of linguistic expressions, and call up a network of mainly linguistic representations.

The representation of an abstract term (such as 'behaviour') can figure in many networks of associations called up both by expressions (such as 'pig'), and by percepts (such as a dirty boy), since these are associated with expressions that in turn are associated with the abstract term (when John comes home, his mother notices he is filthy, that brings for instance 'mud' to her mind, and this brings 'pig' to her mind which she then utters. To someone focused on the explication of the metaphor, the utterance might then trigger the representation of the expression 'behaviour', as a feature that is associated to both the situation (or its description) and the utterance of 'pig').

To describe the meaning of the expression 'pig' in the utterance in this way, then, is to follow one path of association. That does not mean that these associations are the only ones possible, and that they should make up *the* concept expressed by a term. What comes to mind depends on a subjectively formed network of representations. If in a given situation an explication of the meaning of an utterance on the basis of a network of retrieved representations can be predictable, this is so to the extent that the relations between represented expressions like 'behaviour', or 'pig' have been reinforced by an individual's experience of the common practice of using these words. Hence, the commonness of some and not other explications of an expression in a speech community roughly allows us to predict what a person will bring to mind when hearing an utterance.

Since I consider language processing to be an integral part of experiential concept formation, I find we cannot postulate a difference between two levels of concept formation as Bartsch does. However, we can appreciate that to learn how to form associations between expressions will take more time if it is based on the encounter of conventional use of expressions throughout different forms of discourse, and thus that a child will only at a later stage in life use words in accordance with a socially regulated practice of using 'abstract' terms.[267]

There is another use of the term 'abstract' that sometimes seems to be confounded with the 'abstract' character of certain terms; it is the process of

[267] Parallel to learning to partake in the socially regulated practice use of abstract terms in a later stage, earlier on the child learns to partake in the socially regulated practice of using *concrete* terms. For instance, when a child learns to speak, at first it tries to reproduce sounds, and when it achieves this to some extent, it learns to use utterances in connection to a person or an object. Thus, that utterances are associated as signs to other representations, i.e., the referential function of utterances, is learned in practice, whether in connection to other expressions (exemplification) or to people, objects and so on (denotation).

abstraction on the basis of similarity in perception. Since we form perceptual representations that to some extent contain generalizations of what we perceive (for instance, to recognize two different utterances as the utterance of the same expression), abstract linguistic terms are sometimes considered to be expressions that refer to the general or abstract representations of similarity thus formed.

To explain the difference, I draw on a distinction between iconic and symbolic functions of signs that Charles Peirce proposes.[268] He distinguishes icons and symbols in the following way: iconic signs are those signs that relate to what is signified by way of similarity; that is, the representation of an abstracted similarity, which is the icon, allows us to recognize a given object as being similar to another. Symbolic signs, by contrast, are signs that relate to a given object on the ground of convention, namely on the basis of our being taught to associate between the two.

In the model proposed, cognitive representations are a type of icons, that is, an abstraction over different percepts based on similarity in perceptual processing. Linguistic representations, that is, icons for linguistic expressions, may be associated to other icons on the ground of experienced contiguity relations. For instance, processing a name and a face in relation to one another, allows us to associate the icon for the face and the icon for the name. Hence the meaning of the name is provided through its *association with* the icon. In other words, the meaning of an expression is formed by a learned, symbolic association between the icon for the expression (that is, of the sign) to other icons, and not through its *being* an icon. Insofar as an expression is an icon, it is a only a general representation of the (perception of) the linguistic token itself. My account of abstract terms, then, can be stated thus: abstract terms acquire meaning through associations with other linguistic icons, and are not related to one, perception-based icon.

Linguistic meaning in a general, conventional sense, may be conceived of symbolic relations between expressions. That is, a general meaning of a word can be rendered in a description of what it applies to or how it should be used. Thus, conventional linguistic meaning would be based on descriptions or definitions that are agreed upon by convention, in a speech community.

Subjectively, such a conventional understanding of meaning may be incorporated on the basis of learning how to correctly use language within a speech community, but that is not all there is to the subjective representation of expressions. Some representations may subjectively be associated to an expression on the basis of conventional linguistic explication, while other

[268] Cf. Peirce, *Collected papers*, 3.362. On Peirce's notion of the iconic function and its relation to language (cf. Ransdell[1986]).

representations associated to it are based on the processing of specific, personally experienced utterance situations. Thus, for an individual, expressions may be associated to a subjectively construed perception-based icon that is a representation of perceptual processing in a number of personally experienced situations.

However, conventional linguistic meaning depends on the explicable conventional relation between expressions. That is, the conventional meaning of expressions is stated in terms of symbolic relations between expressions, and not by reference to icons that are subjectively formed. With this distinction, we can understand how words can be used in conformity to an explicated conventional meaning, and hence are grounded in linguistic conventions within a speech community; but also how they may be used in relation to subjectively associated representations, based on personal experience.[269]

The conceptual network of representations outlined here has a structure akin to the network between 'labels' that Goodman describes in terms of relations of exemplification and denotation. In a sense, the intended understanding of cognitive representations is as nominalist as Goodman would like, since no notion of 'meaning' is invoked that cannot be stated in terms of exemplification or denotation. However, the extensional, exemplification-based understanding of conventional meaning is paired to an understanding of the cognitive representation of such an extensional definition. Subjective understanding of an uttered expression involves representing it in a network of structurally related representations, whether these are formed in perception, or on the basis of utterance situations. Further, cognitive representations are similar to the extent that they share (part of) a conceptual network, which means that they are similar to the extent that they can be brought into relation to one another, first on the level of perceptual processing (such as recognizing a face, or an expression), and second on the level of cognitive representation, with regard to the structured network of associated representations they evoke. Thus, unlike 'schema's' in Goodman's account, representations as well as structural relations between them, are neither purely conventional, nor arbitrary. They are based on similarity in perceptual processing, and on the recognition of an overlap between different activated conceptual networks in imagination.

In the model outlined above, much depends on the actual working of the cognitive mechanisms underlying memory storage and retrieval, association, similarity recognition and representation. I am well aware that my use of the terms referring to these processes is, in a empirical sense, largely unfounded.

---

[269] The latter, subjective representation of words in relation to experience-based representations would then maybe be recognizable as the 'iconic function' that Ricoeur attributes to words. I return to Ricoeur's understanding of the iconic function of words below, in the epilogue.

The proposal is then not intended to give any answers on the nature of these processes; rather it is an attempt to philosophically model the role that such processes could have in cognition, and how these could be useful for a theory of interpretation. Thus, regarding the nature of cognition in an empirical sense, the account of a dynamics of representation and understanding proposed here at best provides a ground for posing questions that may further empirical investigation.

In the remainder of this chapter I discuss further theoretical consequences of this proposal, as well as its relation to other theories discussed earlier. In the following section I consider the dynamics of metaphorical interpretation as it emerges from the outline presented here.

4.4 Stability and creative interpretation

So far I have adopted a notion of conceptual networks of representations that are triggered in a given situation. I have further assumed that such associated conceptual networks are flexible to a great extent, since they are formed on the basis of attention in a given situation. Contextual information, in the situation, thus plays an important role in triggering a conceptual network of representations.

Stability of associations that a given expression triggers, then, can be explained along two lines. First, we saw, it depends on the regularity or normality of context; secondly, it depends on the strength of associations within a conceptual network. These ways of understanding stability are interrelated, since enforcement of associations will be the result of regularity in experience. Clearly, the capacity of our memories is not such that every single experience we have is stored and may be retrieved. For all we know of consciously retrieved memories, we remember some experiences and never others, and presumably for a variety of reasons: normative importance, traumatic impact, or continuous reinforcement. What I have assumed so far concerning memory, is that memory allows for the retrieval of related representations under attention. Thus, in memory latent representations are stored, as well as structured relations between them. Further, storage in memory is not merely the result of perceptual processing, but also of imaginative representation. That is, if different representations come under attention, we may focus on an overlap between their associated networks of representations; hence an associative relation between formerly unrelated representations is formed in imagination, and may then be stored in memory. In this sense, then, we may not only forget or recall past experience, but also renew it, if it is retrieved in connection to a different network of representations.

In a sense language functions as an 'external memory'. Inasmuch as linguistic explications, definitions and social interaction in utterance situations provide the structure and content of the conceptual system, language also provides the means of reinforcing it. Thus, if the network of representations that is associated with an expression is experientially reinforced, this then allows for stable associations in interpretation, and hence for a predictable understanding of a given utterance.

There are situations where an utterance cannot be processed such that the construal of a relation between the words immediately follows from such reinforcement of associative relations on the basis of conventional use. In some cases, there might not be a normal, i.e. reinforced, associated conceptual network available at all, because of the novelty of an expression in a given context, or because of the lack of experience on the part of the interpreting subject. In this case, processing the utterance does not reinforce, but gives rise to the formation of an associative network. As I observed earlier, it is also possible that an interpreter dissociates from a normal context of interpretation. As an example of such dissociation, I discussed a metaphorical interpretation of the sentence 'Wolves live in herds' on a sign in a museum of natural history.[270] In this case, interpretation is less predictable, since it does not follow a more conventional interpretation of the given sign in its context. Thus, within the proposed model, we can recognize a difference of degree between creative and conventional interpretation.

For further illustration, I return to the example used in the first chapter, the phrase 'Rose is a rose'. If for instance for someone the word 'rose' would be associated with 'presents', and happy occasions of receiving these, the term 'rose' being applied to something or someone that he is glad to see would be conceivable, especially if the name of that person herself is 'Rose', in terms of the model proposed, since it would allow an overlap between the representations that are triggered. Similarly, it would be conceivable that the word 'rose' would be interpreted in much the same line by virtue of different associated features, such as 'the most beautiful flower', or 'the flower that needs greatest care' or 'a very expensive flower' and so on. Thus, interpretations of the phrase could evoke by and large similar representations of the object of predication as one that is appreciated. However, to capture such associations under a general expression, such as 'object that is appreciated' or, as I did in the first chapter, as 'a thing of joy and beauty', is not to analyse the process of conceptual representation in an individual mind. Rather it is to interpret the phrase by explicating conventions and supposedly common knowledge of the social role or the values generally pertaining to 'roses'.

[270] In section 5.1 in chapter 1.

Further, there are *different* conventional background theories that may serve as a context to provide an explication of this particular use of 'rose' in the line 'Rose is a rose'. As we saw in the discussion in the first chapter, someone might be focused on determining a poetic stance on the part of its author, Gertrude Stein, and thereby appeal to an entirely different context of interpretation than that of roses generally being the object of appreciation. He could interpret this particular line in relation to the other line by the same author: ' a rose is a rose is a rose'. The latter can be interpreted as a statement against the poetic use of metaphor. Consequently, for Gertrude Stein to call a little girl a rose could then be considered a contradiction of that stance, or maybe a pun on it.

In this case, the context of interpretation is not a conceptual network pertaining to general knowledge about roses, or to specific perceptual experience of these, but rather, is derived from textual information about the phrase. Such information could comprise knowledge about its author, her other work, or the contextual presentation (a child's book), as well as still further knowledge about poetry and general conventions therein.

Whichever background theories it is based on, any linguistic explication of the metaphorical use of the predicate 'is a rose' would appeal to available descriptions, and would involve the explication of some background knowledge. Such a background could range from knowledge about the occasions for which one is supposed to buy roses to that about classical arrangements of rose gardens; from knowing the colour pertaining to 'rosy cheeks' to recognizing poetical platitudes.

Furthermore in interpretation the associated conceptual network is not restricted to using shared, explicated concepts derived from conventional background knowledge in a speech community. Such explication, I argued above, does not necessarily conform to the associated representations in *subjective* interpretation. If the interpreter only just attempted to fight his way through a flowering rose bush in order to rescue a sleeping princess, he might at the instant think quite differently about who is a rose and who is not.

Thus, associated conceptual networks may just as well be derived from the state of mind or the personal experience of the interpreter, as in the case of the person fighting his way through the prickly rosebush. In other words: the context of interpretation is in the interpreter's mind. To the extent that an interpretation is to be explicated in language, it appeals to socially accepted descriptions, whether these do express innovative interpretations or not.

Metaphorical interpretation is not unique in this respect. In all understanding activated representations may guide a conceptualization at a given moment. In other words, as I said above, the way in which a given percept or an imaginatively produced representation becomes related to other

representations is thoroughly dependent on the networks of representations that are triggered in a given context.
Thus, interpretation amounts to attending to a given representation (such as a predicative phrase) in relation to a range of activated representations (such as may be triggered by a context, both linguistic and perceptual). The thus formed associative structuring is not necessarily stable, nor does it have to become so, since it may result from coincidentally activated representations, yielding associations that could be merely momentary, and might never be reinforced. Stability, then, depends on the incorporation of regularities, conventions and norms that govern the world we experience.
However, I remarked above, memory is not a storage place of fixedly identified representations. The representation of past experience may be renewed, if it is retrieved within a new context, and hence acquires a place in a new associated conceptual network. As a result stability is not the natural destiny of complexes of associated representations. Insofar, then, as conceptual networks are stable, they are so because they depend on reinforced experiences of a largely constant world, including the experience of, hopefully, a largely coherent use of language.

4.5 Semantic and conceptual structures

In a way, with this proposal, I return to a model discussed in the first chapter, namely that of Bipin Indurkhya. Recall that his model assumes that we cognitively represent a 'set of senso-motoric data', which we associate with conceptual structures, that are expressed by words. Such conceptual structures, according to Indurkhya, can be used to organize 'foreign' domains of senso-motoric data, namely those that are associated with other concepts. The main cognitive mechanism used for the cross-conceptual transference of structuring is described as projective analogy, which then is mathematically analysed as a homomorphism. This mechanism is then analysed as pertaining to the interpretation and the production of similarity-creating metaphors. In the model proposed above, I likewise assume that there are structural relations, which are used to retrieve representations that, again as Indurkhya proposes, originate at some point in perceptual processing.
However, the picture drawn here is different in several respects. First, we do not assume the existence of a set of data associated to a concept in the sense of a fixed collection of senso-motoric data. Associations between representations are dependent on more factors than mere past conceptualization; memory capacity, frequency of retrieval, and contexts of retrieval may play a role. Thus, a representation that appeared in a conceptual network in a given situation,

may be absent in a future conceptualization that triggers (parts of) that network.

It is a tendency in Cognitive Linguistics to break with more traditional rhetorical definitions of metaphor, and to attribute a 'metaphorical' nature to any transference of a linguistic expression from one context of use to another. It is, however, a choice of terminology. If one chooses to call the productive combination of symbols pertaining to different conceptual networks metaphorical, then there is indeed hardly any utterance that, upon the view defended here, is not the result of such transference, since any new conceptualization brings constituents from different conceptual networks together. However, as a terminological choice, I prefer to stick to the more traditional use of the word 'metaphor', indicating a rhetorical, stylistic device, in the way indicated in section 5.2 in chapter 1, since it is useful as such, at least more so than taken as a synonym for cognitive processing. For example, I would not consider the transfer of the word 'the' from one represented context to another (such as learning that one cannot only say: 'the car', but also 'the driving') to be metaphorical in this sense, even if it involves the transference of a represented symbol from one 'conceptual domain' to another.

The claim that the cognitive mechanism behind metaphor is the same as that behind any conceptualized representation is one that is of course sustained in the model outlined here. It is precisely on this point that I find Indurkhya's analysis of 'projective analogy' as pertaining to creative metaphors, misleading, since it suggests that there is a discrete domain of representations that belongs to a given conceptual network, and thus involves a hierarchy of concepts versus representations. My position entails that both notions, that is, that of a 'conceptual structure' and that of a 'domain of representations' should be understood to be more flexible, and more dependent on ad hoc-retrieval than Indurkhya seems to want.

As a result, the network of associations between representations in the model here proposed is far more complex than Indurkhya's analysis in terms of the structure and the structured suggests. Representations without conceptual guise are not accessible; rather, when retrieved, they occupy a position in a structured conceptual network; that is, they can only be activated in relation to other simulated representations. Hence, re-presentation may shift the conceptual structuring of the original perceptual data that are represented, and thereby allows for 'reconceptualization'. Thus the enormous potential of 'projection' of different conceptual networks onto perceptually processed representations turns any assumption of a determinate relation between conceptual structures and retrieved imaginative representations into an idealization.

Secondly, in Indurkhya's model structuring networks seem to be expressed by words, whereas the senso-motoric data are derived from 'raw' or basic perceptual representations, which can be recalled as instances of these verbally expressed concepts. In my understanding, conceptual structures are not to be identified with the meanings of expressions, in the sense that an expression *stands for* a conceptual structure. Words, I suggested above, *are* representations that are represented in a structure of other activated representations, both linguistic and perceptual.

In language normally the composition of utterances is regulated, by both semantic and syntactical rules. If we then would fully identify conceptual networks with the regulated use of expressions in a speech community, as Indurkhya seems to suggest, our conceptual system would as a result be just about as normative as theoretically designed syntactic and semantic rules are. However it is notoriously difficult to explicate such rules, as they vary with different contexts, both presented in discourse, and in perception. Further, pervasive non-conventional use of language, such as poetic or creative metaphor as well as Davidson's malapropisms in 'real' language, shows that such rules can be violated, while a meaningful interpretation remains possible.

An alternative to this view was presented by Barsalou, who assumes that 'senso-motoric' representations yield concepts, which then in and of themselves yield a 'perceptual' grounding of all concepts. The problem that arises under this assumption is the question how concepts based on subjective representations should come to represent conventional linguistic meanings, especially in the case of general terms, or theoretical ones that do not denote anything specific in the objective world.

Thus, any account that assumes that linguistic and non-linguistic representations are of a different conceptual type has to face up to these problems. If I am right, then, to *not* assume that the conceptual system is identical with the system of linguistic categorization, but that we merely go by linguistic classifications since they form an integral part of our experience (and are pretty useful as such), then there are no *necessary* conceptual restrictions on the use of any expression. That is, if semantic and syntactic rules of composition are learned and adopted by people who learn to speak but are not inherent to cognition in any *a priori* sense, then it makes no sense to identify conceptual determination with linguistic categorization. Rather, the learning of rules, insofar as they are followed within a speech community, provides an important grounding of our conceptual system. Through it we become capable of producing correctly composed new utterances; and thereby we, by making utterances that are approved of by other speakers, enforce the social norms that regulate the application of linguistic categories. But the inherently subjective conceptual system, constituted by mechanisms of representation and retrieval,

that underlies such embodied social norms, allows for the production of many other utterances than those that conform with a socially adapted, and generally accepted use of language.

4.6 Aesthetic interpretation

In the above discussion, I have suggested a cognitive model in which subjective representations are related to intersubjective meanings through conventionality in the use of language, as well as through the phenomenal regularities of the world we live in. The notion of common ground, as it was here first discussed in the chapter on Kant's theory of imagination, is thus transformed into the assumption of regularities in experience of the world, including language. The conceptual system is thereby assumed to be in part the same for all individuals, namely insofar as it develops on the general capacity of recognizing and representing such regularities. The conceptual system is however inherently subjective, as each individual experiences the world differently, and is educated differently. Thus, to conceptualize a given percept by relating it to one and not another associated complex of representations, is to some extent a matter of what types of associative relations the subject has learned to recognize, as well as which representations are available on the basis of experience.

Imagination, then, is understood as the faculty that brings representations to mind, in a manner analogous to how attention in perception yields representations. This faculty of imagination is productive, since it brings about the combination of representations in a network of related representations. Combination in imagination, in other words, gives rise to a new associative bond between the representations combined. Productive imagination in this sense is proposed as the general mechanism underlying *all* conceptualization: the associations between different representations are in the first place derived from contiguity relations in experience, and in the second place from conceptual combination of representations formed on the basis of simultaneous representation in imagination.

Previously, in the discussion on Kant's understanding of subjective judgement, I speculated on the possibility of understanding all acts of understanding as involving a capacity of productive imagination. Conceptualizing, I argued, either produces creative interpretation or yields routine understanding on the basis of previous productive conceptual combination.

In the approach I propose above, then, the notion of subjective judgement is indeed generalized as pertaining to all acts of conceptualization. Each act of conceptualization is understood as the productive combination of both

imaginative (i.e. retrieved) and perceptual (i.e. newly processed) representations, and this productivity is considered the central drive behind concept formation. Furthermore, interpreting an utterance involves the active formation of a conceptual network, on the basis of a complex of associated representations triggered by an utterance and its context.

If the use of an expression in context is familiar, then that means that an already largely structured complex of representations is evoked, that requires little further structuring. Such more or less automated retrieval can be considered *routine* understanding, or using Bartsch's term, understanding under a restricting perspective. On the basis of the discussion in the second chapter, then, I would classify Kant's understanding of determinant judgements that result from the application of empirical laws, as belonging to such routine conceptualization. If the (use of an) expression is entirely unfamiliar, then the representations that are triggered in the utterance situation have to be newly structured; overlaps in these networks make some representations more prominent than others, and we may focus on different aspects of context and utterance, in order to find such overlaps. A creative interpretation emerges, which we may call *reflective* understanding. Thus, the Kantian reflective judgements, and especially aesthetic reflection in which 'imagination runs free' would belong to reflective conceptualizations. Hence, routine understanding and reflective, creative interpretation can be thought of as being situated on different ends of a spectre of possible acts of conceptual combination.

Creative interpretation, then, involves searching for aspects in context under which a given expression may be interpreted. As such, it is more likely to involve an awareness of the process itself. Kant's understanding of aesthetic reflection as imagination running free, or as judging an object with respect to its subjective finality, that is with respect to how our cognitive faculties may cope with a given representation, may now, in terms of my proposed approach, be rendered as an on-going process of conceptualizing, in which one focuses on the process itself during which one keeps reconsidering even remote triggered associations, in order to produce new angles for interpretation. Below, I elaborate this suggestion, and for this, I use some of the terms that Kant introduces when characterizing aesthetic reflection, albeit under a more clarified interpretation. My interpretation of such notions as 'genius', 'aesthetic ideas' and the 'internal intuition', show the extent to which I have abandoned Kant's understanding of these notions, as well as how the here presented proposal is still related to the understanding of aesthetic reflection in the *Critique of Judgement*.

In his explanation of what genius is Kant mentions how in aesthetic reflection aesthetic ideas are produced. These 'ideas', I recall, function as symbols for, not

as demonstrations of concepts: 'In a word, the aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination, annexed to a concept'.[271] Aesthetic ideas are imaginative attributes of concepts, related to a concept only through the cognitive power of association: 'Those forms which do not constitute the presentation of a given concept in itself, but which, as secondary representations of the imagination, express the derivatives connected with it, and its kinship with other concepts, are called (aesthetic) *attributes* of an object, the concept of which, as an idea of reason, cannot be adequately presented'.[272] For Kant this power of evoking associated thoughts is not the exclusive property of pictures, since words, music and other arts can do the same. An example of such evocated concepts is given in the same paragraph: 'In this way Jupiter's eagle, with the lightning in its claws, is an attribute of the mighty king of heaven, and the peacock of its stately queen'.[273]

For Kant, then, a symbol may function as the perceptual presentation of a concept; not by illustrating or demonstrating that concept as a schematized instance, but rather by indicating or evoking it by a symbolic presentation. Aesthetic ideas thus exceed conceptual determination, in that the evoked concept does not apply to the representations themselves. Hence, the notion of internal intuition is brought in:

'[...] understanding, in the case of an aesthetic idea, fails with its concepts ever to attain to the completeness of the internal intuition which imagination conjoins with a given representation'.[274] In other words: imagination allows us to create new symbols for thoughts, which are not derived from schematized presentations in intuition. Neither conceptual determination (as schematization) nor schema (as the representation schematized) is what captures the idea as it is produced before the mind.

The mode of symbolic representation through attributes that Kant thus finds in aesthetic ideas, is in a sense just what is generalized in the proposed model as pertaining to all representations. Representations can be described in the way Kant describes the function of aesthetic ideas, that is, as symbols evoking more thoughts and feelings than can be explicated in the judgements we have at our disposal. Indeed, Kant defines the aesthetic idea as 'that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e. a concept, being adequate to it'.[275] He continues in the same passage: 'The imagination is a powerful agent for creating, as it were, a second nature out of the material supplied to it by actual nature. [...] we

[271] CoJ 316
[272] CoJ 315
[273] CoJ 315
[274] CoJ 343
[275] CoJ 314

even use it to remodel experience, always following, no doubt, laws that are based on analogy, but still also following principles which have a higher seat in reason [...]. By this means we get a sense of our freedom of the laws of association (which attaches to the empirical employment of the imagination), with the result that the material can be borrowed by us from nature in accordance with that law, but be worked up in something else - namely what surpasses nature. Such representations may be termed ideas'.

In my understanding of conceptualization, such 'empirical employment of imagination' provides familiar structures of association, within a specific context. The representations that participate in such structures, as well as these structures themselves become enfused in several conceptual networks. In Kantian terms: the realm of productive imagination as rendering possible 'ideas' as representations in imagination annexed to concepts, and the realm of reproductive imagination as rendering determinate concepts are not separated. We may thus feel that whichever representations we associate to expressions such as 'colour' could present an objective meaning for the term, even if the association is produced in imagination, and as such consists of accidental perceptual representations that are brought together by the experienced use of language alone.

The normative use of language, I argued, depends on available explications of expressions, and more generally, on learning to associate a given expression to others in a manner conform to syntactic and semantic rules within a context. That is, to understand an utterance in a conventional manner aims at embedding a representation within a conceptual network that is built on the socially accepted situations in which it may be uttered. Thus, conventional understanding is based on processing a given representation within a *normal context* of interpretation.

A representation, such as a recognized expression, in itself then presents greater potential for conceptualization, since, in different contexts, it can be embedded in different networks of associated representations. Kant's notion of 'internal intuition', then, can be understood as the potential of representations that can be retrieved throughout different contexts.

What can be analysed as specifically aesthetic in understanding then, is that in aesthetic interpretation we aim at calling up this potential of associated representations. That is, interpretation here is not directed at embedding a given representation in a *normal* contextually triggered network of representations, but it aims at bringing *other* possible networks of associated representations to the mind.

Thus, an aesthetic idea can be interpreted as a representation that serves to bring representations to attention by focusing on other paths of association than those brought about by a normal contextually guided understanding. For

instance when in poetic use of language typography and rhythm play an important role, this may be recognized as a means to evoke other associations with a given phrase, than the focus on semantically correct contexts would allow for. To train an 'aesthetic sensitivity' may then amount to learning to focus on different associative relations between symbols, which in themselves can be just as conventional as are semantic rules.[276]

The quality of genius, that Kant attributes to those who can express new concepts construed on the basis of imaginative content, can now also be interpreted along these lines. Genius can be understood as the capacity to express aesthetic ideas in such a form that it leads others to produce un-normal imaginative representations in internal intuition. In other words, genius is the way in which someone succeeds to convey aesthetic ideas. In poetry, then, the genius uses existing, conventional expressions, in such a way that they evoke a creative, imaginative interpretation. The poetic genius, in other words, provides a bridge between subjective imagination and the conventional symbol system, which is otherwise used to evoke normal representations. And hence, it is this sense that I could speak of poetry as the home-coming of language in the first chapter: it allows the interpreter to recognize a text as expressing her *own* thoughts, feelings and experiences, instead of following normal paths of association.

To understand genius as the capacity to produce objects or texts newly express imaginatively produced combinations of representations does the effect of such objects or texts to the evocation of feelings of harmony or awe, which are what aesthetic judgements in the third *Critique* are about. Genius equally applies to a novel combination of expressions and observations that belong to what Kant understands as the empirical realm. Hence, the quality of genius applies to the newly formulated scientific insight as much as it applies to the presentation of an intriguing poetic metaphor, since both may give cause to the production of novel conceptual combinations in imagination. The products of genius, then, allow us to combine representations in imagination in a new way, whether they consist of symbols for personal feeling or of unthought, new explications.

Understood in this way, aesthetic interpretation involves no specific mechanisms of cognitive processing that would uniquely be applied in the interpretation of specific objects, such as sculptures, songs or metaphors. Thus, as I observed earlier, the proposed model presents a unified account of interpretation with respect to the cognitive processing of both creative and conventional use of language, between which a difference in degree can be

[276] The notion of 'aesthetic sensitivity' appears throughout aesthetics, for instance in Levinson's writings on aesthetic pleasure. Aesthetic pleasure, in his opinion, can be derived from art by the viewer who is well equipped with a proper background (cf. Levinson[1996]).

recognized and explained. Thus, the objects of what we usually call aesthetic interpretation, such as art, poetry and music, share no exclusive features regarding the type of interpretation they may receive, since the free imagination is not exclusively employed in the realm of art.

However, there is something that sculptures, songs and metaphors have in common, namely that they are objects that are designed *for* aesthetic interpretation, without other practical end. In other words, they represent objects that are intentionally produced to appeal to subjective imagination, and that, moreover, can be recognized as such.

In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant distinguishes between the interest that may be aroused by a well-organized pepper garden on the one hand and the wilderness of Sumatra on the other. These remarks can be read as an expression of the possible *norms* that we could use for what counts as an object worthwhile of aesthetic reflection and what not. That is, perceiving the wilderness of Sumatra would present a model for the perception of art, while the pepper garden would not. If so, then art is here defined as what presents a worthwhile occasion for an open-ended reflection on imagination's wealth of possible representations, rather than that such reflection was made possible by art.

The definition of the realm of art, over time and with the developments in art history has changed to some extent. Art, today, is no longer considered as consisting of those objects that imitate nature in that they are worthwhile occasions for imaginative pondering that allow one to achieve a feeling of harmony or awe. For instance relations to politics, art history, and the conditions under which an artwork is exposed to its viewers, have all become part of a general background theory that pertains to the interpretation of art, and thereby presents a new, *normal* context for the interpretation of art, which is another than enjoying views of nature.

In the 'afterthoughts' presented hereafter, I will turn to the question whether an understanding of art in terms of a normal aesthetic context can be given, since the realm of the aesthetic, as what involves aesthetic reflection or what allows for the free use of imagination is no longer specific for either nature or art under my generalized understanding of aesthetic reflection. This discussion, as it involves the characterization of a specifically aesthetic context, addresses a different topic than the investigation conducted so far, and thus is thematically set apart as an afterthought to the conclusion of the above discussions.

4.7 Conclusion

In the above discussion the starting point was Kant's theory of aesthetic reflection that I discussed in the previous chapter. There I speculated on the possibility of generalizing this theory, such that it would yield a general model of understanding. In order to develop these speculations in a more systematic, and well-founded manner, I considered two contemporary theories on concept formation.

The model of Bartsch presented an understanding of concept formation as dependent on learning language, and thereby introduced a socially or culturally normative aspect with regard to the subjective process of concept formation. In this theory, concept formation was divided in an experiential level and a theoretical level, and, while theoretical concepts were grounded in the experiential level, experiential concepts were taken to reflect properties of objects given in perception. Thus, a common ground in concept formation was, to some extent, explicitly assumed in the form of both the shared perceptual faculties of all people, and the objective reality underlying all concepts formed on the basis of its experience. Thus, experiential concepts could be characterized as subjective universals, in the sense that they depend on subjective minds doing the same thing on the basis of the same world. However, I argued, such an experiential grounding of linguistically expressed concepts would, certainly in the case of more abstract expressions, not be based on common ground, but rather, on a purely subjective representation of properties, or manners of perceiving these. And so, if linguistic meaning were to depend on the experiential content attributed to an expression through the processing of its satisfaction situations, it could not be reconstructed as an intersubjective concept. Since language is a social phenomenon, an intersubjective notion of linguistic meaning could be conceived of in a different way, namely through the experience of utterances containing common explications of an expression, similar to how Bartsch defines concepts on a theoretical level. I proposed that a shared linguistic meaning of an expression could be stated as a collection of exemplified descriptions or definitions. The implication of this understanding of linguistic meaning however, is that it is not intersubjective in any universal sense, but shared only in a speech community. Thus common ground for the formation of linguistically expressed concepts, although in a different sense than Kant understands it, may to some extent be found in the regulated use of language within a speech community.

The problems found in the assumption of a grounding of linguistically expressed concepts in experiential concepts, is possibly due to the lack of discussion on issues of representation in Bartsch's theory, as she focuses on stating a semantic, anti-psychologistic model. Quite the reverse, then, was the

case with the model Barsalou presents. He develops a model of cognitive representation on the basis of perceptual processing. As such, this model provided a fruitful basis for an account of concept formation on the basis of perceptual processing, which I outlined in section 4. However, insofar as Barsalou considers symbolic representation, his theory was found to be philosophically naive. A notion of causally effected, perceptual content was presented as symbolic meaning, on the basis of the assumption that language acquires meaning on the basis of perceptual states accompanying the processing of an utterance. His account was found to be unacceptable insofar as it postulates a perceptual content for abstract concepts, and thereby assumed the automated processing of percepts into general, objective concepts.

On the basis of these two models, I proposed an approach to model conceptual representation on the basis of representations of perceptually processed representations, including the representation of expressions as perceptually processed symbols. In my proposal, I draw on Bartsch's understanding of language as a rule-governed social phenomenon, the learning of which also entails the representation of exemplified explications of expressions. I further use her analysis of the dynamics of concept formation as involving perceptual processing of both similarity and of contiguity. Next, I use Barsalou's theory of cognitive processing, which models the processing of percepts into cognitive representations, latently stored in memory. Starting from this model, I consider how associations between representations may develop on the basis of processing percepts in a given relation to one another.

Cognitive processing, I suggest, is based on a faculty of representation, and on the capacities to recognize similarity and to represent contiguity relations between different representations. Conceptualization is understood as forming a network of structurally related representations. Such representations, then, acquire a certain degree of generalization, in that they represent a cluster of similarly processed percepts. Perceptual processing is considered, after Barsalou, as focal attention in perception, resulting in storage of a functional selection of the percept in long term memory. In perception, different representations are processed as being connected by contiguity, and are stored in memory as associated to one another. During perceptual processing, representations in memory that are similar to the percept are activated, and thereby trigger the activation of associated representations retrieved from memory. Thus, a given percept may evoke representations, and associated representations, and thereby is embedded in a structure of different activated representations.

Such structures, as well as representations are what make up the representation of language. That is, syntactic as well as semantic rules, insofar as these are embodied in use of language, provide a contiguous structure in the

processing of an utterance containing different, recognizable expressions. Thus, expressions (that is, primarily sounds) are associated by contiguity to one another in perceptual processing, as well as to other, non-linguistic representations that are processed in association to the utterances of expressions. On the basis of the processing of structurally connected representations, networks of representations are formed, in which each representation itself may trigger different associated representations.

In processing an utterance, representations that are triggered by attending to the context of the utterance, both in a linguistic and in a non-linguistic sense, provide parts of the network of representations in which the utterance is processed. Hence, the role of context becomes normative with respect to the understanding of a given utterance, since it will enforce some associations with the uttered expressions, but not others. An understanding of conventional linguistic meaning may then be formed on the basis of common use of language, in a normal context. Recognizing the use of an expression in a normal context as one encountered before, may simply trigger a familiar network of representations, including the representations of expressions that we have learned to be appropriate in the context. A subjective understanding of words is grounded in subjectively associated representations, including linguistic expressions. These may comprise expressions that are not normally used or considered appropriate in a given context of an utterance. We are trained to ignore these, or at least to not utter them, insofar as we have learned they are not considered appropriate with the recognized normal context.

Creative interpretation, then, is understood as focusing on possible networks of representations that are activated by the utterance and its context. Conceptualizing an utterance in context creatively means to form a new network of representations, on the basis of an overlap between activated conceptual networks of representations. Thus, aesthetical reflection could be considered as an on-going reflective process of creative interpretation.

Imagination, then, is considered the faculty of producing a structured network between representations. The representations involved are either retrieved from memory, or they are activated in perceptual processing. Since the former are cognitively represented, and not derived from a direct intuitive presentation, we may call them imaginative representations. The proposed approach to conceptual understanding, then, identifies the faculty of productive imagination as the drive in conceptual understanding, and in reflective interpretation. Thus, it meets my earlier speculations on a generalization of the faculty of aesthetic reflection.

Of course, my proposed understanding of cognitive processes remains speculative, since my assumptions about perceptual processing, and about storage in and retrieval from memory are not founded empirically, even if they

are shared by other authors. The notion of representation I use is, as I remarked in section 4.1, a theoretical construct based on such assumptions about perceptual processing and about the functionality of memory, and the same holds for the notion of association or conceptual relation. However, from my point of view, the description of interpretation and understanding in terms of these notions has one great advantage, and that is that it does not presume the cognitive representation of either universal concepts or of real properties. All that is in the mind, I suggest, is produced in imagination.

As an afterthought to this conclusion on the all-pervasiveness of the productive work of imagination, I consider how the thus generalized understanding of aesthetic reflection is related to the interpretation of poetry. In the previous chapter, I considered poetic interpretation, following Kant's characterization of aesthetic reflection, as a process with a specific orientation, namely with an interest in the process of reflective interpretation alone.

Since context, in the suggested understanding of interpretation, provides a normative background for interpretation, I will discuss the possibility of a normal context for poetic interpretation. Clearly, if the interpretation of poetry should involve a free use of productive imagination, and should thus lead to the production of unconventional combinations of representations in imagination, the postulate of a 'normal' or conventional context of interpretation for art must be problematic. On the other hand, if aesthetic reflection would be the only possible characterization of what is poetry, then poetry would not be distinguished from other texts or utterances that involve reflective interpretation. Thus, in the epilogue to this investigation, which after all started out with questions raised by the interpretation of poetic text, I consider the entanglement of the poetic genre that seems to impel the free use of imagination by convention, with the actual use of productive imagination in the interpretation of art and poetry.

Aesthetical afterthoughts

La fortune des poésies ressemble beaucoup à celle de ces horoscopes dérisoires qu'une sorte de messagers magnifique pose sur les tables des consommateurs aux terrasses des cafés.
Francis Ponge[277]

1 Metaphorical interpretation and metaphors

Metaphorical interpretation, I concluded above, is not specific for the interpretation of metaphor. Metaphorical interpretation involves the productive combination of representations within interpretation, just as other acts of concept formation do. However, what is different in the case of interpreting metaphors is the status of the utterance. A metaphor, or rather a creative metaphor, is an utterance that *could* violate normal rules, but is nevertheless accepted as an appropriate utterance on the grounds that it is a metaphor. That is, a metaphor is an utterance that is somehow recognizably different from others.
Whether an utterance is to be accepted as a normal one, as a metaphor, or is to be discarded as unacceptable is to large extent dependent on the context in which it is interpreted. Thus, insofar as the context of an interpretation is given

[277] Francis Ponge 'Prospectus distribués par un fantôme' in *Proêmes*

by the discourse in which the utterance occurs, social norms may determine the nature of the utterance.

I observed in the first chapter that there are conventional means of indicating that an utterance is a metaphor. Metaphors can be made recognizable through stylistic properties, through their 'non-standard' relation to the context, or even through an explicit indication that an expression is used metaphorically. In other words, there are some formal properties of an utterance that, in a given situation, may indicate that metaphorical interpretation is in order.

Further, we saw that utterances that are not immediately recognizable as metaphors could be interpreted metaphorically, if a different context of interpretation was construed. I did this for the example 'Wolves live in herds', but also for the example of the child that calls a toothbrush 'dog', by assuming that the child and the teacher were just previously discussing the quality of fur of dogs and cats.

In its original context the child's utterance was not considered as a metaphor, but as a mistake, due to our attitude towards the child as a speaker. This attitude towards the child can be summed up as: 'You are learning language, and this is not how we normally use the word 'dog''. We are interested in the child's capacity to reproduce a conventional use of language, and are not open for any creative act on its part.[278]

The crucial distinction between the child in this example and the example in which a mother calls her son a pig, is that we think the mother could have said 'You are filthy' had she wanted to, while we do not trust the child of the initial example in its choice of words. In the child's case, we assume the teacher's point of view that the child is too ignorant to present a witty (but somewhat odd) metaphor. This suggests that an utterance only acquires the status of metaphor when we assume (correctly or incorrectly) that it is intentionally produced as such. Consequently, there is a pitfall in the intentional characterization of metaphor: if metaphors become what they are through speaker's intentions, any utterance that is produced accidentally, or, for example, by a machine, could not count as metaphor. The same goes for utterances that are interpreted as metaphors, but were not intended as such, such as the example 'Wolves live in herds' discussed above. Still, in this case, we would not have wanted to say that the *utterance* actually was a metaphor, at least not until someone reported a possible metaphorical interpretation. Thus, a

[278] Examples of instances where this pedagogic attitude is mistakenly adopted are abundant, as every parent knows. Renilde Montessori, for instance, describes a case where a child draws a green cow. The teacher tells him that green cows don't exist. 'But that why I *made* one' is the child's answer (cf. Montessori[2000]).

context may be construed in which an utterance can be presented and accepted as a metaphor, independent from the original intentions of the utterer.

To recognize an utterance as a metaphor, then, is something different than to interpret it metaphorically. The first is part of social interaction, involving, for example, an estimation of intentions and capacities on the part of the speaker, while the second is an act of understanding.[279] The difference between metaphorical interpretation and the interpretation of a metaphor has been noted previously. Gibbs, for instance, distinguishes between the intentional strategy of interpreting an utterance *as* a metaphor, an act of what he calls 'metaphorical processing', and the processing *of* a metaphor. Although he calls metaphorical processing a 'general mode of understanding', he does not provide a more specific description of it than that it 'might not be just a special literary strategy employed only by certain readers when interpreting texts'.[280]

In chapter 3 above, I suggested that this strategy of metaphorical processing be identified as a general mode of understanding, as outlined in section 4 of that chapter. That is, 'metaphorical processing' is the capacity to structurally embed a given expression in a network of imaginative representations that are triggered on the basis of the context of interpretation. As we saw in chapter 1, in the interpretation of poetic metaphor it is the interpreter who finds a context of interpretation for the utterance, and thereby considers the utterance as 'text proper'. However, we also established that such an interpretation could be triggered by formal, or stylistic properties of the text in question. The presentation of the metaphor then indicates that it belongs to a poetic genre, and thereby invites an imaginative interpretation. Thus the utterance *does* have a context, namely a poetic one.

Generally speaking, a poetic context belongs to the realm of the aesthetic. In the following section I first consider the notion of *disinterested* reflection, derived from Kant's account of aesthetic interpretation. As I generalize the understanding of aesthetic reflection to the extent that it underlies any act of conceptualization, this feature seems to be the one remaining possible characteristic that would pertain to the interpretation of poetic text, or more

---

[279] There is quite some literature on the dynamics of social acceptance of metaphors. For example Cacciari[1998] discusses how the use of metaphor may create a sense of 'in-groupness', that is when such utterances are comprehensible but to those who share some information about one another's knowledge, beliefs, intentions or history. Thus, accepting a metaphor may enhance the intimacy of a conversation, as well as only serve to exclude uninformed participants from the conversation (p 141 Cacciari[1998]). Another, earlier discussion of intimacy is conducted by Ted Cohen, who in Cohen[1978] emphasizes that metaphors need not be made 'respectable' on account of their possible cognitive value alone, since they do also have an important social value (as well as, possibly, an aesthetic one).

[280] Gibbs[1998] p 113

generally, of art. I consider how Kant's analysis of objective disinterestedness presents a model for the proper attitude of interpretation, and hence is taken to be the normal response to recognizing an object as art or poetry.
In section 3 I then consider how objects of art or poetic text may be recognized, by a discussion of the different types of conventions that have been proposed in aesthetics as being constitutive for the object of art or poetry. That is I discuss some answers to the tedious question: 'What is art?'. In this discussion, it will become clear that none of these attempts provide a definition of what art is, but that all have some relevance for its characterization. Thus, although it is the interpreter's response to what is presented as poetic that in the end determines how a text is interpreted, such interpretation is not independent of conventional values and an established practice regarding the interpretation of art or poetry.
In the final section, I reconsider how such conventions and established practice of dealing with art and poetry influence the process of interpretation. I thereby return to Ricoeur's theory of metaphorical interpretation, which he uses to characterize poetic interpretation generally. His analysis conforms to a Kantian model of aesthetic interpretation, since it appeals to the use of productive imagination and is characterized by objective disinterestedness. I argue that this analysis ignores how conventional aspects of a poetic context play a role in interpretation. The disinterested, imaginative mode of interpretation, I suggest, presents a model for poetic interpretation. Thus, Ricoeur's analysis describes a *conventionally* proper attitude to approach poetic text, rather than that it reflects the actual response to a text that is recognized as poetic. I conclude that the notion of free, disinterested aesthetic interpretation, insofar as it is taken by different authors to characterize the interpretation of art and poetry, idealizes how such interpretation yields novel insights, without recognizing the need to sometimes *not* engage in free imagination in order to develop new insights.

2 The proper attitude

In the sixties the Dutch writer Gerard van het Reve published a collection of letters, in one of which he imagines that God would come to visit him in the body of a one year old, mouse-grey donkey, and that Van het Reve would make love to Him.[281] This was the starting-point of a fierce debate, involving even the Dutch Parliament, culminating in a lawsuit against the writer. The question was whether the text was scornfully blasphemous. In the end the Dutch High Court ruled it was not *intended* as scornful blasphemy, and

[281] Gerard van het Reve, *Nader tot U*

therefore Reve was acquitted; if others were offended by his writings it was no cause for judiciary persecution.[282]

With its verdict, the High Court confirmed the artistic freedom of speech that ensures that we can say whatever we deem fit in an aesthetic context. The lack of censorship reflects a longstanding aesthetic tradition in our culture, in which any artistic, literary expression is part of a separate aesthetic domain. In the domain of artistic expression ordinary rules of communication do not necessarily apply: politeness, political correctness, truth and grammaticality are not the principles by which a poetic expression ought to be judged. The legally established freedom of art allows us to entertain a view for the sake of investigating it, of testing its consequences in fiction. We can make-believe without bearing the responsibility of uttering a true belief. The legal system protects this space for make-believe, by ruling out any responsibility on the author's part for possibly offending interpretations.

The establishment of such freedom works in two directions. On the one hand it ensures, as explained above, a realm of freedom of speech and action, a suspension of any worldly responsibility. On the other hand, a distinctive realm where the mentioned principles are of little concern suggests that outside of the aesthetic free-zone, norms of truth, grammar and morality are all the more valid.

However, the realm of the aesthetic cannot be defined by the lack of norms, since not all utterances that violate such norms automatically belong to the realm of the aesthetic. They may, as we saw in the case of heuristic metaphors, provide a challenge to adapt the normative framework of understanding, or they may be simply incorrect or incomprehensible, as in the case of malapropisms or printing mistakes. Thus the realm of the aesthetic is in need of its own criteria for membership. In other words the question is: By what principles do we judge something to belong to the realm of the aesthetic? In view of the previous discussion on aesthetic reflection, it would seem that whichever experience results from an aesthetic attitude of interpretation, that is, interpretation which is oriented towards imaginative reflection itself, and not towards understanding, would qualify as belonging to an 'aesthetic realm'. In this way, then, whether an object is to be interpreted aesthetically is a matter of subjective choice. However, as the verdict of the High Court suggests, there is a public understanding of which objects are suited for aesthetic interpretation, namely, works of art.

In the third *Critique*, Kant analyses aesthetic reflection. Since objects of art or poetic texts are aesthetic objects in a public, conventional sense, they pose some

[282] The verdict, Van het Reve's plea and the parliamentory discussion are rendered in: Fekkes[1968]

sort of a problem in the *Critique of Judgement*. The objects of aesthetic judgement here are not specifically artistic or poetic. Rather, Kant mostly deals with objects of nature, and only sometimes with objects of art. Thus, his theory of aesthetic judgement is concerned mainly with the reflection on nature, and on its impact on the cognitive faculties.

As we saw in the discussion in chapter 2, the distinction between subjective reflection on an object, and its determinate understanding is motivated epistemologically. The latter is a matter of exercising the faculty of understanding, a process that is mechanical in nature, and yields objective concepts. Thus, if we see a donkey, we can immediately grasp it as an instance of the empirical concept of a donkey. In aesthetic judgement, which is the first type of subjective judgement that Kant discusses, something else goes on. Kant, as said, presents examples of nature to illustrate how judgements of taste are concerned with pure form. To judge, for instance, a flower aesthetically is not a matter of determinant understanding that results in a mechanical judgement on what kind of object it is: 'Hardly any one but a botanist knows the true nature of a flower, and even he, while recognizing in the flower the reproductive organ of the plant, pays no attention to this natural end when using his taste to judge of its beauty'.[283] The interpreter here is concerned with the form, regardless of how the intuitive presentation of the flower fits into a concept. In reflecting on this form, the subject experiences a typical state of mind. A feeling of harmony in the cognitive faculties is the result of beauty, since intuition, imagination and understanding work together in the on-going determination of the intuitive presentation, that is, while contemplating the possibility of a law in imagination that is not given in understanding. Such imaginative laws can be formed in two ways on the basis of the intuitive presentation. The first is through *schematization* conform to (but not determined by) the laws of understanding, that is, on the basis of perceptual likenesses. The second is through *symbolization*, that is, the rules applying to the sensorily given object can be used to form an imaginative understanding of a different object *by analogy*.[284] While reflecting on such possible laws, the subject experiences the feeling that the beautiful object was, as it were, made for his cognitive faculties. Pure aesthetic judgements, then, are the result of the disinterested reflection on the undetermined object: they are judgements pertaining to how the cognitive faculties can deal with *form*, rather than object.

As we saw in chapter 2, this analysis can be interpreted as a preliminary for the analysis of teleological judgements, where determined objects are judged with respect to their place in our systematic conception of the world. That is, with

[283] CoJ 229
[284] CoJ 351-352

the analysis of aesthetic judgement the possibility of subjective generalization in imagination is first presented; this functions as a description of productive imagination, such that, in teleological judgement, it becomes possible to subjectively construe a generalization with respect to its suitability for our rational conception of nature. In aesthetic reflection, similarly, an object is considered with respect to its suitability for our cognitive faculties themselves; in this way aesthetic judgements do have 'finality', but it is subjective, not objective. Hence, an object here is considered with respect to the concepts we may subjectively associate with it in imagination, and not in objective determination.

In the model outlined above, *all* concepts were considered to originate in subjective reflection, and hence, Kant's characterization of aesthetic judgements as subjective judgements is no longer specific of aesthetic reflection.

Apart from the conditions that pertain to subjective universals generally, then, the disinterest of the subject in determining the object, and its interest in what imagination produces when running free is specific for aesthetic judgement.[285] Kant mentions a specific necessary characteristic for aesthetic judgements, namely the *objective disinterestedness*. The subject engages in a contemplation of its own imaginative representations, and has no interest in the objective existence of the object. That is: nothing depends on the possible outcome of aesthetic reflection. To characterize the 'realm of the aesthetic' by means of aesthetic reflection may then not involve any characterization of which objects belong to that realm, since aesthetic interpretation depends on the (disinterested) attitude of the interpreter and not on (determined) properties of the object. Hence, objects of art, belonging to a publicly proclaimed realm of

[285] Some authors focus on the definition of art through the notion of aesthetic pleasure. For instance Kubovy[1998] proposes a notion of 'cognitive pleasure', which is aroused by the experience of a sequence of emotional events, and specifically by a disruptive turn of events that breaks the expectations of the reader. However, this qualification may, as Kubovy indeed notes himself, also pertain to a ride in a roller coaster, and hence is not specific for art. Levinson[1998] uses a notion of aesthetic pleasure to characterize the interpretation of art. However he thereby presupposes a 'structural basis' in which the objects are presented as art, and further assumes that the aesthetic pleasure is only obtainable in 'properly backgrounded people' who have, for instance, some art historical knowledge. Thus, in his definition of aesthetic pleasure, Levinson refers to the experience of an object already identified as art. In the Kantian sense, the pleasure that may result from engaging in free imagination is of course also not specific to the contemplation of art, since, as already observed, objects in nature may cause the same harmony of the faculties, as well as any other object from the determination of which the reader may dissociate himself.

the aesthetic, need not necessarily belong to a thus subjectively formed realm of objects of aesthetic reflection.

Indeed, the objects that for Kant seem to be best suited for aesthetic judgements are objects of nature. Regarding the relation between nature and art, Kant writes: 'art can only be termed beautiful, where we are conscious of its being art, while yet it has the appearance of nature'.[286] Although an object of art is intended for our reflection, it can only be reflected upon freely if it takes the guise of *not* being thus intended: 'the finality in a work of art, intentional though it be, must not have the appearance of being intentional; i.e. fine art must be clothed with the aspect of nature'.[287] In other words, an artwork should not betray that it is designed for our faculty of reflection, since it would then represent a technique, or a rule that the artist used to make the work.[288]

Still, art should have some sort of recognizable form: 'in all free arts something of a compulsory character is still required, or as it is called, a mechanism, without which the soul, which [...] alone gives life to the work, would be bodyless and evanescent (e.g. in the poetic art there *must* be correctness and wealth of language, likewise prosody and metre)'.[289] Further, social conventions of beauty in art appear in the *Critique of Judgement*, when Kant recommends the study of classical languages, that is, dead languages. He considers the study of dead languages as the field of training the faculty of taste *par excellence*, since, here, the student can become acquainted with beautiful form. Some products of taste, then, are considered to be exemplary, and they allow the individual to develop his own faculty of taste.[290] For Kant conventions on what is art and how to judge it seem to serve as a training device; partaking in the practice of reflecting on conventionally beautiful objects allows the individual to develop

---

[286] CoJ 306

[287] CoJ 307

[288] Lyotard states the preference for objects or scenes of nature from the perspective of a deep suspicion of art, or rather of human creativity: 'Die großen Schauspiele der sich in Unordnung befindlichen Natur sind ein Beispiel dafür, daß die menschliche Kunst niemals etwas derartiges hervorbringen kann. Denn alle menschliche Kunst ist immer nur Mimesis und letztlich suspekt, weil immer die Möglichkeit besteht, daß sie mit einer Absicht konzipiert worden ist und von daher ein Begriff und eine Zweckmäßigkeit mit Zweck auf ihr lastet.' (Lyotard[1989]).

In a similar vein, the computational character Huge Harry contends: 'Is it possible to listen in a disinterested way to music that is composed and performed by humans? Human composers and musicians are not disinterested. They want money, fame, sex. They cannot hide this, and often they don't even try. If we do not turn off our microphones when we listen to their pieces, we hear greed, jealousy, lust. Behind the apparent complexity and indefiniteness of their compositions, there are all too clear-cut meanings', and he continues to conclude that computers make for better artists than people. (Harry[1995])

[289] CoJ 304, my italics.

[290] CoJ 232

himself, and to learn to use imagination freely.[291] Thus, objects of art should not be copies of what exists conventionally as art, and therewith one characteristic of art is stated, namely that it should allow for the free play of imagination, as Kant writes, 'a freedom without which a fine art is not possible'.[292]

Hence, although the realm of objects of aesthetic reflection for Kant is greater than the realm of art, the latter should be part of it. And art may take part of it if it appears to us *as* art, and yet at the same time hides its intentional character, such that we may consider it in a disinterested manner, that is, only with respect to its effect upon our cognitive faculties.

The idea that the objectively disinterested aesthetic reflection pertains to objects of art, or otherwise, to objects considered *as* art, is a common one, and it can be witnessed in different forms in many theories on art or poetry. The feature of disinterestedness can, for instance, be recognised in the concept of *aesthetic distance*, or detachment from the everyday world.[293] As I remarked previously, Kant remarks that some individuals are capable to see something that was previously judged conceptually as if it were new and unfamiliar; therefore, the most common objects may become the object of aesthetic reflection.[294] This aspect of Kant's analysis has been interpreted as implying that any common object therefore can be considered *as art*.[295]

The feature of disinterestedness in the object of the judgement is further echoed in Jakobson's notion of the *poetic function*. Dominance of this function entails that the text draws attention to itself through the purely formal qualities of the poetic message, and at the expense of the referential (objective) function of the text. I already referred to this aspect of interpretation, namely as the possibility of dissociating from a given context, and of imaginatively producing other contexts in which the object may be interpreted. This aspect of aesthetic interpretation is also taken up by Ricoeur, when he explains how poetic text is interpreted: through the suspension of reference the interpretation leads the interpreter to a new poetic world vision. That is, by first undoing any objective references in interpretation, the interpreter may only then apply the 'vision'

---

[291] Ultimately, in this way, an 'ideal of beauty' may be formed in the trainee's consciousness. However, to express such idea in a 'bodily manifestation' would involve more than mere use of free imagination, since: 'this embodiment involves a union of pure ideas of reason, and great imaginative power, in one who would even form an estimate of it, not to speak of being the author of its presentation' (CoJ 235).

[292] CoJ 355

[293] Cf. Bullough[1912], Langer[1953]

[294] To repeat the quotation: 'In respect of an object with a definite internal end, a judgement of taste would only be pure where the person judging either has no concept of this end, or else makes abstraction from it in his judgement'. (CoJ 231)

[295] DeDuve[1998]

that is produced in imagination to reality. Thus, the interpretation of poetry and art is once more related to an attitude of 'objective disinterestedness' in interpretation, and this allows for imaginative reflection. To recognize poetry *as* poetry, according to this characterization, should encourage the interpreter to disengage from an objective interest, and set productive imagination to work. I will consider how this understanding of poetic interpretation may be used to describe the actual encounter with poetic text in section 4 below. The first question that remains to be answered, however, is how the reader then *would* recognize poetry as poetry, or art as art. I turn to this question in the next section.

3 Conventions in poetic context

The empirical criterion to determine whether a text is principally poetic, Roman Jakobson writes, is to see whether the poetic function in the text is dominant over other functions, such as its referential, meta-linguistic or addressing functions.[296] This poetic function is present when a message draws the attention to the message itself, that is, a poetic message is one in which the principles for selecting words are constitutive for the construction of the text. Elsewhere Jakobson analyses the principle of selection as the principle of equivalence, or, in his terminology, *metaphoricity*, as opposed to the principle of combination, namely *contiguity* (or metonymy). According to this terminology, in poetry the 'metaphorical axis' is projected onto the 'metonymic axis'.[297] Jakobson already warns for an all too eager application of this criterion to genres: poetry is not necessarily principally poetic, and thus the poetic function cannot be identified as the sole definatory characteristic.
In this respect the term 'metaphoricity' is not coincidental, since the same, we saw, holds for metaphors. The poetic function is to some extent always present in metaphor, since all metaphorical interpretation starts with a closer look at the unusual use of a predicate and its possible interpretations in the context. However, metaphors appear in all types of textual messages, and thus can be dominated by any textual function. The property of words drawing attention to their use in itself, I conclude along with Jakobson, is not uniquely reserved for poetic utterances.

---

[296] 'Si la poéticité, une fonction poétique d'une portée decisive, apparaît dans une oeuvre littéraire, nous parlerons de poésie. Mais comment, la poéticité se manifeste-t-elle? En ceci, que le mot est ressenti comme mot et non simple substitut de l'objet nommé ni comme explosion d'émotion.' (Jakobson[1973] p 124).
[297] Jakobson[1969]

In the case of literature, we can establish that literary discourse in our culture normally is presented according to the conventions of the literary genres, and is thereby distinguishable. Conventions, for example, of typography; of being published through certain publishers; of style, for example in employing phrases like 'once upon a time…', tropes, archaic words or disregard of grammar. Accordingly, we may attempt to define the poetic as the type of discourse occurring in a thus established aesthetic context.

However promising this looks, as a general criterion to determine whether a text is poetic or not these formal conventions do not suffice. As the history of literature, and of art in general, shows, dominant conventional forms of literary text are not restrictive for what may be considered literature in the future. Some art-forms have taken a long time before they were widely recognized as art, and, given the changes in the past of what we consider to be art, there is no reason to assume that what we recognize as art now will continue to provide a criterion in the future.

Many examples can be given to prove the insufficiency of formal criteria based on traditional genres. The by now standard example of the changing form of art is that of the *pissoir*, that Duchamp submitted for an exposition in 1917, which led to the general acceptance of admitting common objects in the realm of artworks. André Breton gave a literary variety of the *objet trouvé*, when he included the listing of several Bretons in the telephone directory, followed by his name, in a poetry book.[298] The reader finds himself wondering whether he could just as well read the telephone book to find an assertion of poetical authorship, since it depends on his personal attitude whether he treats this particular page as a poem.[299]

Furthermore, the criterion of conventional form as constituting the realm of aesthetic interpretation allows only for conservative art forms. It conflicts with our view of art or literature as renewing and original, since it excludes the possibility of interpreting any unconventional text poetically. Such observation may tempt one into the romantic thought that unconventional form itself may be an essential property of art, since we expect of art that it is original or innovative. However the property of unconventionality in itself does not provide a criterion, since something can only be unconventional with respect to certain conventions, leaving others intact. There is no area of which one can say 'This is unconventional therefore it is art', at most we can say 'This is art but it is not conventional'. Furthermore, even as a criterion for merely extending the domain of art it denies itself. If we expect the unconventional to be art, a truly

[298] 'PSTT' in: *Clair de Terre*

[299] I consider these examples in more detail in the section below.

unconventional artwork would be one that does not count as unconventional. But, having figured this out, it would be conventional to make something non-unconventional, and so on.[300]

One can appreciate Reve's lines on the imagined visit of God as provocative, and which thus would have to lead to silly discussions in parliament by ignorant or non-artistic people. Alternatively, upon reading the phrase, the reader can become an ally of the author, feeling himself above such trivial sensitivity.[301] Here the reader achieves a feeling of superiority to those readers who do not adopt the aesthetical attitude of detachment.

This feeling of superiority, based on identification with the author, seems a source of pleasure itself, quite distinct from dwelling on the possible meanings of the utterance. In some form such identification with the artistic is always present in discussions on art. Aesthetic reflection involves a special attitude, an attachment to the aesthetic, which is more than a passive receptivity. The interpreter chooses to make 'the purposeless' an object of reflection, and this personal involvement reflects the interest he has in the interpretive process. Thus, in aesthetical judgments, there is always an interest of personal valuation, of directing one's attention to a rewarding object.

Typically, objects of aesthetic reflection are deemed worthy of attention, as a matter of both cultural and personal taste. For example in a social context, the appreciation of an artwork by a highly regarded person often leads to a more general appreciation of that art-work. This is for instance reflected in the thoroughly discussed relation between general appraisal and the economical value of an artwork. If a prominent museum, or a renowned collector acquires the work of some artist, her work more probably than not becomes the object of both economical speculation and of art criticism, and is thereby situated firmly in the realm of art.[302]

Aesthetic recognition within society, as for instance expressed in economic value or in the appearance of reviews, thus may provide both a reason for and guidance in aesthetic reflection. The interest thus presented reveals another type of conventionality in aesthetic reflection, namely that of the social practice

---

[300] The construction of such an argument may seem far-fetched, but it has actually been brought forward, e.g. in Bierens[2000]. Bierens gets entangled in this paradox when he argues that the *objet trouvé* was an artwork when presented by Duchamp in 1917, but is no longer so when presented by Tracy Emin in the nineties.

[301] Especially in the case of Reve, there seem to be a number of people who admire the author on the basis of his cynical attitude, i.e. one of detachment, exposing the moral pettiness of the world around them. Their appreciation sometimes even borders on religious worship, adopting the idiolect that Reve uses in his books, calling him 'the Master 'etc. See the web-site www.Reve.nl where fans discuss Reve's writings.

[302] Robert Hughes has described this process of economical development. Cf., for example, 'On Art and Money' in: Hughes[1990].

of interpreting and judging art. Some authors think that it is through these conventions that we can determine whether something is art.

Dickie holds that the social context that brings an object to our attention *as* art determines whether we look upon something as art.[303] According to Dickie, something is a work of art if it is an artefact brought to our attention as a 'candidate for appreciation' through the judgement of one or more agents acting in the name of a specific social institution, namely the art world. Dickie's criterion of convention is not conservative with respect to the form of the art-work: as long as someone considering himself an agent of the art world presents the object as a candidate for aesthetic 'appreciation', *any* object can be appreciated as art. This incidentally coincides with the outcome of Kant's analysis in that, if one takes an attitude of objective disinterest, any object may become a candidate for aesthetic reflection.

The problem with Dickie's theory is that mere conventionality presupposes another criterion for deciding what art is in an object's first judging. That is, the 'agents of the art-world' are left in need of a criterion for their judgement of an object as art. Thus whether the formal qualities of the object, or the attitude of the expert-interpreter lead to 'appreciation', the initial judgement is unspecified, and leaves the criterion of institutional recognition as a secondary and hence not a constitutive definition of art.[304] Thus, whether an object will be interpreted as art, or not, in Dickie's theory still depends on the trained 'agent of the art-world', and the way she might apply her expertise. In other words, although the social status of an artwork may prompt its recognition, in the end the status still depends on the subjectively construed interpretation on the part of the representative of the art-world. The institutional analysis does then reveal two sides of answering the question on how art should be recognized. On the one hand, there are conventionally accepted works of art, which one learns to value as art as a matter of cultural education, and hence recognition is based on having learned these conventions. On the other hand, this collection of publicly recognized works is continuously extended by the recognition of new works of art. Thus, if Dickie is right in emphasizing the institutional status of art, then his theory should be supplemented with an understanding of how the individual (which might be an 'agent of the art-world') may extend this collection.

---

[303] Dickie[1974]

[304] The same criticism holds for the so-called 'rigid designator model' of art that Matthews[1980] and Carney[1982] propose. Here, 'art' is understood as a sort name with rigid designation, in the sense Kripke and Putnam proposed for natural kind-terms. In this model, then, art-works are considered to be baptised as art by 'experts', and thereby fix the possible referents of the word 'art'. Here, again, a criterion for deciding what is art is presupposed to be available to the 'expert'

DeDuve elaborates on the individual choice of engaging in aesthetic interpretation. He deals with Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgement, and especially the implication that any object may become an object of aesthetic reflection if the interpreter adopts the right perspective. Since it is a matter of personal attitude whether a given object is reflected upon *as* art, the meaning of the epithet 'art' is equally dependent on personal choice. We can thus take DeDuve to present an alternative rigid designator definition of art: *every* individual is an expert and has his own extensionally defined understanding of 'art'.[305]

However if we follow this definition strictly, we end up with an unexplainable convergence in what people in fact think is art; for why should there be any overlap in our personal 'art collections', if it were merely a matter of personal baptism? DeDuve explains this along the same lines as Kripke explains the use of proper names by people who do not know the person to whom the name applies. That is, through a causal chain of acts of referring, the use of a name can become conventional. However, why a general term like 'art' should be taken as a proper name (or a natural kind), and why the baptism is taken over only by some, and may be contested by others remain unanswered questions with respect to the use of the word 'art'. Following Dickie's suggestion that there are experts in the matter, we could assume that the act of baptism should fix the reference when performed by some people, but not by others. Thus, we are referred back to the problem of recognizing who is an expert, and of understanding how she could use the word 'art', if we attempt to explain the social convergence in our use of the word.

Lüdeking discusses the conventionality of aesthetic judgement in a Wittgensteinian manner, when he discusses the use of the word 'art'.[306] When we judge something to be art, we recognize it as having a certain value. For instance, if an extra-terrestial friend from Mars would translate our word 'art' into *art*, and would use it for exactly the same objects as we do, but would then treat these objects as common garbage, we would not think he had grasped the meaning of the word. Moreover we would not think of any object he newly presented as *art* as art. The epithet 'art' to us is a title of honour; it means we treat the bearer of the name with reverence, and the social codes demand from other people that they respect our valuations, even if they do not agree or understand. Thus before any aesthetic reflection is engaged in, an object can be given *as* art. Hence, according to Lüdeking, it is not only the outcome of individual reflection upon its value that determines what is art, but again also a social fact, now not merely consisting of an institutionally

[305] DeDuve[1998]

[306] Lüdeking[1988] §§ 64-69

proclaimed status, but of a cultural practice of courtesying other opinions and tradition.

This latter understanding of a broad cultural practice, governed by norms of politeness and standards of judgement, seems to come closest to what could be called a 'normal context' of aesthetic interpretation. To name an object 'art', cannot be simply a matter of personal baptism, since, in doing so, we point to the object as something valuable, deserving special attention by others as well. We expose the object as one that is worthy of reflection. In other words, to personally adopt a specific interpretation is not yet the same as calling something art. The interpretation is a private matter, a matter between the interpreter and the object. But to call an object 'art' is a social deed; one points to an object, as a candidate for more general aesthetic appraisal. Social factors such as one's reputation, intentions and credibility on the one hand, and formal aspects such as the more or less conventional make-up of the object as an art-object on the other hand, play a role in how such judgement is received, and whether it is followed by others. Depending on the social role of the interpreter, and on conventional aspects of form, then, after being named 'art' an object may acquire the *social* status of art.

Parallel to the use of the word 'art', the epithet 'poetic' indicates an utterance that deserves special attention. Calling an utterance a *poetical* metaphor is to say that it is of specific value, and promises a rewarding moment of reflection. The poetic nature of a text is then not so much a property of the text drawing attention to itself, but rather, depends on contextual presentation, and on the social convention that some formal aspects of a text *should* draw the interpreter's attention to the text in itself. Thus, to recognize a text as being part of a poetic context allows a reader to approach the text as one of which the value has been established previously, and thus presents a 'normal' context for poetic interpretation.

4 The realm of imagination

The feature of objective disinterestedness in aesthetic judgement, we saw, is echoed in Jakobson's notion of the *poetic function*, which draws the reader's attention to the purely formal qualities of the poetic message, and leads him to disregard the referential or objective function of the text. Ricoeur, we saw in the first chapter, takes up this feature in his analysis of poetic metaphor. He calls it a 'suspension of reference', as he finds the dissociation from referential meanings necessary for metaphorical interpretation. Other than Jakobson describes, for Ricoeur at a later stage in the interpretation, the notion of reference, now of the new, metaphorical meaning, becomes relevant again.

Similarly, in Ricoeur's understanding of the interpretation of literary or poetic text, the reference in a text initially makes way for a contemplation of the text in itself, in order to produce a new 'vision', which, as a 'heuristic fiction', may then be applied to the world again. Thereby the interpretation of poetic text is identified as the process of metaphorical interpretation.[307]

According to Ricoeur, in metaphorical interpretation the contemplation of the utterance allows for a 'predicative assimilation', in the form of a schematization of the similarities between concepts. This in turn leads to the formation of an icon: an abstract representation of the similarity between representations belonging to the vehicle and the target of the metaphor. Hence, metaphorical interpretation involves an 'iconic function' of language.

In the previous chapter I remarked that this notion of an iconic function can be analysed in terms of retrieved associated representations, and as such pertains to any representation, be it a representation of a linguistic expression or not.[308] We can then, to some extent, restate Ricoeur's analysis of metaphor in terms of the model outlined above. Metaphorical meaning is produced by the conceptual combination of representations that are associated with the terms in a metaphorical utterance. The metaphorical meaning produced thus is then assumed to present an icon in itself, that is, it leads to the representation of an abstracted similarity between the representations that are evoked.

As I said before, to think of expressions as having meaning through a single icon, that is identified as an abstract image of the similarity shared by the referents of an expression, is to ignore the symbolic functioning of words. That is, a word is a symbolic sign that acquires meaning through the representation of the word itself in relation to other representations, which may include a representation of its referent. Hence it acquires meaning through association, and does not in itself represent an abstraction of perceptual presentations of a referent. In fact, Ricoeur's account of the new 'schema' of the meaning that is attributed to metaphorically used predicates in a sense presupposes that the connection between an expression and an iconic representation is merely conventional, since it can change on the basis of imaginative re-presentation.

The process of iconic imaging then implies the formation of an abstract meaning, or a not yet fully conceptualized abstract meaning, independent from context, which may then, as a new conceptual structuring, be applied to the objective world. Thus, poetic interpretation involves a moment of objective disinterestedness, necessary to engage in productive imagination, and hence to form a new vision. Ricoeur's understanding of the process of interpretation thus appeals to Kant's characterization of aesthetic reflection. In the former

[307] Ricoeur[1991]

[308] Cf. section 3.4 in chapter 3.

section I concluded that to recognize a text as poetic entails a 'normal' attitude to it, namely to treat it reverently and as worthwhile of reflection. We may now examine the relation between such a convention-guided attitude and the actual interpretation of a text. As discussed in section 2, the moment of objective disinterestedness was used by many authors to characterize the interpretation of art or poetry, and we saw above that Ricoeur again appeals to a suspension of reference to characterize the process of poetic interpretation. The question then is whether this attitude of interpretation is one that belongs to conventions of how to interpret an object that is generally considered to belong to the 'aesthetic realm', or whether it is the actual process that takes place when we open ourselves up to a poetic text, or a work of art.

I first discuss an example of how the notion of an 'iconic function' of language may be relevant in poetic interpretation. Then I consider some other examples of art and poetry, to find in what sense a 'vision' produced in productive imagination through the means of 'suspension of reference' may *not* be relevant at all for the interpretation of either poetry or art. Here is an example to illustrate how linguistic signs can be interpreted iconically, in the form of a typically imaginative metaphor:

schwarze Vögel, Früchte in den kahlen Ästen
(black birds, fruits on the bare branches) [309]

On account of its having no useful conventionally denotative meaning as a predicate for 'black birds', the word 'fruits', according to Ricoeur's theory, will become iconic in its reference. First we imagine the fruits, in the context of a tree. However this image does not fit the purpose of its present use. Therefore we strip the image of fruit, leaving the tree, the blackness and the position of the fruits. This would provide an abstracted image, thus agreeing with Ricoeur's notion of an icon, which fits with the description of the winter tree with birds. Hence, only certain aspects of the images connected to the sign 'fruits' are useful for the interpretation. At first, we might consider representations associated with fruits, that in themselves may have nothing to do with black birds, such as green leaves, summer, being edible, rotting away, containing seeds and so on. In the interpretation we try to find whether these can be connected to black birds. Representations associated with the expression itself, i.e. 'fruits', thus do not yet provide the interpretation we will make of it. We have to search for those representations that can be relevant or appropriate in its present interpretation, that is, in the context of 'black birds' and 'a winter tree', and omit others. Hence, we acquire an imaginative presentation of fruits

[309] My translation. The example is derived from Frieling[1996].

'under an aspect of ellipsis'. In interpretation we thus finally arrive at what is shared between the associations belonging to the terms of the metaphor. This is what Ricoeur calls an abstracted image, that is, an icon. In interpreting this specific line, the image can be visualized, and even 'mapped' in a more or less literal sense, namely by visualizing a bare tree with black birds instead of fruits, or vice versa.[310]

Thus, in reading this particular line, one may rely on the description of a concrete image that provides the basis for constructing an interpretation. We dwell on the image of black birds and fruit, and form an 'icon' that captures the metaphorical predication in an almost visual representation.

The 'iconic function' of imagination that thus consists of the formation of abstract image on the basis of visualizations has been recognized by C.S. Peirce as well. For him an icon represents an abstracted *perceptual* similarity, shared between a sign and the object it refers to. Visual arts for Peirce fulfil an iconic function, as he writes:

> 'So in contemplating a painting, there is a moment when we lose the consciousness that it is not the thing, the distinction between the real and the copy disappears, and it is for the moment a pure dream - not any particular existence, and yet not general. At that moment we are contemplating an *icon*'.[311]

The moment of contemplating, or of 'dreaming' the signification of the artwork before us, coincides again with Kant's description of the aesthetically employed free imagination, contemplating an object *as form*, and without interest in the object, that is without considering 'the real'. Thus, the lingering of imagination on imaginative presentations once more may be identified with Kant's process of reflective judgement, corresponding with the 'disinterested pleasure' that the work in question provides.

However, not every work of art can be considered to be an iconic sign prone to judgemental reflections and *ad libidem* interpretations on the basis of iconic likeness or perceptual resemblance. The artist has her say in this process. Her images may take such a *form* as to undermine the comparisons the viewers may come up with, confronting them along the way with their want of interpretations. The famous *objet trouvé* of Duchamp, for instance, as visual art downright sabotages any process of iconic interpretation. Contemplating the

---

[310] One could say that this particular metaphor does not provide a very nice example of such visual mapping, in that the birds would be on top of the branches, while the fruit would be hanging; thus the mapping involves a reversal of position, which seems arbitrary in that it does not make sense in further interpretation. For instance if one would like to see the birds as an omen of death, to visualize the reversal of position with respect to the branch would involve something like a resurrection of the black winter fruit.

[311] Peirce, Charles Coll. Papers, 3.362 (original italics)

pissoir we can hardly derive a satisfactory 'iconic' imaging from it, lingering 'between the copy and the real'. If we want to maintain an attitude of aesthetic distance, or objective disinterest in this case, we must make ourselves willfully naive. It would mean that we dissociate from the recognition of the object as a urinal, and consider it as an object suited for reflection.

Two ways of reflecting on the object are thus possible, if we follow Kant's description of how the sensory presentation may be interpreted by use of imagination.[312] The first is that we merely consider the object as form, and thus, dissociating from its actual determination, we schematize the object in mere *conformity* to concepts of understanding, without determining the object itself. For instance we might consider formal resemblances to other objects (such as shrines, caves, bathtubs, wombs), or consider its position (upside down). In order to do this we have to make ourselves naive, and willfully ignore the brutal everyday meaning it has for us. However, we *do* recognize the object as a urinal, and recognizing it as such contests the value that we are supposed to attach to works of art. The alternative, then, is that we look upon the object as a *symbolic* presentation, that functions as the intuitive presentation of another concept by analogy. Therewith the work is interpreted as a cynical gesture: a urinal symbolizing an art-object, representing the value of objects on an art-show and how to treat them by analogy. In that case we, in the act of looking at the object *as* art, allow ourselves and our values to be made fools of. A paradox is therewith presented to us in the interpretation: we dismiss the object as an object of art, but we only arrive at this conclusion because we were tempted to consider it *as* art. That is, in the first place we approach the object as art, which would be normal since it is presented in the context of an exhibition and even signed by an artist, in short, we approach it ready for aesthetic reflection, while in the end it is precisely this reflection that we want to withhold from the object.

The solution to the paradox the *pissoir* presents to us, has been to acknowledge its working *as art* on a different level than that of an objectively disinterested free use of imagination. As with all paradoxes the solution lies in distancing oneself from the attitude that evoked the paradox in the first place. Indeed, as the range of interpretations and the vast literature on the *pissoir* shows, its interpretation has become part of a meta-question on how to look at art. In this light, the work can be understood as the presentation of a mirror to reflective judging, by sabotaging the process of a 'pleasant' lingering in imagination. Instead, it becomes an object representing the *problem* of aesthetic

[312] The distinction between these two possible intuitive modes of representing a concept in imagination (as either schematic or symbolic) is stated in CoJ 351-352. See also section 2 above.

interpretation. As such it has been interpreted as belonging to a different 'semantic' category.[313] The object of art, given *as* art, now triggers the question whether it is rightly called so, and the 'image' of the *pissoir* in free imagination thus leads to the self-conscious reflection on interpretation: the degree to which a spectator might be shocked by such an object in an exposition reveals his attitude and expectations toward what may normally qualify as art.

As a consequence it is now up to the spectator to determine whether or not this object is art. Thus, Thierry DeDuve comes to his previously discussed conclusion that after the *pissoir*, the application of the word 'art' to an object has become a matter of personal baptism and a following of conventions, that has nothing to do with the nature or specific form of the art-objects themselves.[314] And yet further, the meta-standpoint that is thus taken in art theory towards the work shows that the attitude of aesthetic distance, or of a suspension of reference, in this case is not what leads to the interpretation of the work. Rather, the paradox of considering the object as a work of art, and the impossibility of maintaining objective disinterestedness, allows for a new attitude in interpretation, namely of reflection on the 'normal' attitude of aesthetic reflection.

In the case of the *pissoir*, the unacceptability of a detached attitude that would allow for an iconic representation of the object turns the interpreter to a different type of understanding. The interpretation is blocked by the repulsiveness of an iconic image, and leads the interpreter to interpret his own attitude, or the desired, 'proper' attitude within the cultural practice of looking at art. Similarly, not every literary image, not every metaphorical predication has an iconic signification in the sense witnessed in the example of the winter tree with birds above. Some poetic imagery is designed for never arriving at an established iconic interpretation, or is designed to willfully un-establish any metaphorical interpretations of the 'visions' their work may produce. Writers can blow up an image, making it grotesque, immoral or altogether inconsistent.

Above, I already mentioned a literary variant of the *objet trouvé* by André Breton, namely the presentation of a list of Bretons in a Paris telephone directory in a poetry book. The reader finds himself wondering whether he could just as well read the telephone book to find an assertion of poetical authorship, since, like in the case of the *pissoir*, it depends on his personal attitude whether he treats this particular page as a poem.

---

[313] E.g. by Lüdeking in a paper on Duchamp, presented on a conference on style in Amsterdam in 1991.

[314] Cf. DeDuve[1998]

But there are other ways of denying vivid literary language its iconic significance. Consider the following story by Daniil Charms [315]

Blue notebook No.10

> There was once a red-haired man who had no eyes and no ears. He had no hair, so he was called red-haired only in a manner of speaking.
> He wasn't able to talk, because he didn't have a mouth. He had no nose, either.
> He didn't even have any arms or legs. He also didn't have a stomach, and he didn't have a back, and he didn't have a spine, and he also didn't have any other insides. He didn't have anything. So it's hard to understand whom we're talking about.
> So we'd better not talk about him any more.

Charms composes a story by the use of imaginative language, provoking the reader to form an image of its hero: red hair, eyes, ears, mouth and nose, arms and legs, insides and so on. However the composition of the image consists of the careful annihilation of every detail of the image. We, as readers, are put at a distance, not being able to understand what sort of character this is. And then we are told that since we cannot understand what he is, we better not talk about him any more. The story is presented as an enigma not worth being puzzled by. The dynamics of the narrative lies between the affirmed fictional existence of such a man in the introduction 'There was once...' and the then denied reality of it. He may be a Cartesian mind, this hairless red-haired, or, being red and not able to talk as well as being without spine or substance, he may be an emblematic portrait of a contemporary post-revolutionary communist. And then again, he may just be an empty story.
We can only construct such an interpretation if we realize that in the first introduction we at once allow for the fabulatory existence of a personage, who in fact does not normally have arms, legs etc. since he is fabulated. But the imaginary existence does entail normal imaginary properties, and thus we are confronted with the ordinary presuppositions we have about imaginary characters. Without those attributions, and without any alternatives presented to us, we no longer know whom the story is about - and if we do not want to stick to the unsatisfactory conclusion that the man we can henceforth not imagine is not worthwhile, we have to take interest ourselves and make up an image. But thereby we depart from what the writer has told us ('we'd better not talk about him any more'), and hence we are no longer concerned with his story. So, once more, if we want to stick to the writer's version, we take a meta-standpoint, and look at our own act of reading stories, analyse our expectations

[315] quoted from Gibian[1971]

and consider our doing so to the aesthetic impact of the story. Thus, from the required abandonment of our own imaginative interpretations, we can conclude that the story presents a poetical point of view that at least renders certain types of imagination problematic.

Another appearance of literary imagery that sabotages readily made, 'normal' interpretations can be found in surreal writings. The figurative content is overloaded with meaningful elements but in no apparent meaningful consistency, and the resulting imaginative world is bound to be unimaginable from sheer meaningfulness. Similarly, Lautréamont's *Chants de Maldoror* presents overwhelming imaginative descriptions, not only in number, but also in moral implication. The narrator heeds the reader to return to his normal business, to not tire himself with perilous imaging, and hence, for his own safety, to ignore the realm of this book, which is imagination. In one passage the narrator reflects on his own work (the *chant*), and in the act contests just about every aspect of a Kantian aesthetics:

> Il y en a qui écrivent pour rechercher les applaudissements humains, au moyen de nobles qualités du coeur que l'imagination invente ou qu'ils peuvent avoir. Moi, je fais servir mon génie à peindre les délices de la cruauté! Délices non passagères, artificielles; mais, qui ont commencé avec l'homme, finiront avec lui. [...] Pardon, il me semblait que mes cheveux s'étaient dressés sur ma tête; mais, ce n'est rien, car, avec ma main, je suis parvenu facilement à les remettre dans leur première position. Celui qui chante ne prétend pas que ses cavatines soient une chose inconnue; au contraire, il se loue de se que les pensées hautaines et méchante soient dans tous les hommes.[316]

The very precise methods of avoiding or alltogether blowing up conventionally delightful poetic imagery are revealing with respect to our expectations in interpretation, and hence with respect to the possible conventions that guide us. Since Duchamp's *pissoir* or the Breton poem uproot a normal understanding of art until an interpreter cleverly discover a meta-language, and since we cannot understand what it means to deny an imagined red-haired person a head and a physical appearance, we seem to be looking, normally, for heads and sincere intentions in art. Nevertheless, it is in the same context of art that such expectations may be sabotaged. Inasmuch, then, as genius may provide the bridge between subjective imagination and conventional understanding, the artistic genius may tear it down. Thus, we are left alone with all our cognitive and symbolic tools to extract meaning from an object or phrase presented to us, and we know such meaning is to be found, since we *are* reading poetry, and we *do* enter an exhibition. We hope for recognition,

[316] Lautréamont, *Les Chants de Maldoro*r, Chant premier.

struggle for likenesses, and use language to explicate the theories we cling to on the next occasion.

It is in this respect, then, that the development of aesthetic theory has a heuristic function for any theory of understanding, since it describes our ways of coping with the world where learned strategies of interpretation fail. This holds especially for the study of the long time-avoided issue of imagination in philosophy of language, since in the mean time artists, designers and advertisers have acquired a far greater familiarity with the subject.

References

Allison, H. 1983. *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Anderson, J. 1978. 'Arguments Concerning Representations for Mental Imagery' in: *Psychological Review* 85: pp 249-277

Aragon, L. 1926. *Le Paysan de Paris.* Paris: Éditions Gallimard.

Aristotle. *Poetica*. Transl. by Van der Ben en Bremer, 1988. Amsterdam: Athenaeum Polak en Van Gennep.

Aydede, M. 1999. 'What Makes Perceptual Symbols Perceptual?' in: *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 22, 4: pp 610-611

Barsalou, L. 1999. 'Perceptual Symbol Systems' in: *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 22, 4: pp 577-660 (followed by 'Response to Critics'. pp 637-652)

Bartsch, R. 1998. *Dynamic Conceptual Semantics. A Logico-Philosophical Investigation into Concept Formation and Understanding.* Stanford, California: CSLI Publications.

Bartsch, R. 2002. 'Generating Polysemy: Metaphor and Metonymy' in: Dirven, R. and Pörings, R. (eds.*) Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast.* Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.

Benjamin, W. 1968. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in: *Illuminations*. New York: Harcourt Brace. pp 217-251 (First published in 1936)

Black, M. 1962. *Models and Metaphors*. Itaka: Cornell University Press.

Black, M. 1978. 'Metaphor' in: Margolis, J. (ed.). *Philosophy looks at the Arts*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press. pp 451-467

Black, M. 1979. 'More about Metaphor' in: Ortony, A. (ed.) *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press. pp 19-43

Blake, W. 1990. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789). Reprinted with an introduction by G. Keynes. Oxford University Press.

Breton, A. 1966. *Clair de Terre* (1923). Reprinted with an introduction by A. Jouffroy. Collection Poésie. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.

Bullough, E. 1912. '"Psychical Distance" as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle' in: *British Journal of Psychology* (June).

Cacciari, C. 1998. 'Why Do We Speak Metaphorically? Reflections on the Functions of Metaphor in Discourse and Reasoning', in: Katz, A. et al. (eds.) 1998. *Figurative Language and Thought*. Oxford University Press. pp 119-157

Carney, J. 1975. 'Defining Art' in: *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 15: pp 191-206

Carney, J. 1982. 'A Kripkean Approach to Aesthetic Theories' in: *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 22: pp 150-157

Cassirer, E. 1970. *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Judgement*. New York: Barnes and Noble. (First published in 1938)

Charney, L. and Schwartz, V. (eds.) 1995. *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Chipman, L. 1982. 'Kant's Categories and their Schematism' in: Walker, R. (ed.) 1982. *Kant on Pure Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp 100-116

Cohen, T. 1978. 'Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy' in: Sacks S. *On Metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cooper D.E. 1986. *Metaphor*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Cornel Bierens 2000. 'De Beeldende Kunst Moet Onderduiken' in: *NRC Handelsblad*. 19/5/2000

Davidson, D. 1984. 'What Metaphors Mean' in: Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press. (First published in 1978)

Davidson, D. 1986. 'A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs' in: LePore, E. (ed.) 1986. *Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson*. Oxford: Blackwell. pp 433-446 (First published in 1977)

DeDuve, T. 1998. *Kant after Duchamp*. Cambridge Mass: Mit Press.

Dickie, G. 1974. *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis*. London: Cornell University Press.

Donnellan, K. 1974. 'Speaking of Nothing' in: *The Philosophical Review* Vol 83: pp 3-31

Dulac, G. 1932. *Le Cinéma des Origines à Nos Jours*. Paris: Ed. du Cygne.

Eliot, T.S. 1944. *Four Quartets*. London: Faber and Faber.

Evans, G. 1982. *The Varieties of Reference*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Farah, M. 1984. 'The Neurological Basis of Mental Imagery: a Componential Analysis' in: *Cognition* 18: pp 245-272

Farah, M. 1995. 'Current Issues in the Neuropsychology of Image Generation' in: *Neuropsychologia* Vol. 33, No.11: pp 121-137

Fauconnier, G. and Turner, M. 1998. 'Conceptual Integration Networks' in: *Cognitive Science* (Vol. 22/2) pp 133-187

Fekkes, J. 1968. *De God van je Tante. Ofwel het Ezel-proces van Gerard Kornelis van het Reve*. Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers.

Förster, E. (ed.) 1989. *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*. Stanford University Press.

Frege, G. 1977a. 'Thoughts'. Transl. of 'Der Gedanke' (1918) by Geach, P.T. and Stoothoff, R.H. in: Frege, G. *Logical Investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Frege, G. 1977b. 'On the Scientific Justification of a Conceptual Notation'. (1882) Transl. by Bynum, T.W. in: *Conceptual Notations and Related articles*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Frege, G. 1979. *Posthumous Writings*. Hermes H. et al. (eds.) Oxford: Blackwell.

Frege, G. 1984. 'On Sense and Meaning' Transl. of 'Uber Sinn und Bedeutung' (1892) by Black, M. in: Mc Guiness. (ed.) *Collected papers on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell. pp 157

Frieling, G. 1996. *Untersuchungen zur Theorie der Metapher.* Osnabrück: Universitätsverlag Rasch.

Gerhart, M. 1994. 'The Live Metaphor' in: Hahn, L. (ed.) 1995.*The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*. Chicago: Open Court. pp 223

Gibbons, S. 1994. *Kant's Theory of Imagination: Bridging Gaps in Judgement and Experience*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gibbs, R.W. 1998. 'The Fight over Metaphor in Thought and Language' in: Katz, A. et al. (eds.) *Figurative Language and Thought*. Oxford University Press. pp 88-118.

Gibbs, R.W. and Berg, E.A.1999. 'Embodied Metaphor in Perceptual Symbols' in: *Behavioural and Brain Science* 22, 4: pp 617-618

Gibian, G. (ed.) 1971. *Russia's Lost Literature of the Absurd: a Literary Discovery. Selected Works of Daniil Charms and Alexander Vvdensky*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Gineste, M.D. Indurkhya, B. and Scart-Lhomme, V. 1997. 'Mental Representations in Understanding Metaphors' in: *Notes et documents Limsi* No. 97-02. Orsay: Limsi Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

Goodman N. 1978a. *Ways of Worldmaking*. Indianapolis: Hackett Published Comp.

Goodman, N. 1972a. 'On Likeness of Meaning' in: *Problems and Projects*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. pp 221-230

Goodman, N. 1972b. 'On Some Differences About Meaning' in: *Problems and Projects*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. pp 231-238

Goodman, N. 1976. *Languages of Art*. Second edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publ.

Goodman, N. 1978b. 'Metaphor as Moonlighting' in: Sacks S.(ed.) *On metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp 175-180

Goodman, N. 1984. *Of Mind and Other Matters*. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.

Hahn, L. (ed.) 1995. *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*. Chicago: OpenCourt.

Halford, G. 1998. 'Relational Processing in Higher Cognition' in: Holyoak, K. et al. (eds.) *Advances in Analogy Research: Integration of Theory and Data from the Cognitive, Computational and Neural Sciences.* NBU Series in Cognitive Science. Sofia: New Bulgarian University. pp 49-57

Hampton, J. 1998. 'The Role of Similarity in How We Categorize the World' in: Holyoak, K. et al. (eds.) *Advances in Analogy Research: Integration of Theory and Data from the Cognitive, Computational and Neural Sciences.* NBU Series in Cognitive Science. Sofia: New Bulgarian University. pp 19-30

Harry, H. 1995. 'A Computational Perspective on Twenty-First Century Music'. *Contemporary Music Review* 14, 3 (1995), pp. 153-159.

Henle, P. 1958. *Language, Thought and Culture.* University of Michigan Press.

Hesse, M. 1966. 'The Explanatory Function of Metaphor' in: *Models and Analogies in Science*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. pp 157-177

Hesse, M. 1983. 'The Cognitive Claims of Metaphor' in: Noppen, J. v. *Metaphor and Religion*: *Theolinguistics 2*. Brussels: VUB. pp 27-46

Hester, M. 1967. *The Meaning of Poetic Metaphor*. The Hague: Mouton & Co.

Holyoak 1998. 'Analogy in a Physical Symbol System' in: Holyoak, K. et al. (eds.) *Advances in Analogy Research: Integration of Theory and Data from the Cognitive, Computational and Neural Sciences.* NBU Series in Cognitive Science. Sofia: New Bulgarian University. pp 9-18

Hoorn, J. 1997. *Behavioral and Psychophysiological Research into Literary Metaphor Processing*. Dissertation. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Hughes, R. 1990. 'On Art and Money' in: *Nothing if not Critical. Selected Essays on Art and Artists.* New York: Knopf.

Indurkhya, B. 1992. *Metaphor and Cognition: an Interactionist Approach*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publ.

Indurkhya, B. 1994. 'Metaphor as Change of Representation' in: Hintikka, J. (ed.) *Aspects of Metaphor*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Acadamic Publ.

Jakobson, R. 1969. 'Linguistics and Poetics' in: T.A.Sebeok (ed.) *Style in Language.* Cambridge Mass: MIT Press. pp 360-377 (First published in 1960)

Jakobson, R. 1973. 'Qu'est-ce que la Poésie?' Transl. by Derrida, M. in: *Questions de Poétique.* Paris: Édition du Seuil. pp 113-126

Johnson, M. (ed.) 1981. *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor.* University of Minnesota Press

Johnson, M. 1987. *The Body in the Mind.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kant I. 1952. *The Critique of Judgement*. Transl. of *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790) by Meredith, J. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kant I. 1988. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Transl. of *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* (1781) by Kemp Smith, N. London: Macmillan Press. (First published in 1929)

Katz, A. et al. (eds.) 1998. *Figurative Language and Thought*. Oxford University Press.

Kosslyn, S. 1994. *Image and Brain: The Resolution of the Imagery Debate.* A Bradford Book. Cambridge Mass: MIT Press.

Kosslyn, S. and Schwarz, S. 1977. 'A Simulation of Visual Imagery' in: *Cognitive Science* 1: pp 265-295

Kripke, S. 1980. *Naming and Necessity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kubovy, M. 1999. 'On the Pleasures of the Mind' in: Kahneman, D., Diener E. and Schwarz, N. (eds.) *Foundations of Hedonic Psychology: Scientific Perspectives on Enjoyment and Suffering*. New York: Russell Sage. pp 134-154

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G. and Turner, M. 1989. *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lamarque, P. 1990. 'Reasoning to What is True in Fiction' in: *Argumentation* Vol. 4: pp 333-346

Langer, S. 1953. *Feeling and Form. A theory of Art Developed from Philosophy in a New Key*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. pp. 318-319

Lautréamont 1869. *Les Chants de Maldoror*. Reprinted in 1969, Paris: Garnier-Flammerion

Leezenberg, M. 1995. *Contexts of Metaphor*. Dissertation. Amsterdam: ILLC University of Amsterdam.

Levinson, J. 1996. *The Pleasures of Aesthetics*: *Philosophical Essays*. Ithaka: Cornell University Press.

Levinson, S.C. 1983. *Pragmatics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, D. 1978. 'Truth in Fiction' in: *American Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 15: pp 37-46

Lewis, D. 1983. 'Postscripts to Truth in Fiction' in: *Philosophical Papers* Vol.I. Oxford University Press.

Lüdeking, K.H. 1988. *Analytische Philosophie der Kunst*. Frankfurt am Mainz: Athenaeum Verlag.

Lyotard, J.-F. 1989. 'Die Erhabenheit ist das Unkonsumierbare. Ein Gespräch mit Christine Pries am 6.5.1988'. *Kunstforum International*, 100 (April/May 1989), pp. 355-356.

Makkreel, R. 1990. *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: the Hermeneutical Import of The Critique of Judgement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Martelaere, P. de 1988. 'The Fictional Fallacy' in: *The British Journal of Aesthetics* No.1

Matthews, R. 1980. 'Traditional Aesthetics Defended' in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 38 (1979-1980): pp 39-50

McMullin, E. 1996. 'Enlarging Imagination' in: *Tijdschrift voor de Filosofie* (Jrg. 58 No.2). Leuven: Uitgeverij KUL.

Montessori, R. 2000. *Educateurs sans Frontières*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer.

Mörchen, H. 1970. *Die Einbildungskraft bei Kant*. Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag.

Ortony, A. (ed.) 1979. *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Paivio, Allan 1971. *Imagery and Verbal Processes*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Paivio, Allan 1986. *Mental Representations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Peirce, C.S. 1933. *Exact Logic*. Collected Papers. Vol.III. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard Press.

Plautus. 1949. *The Menaechmi*. (Transl. unknown) New York: The Library of Liberal Arts Press.

Ponge, F. 1948. *Proêmes*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.

Putnam, H. 1983. *Realism and Reason*. Philosophical papers. Vol 3. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Putnam, H. 1988. *Representation and Reality*. A Bradford Book. Cambridge Mass: MIT Press.

Pylyshyn, Z. 1973. 'What the Mind's Eye Tells the Mind's Brain: A *Critique* of Mental Imagery' in: *Psychological Bulletin* 80: pp 1-24

Quine, W.V.O. 1960. *Word and Object*. Cambridge Mass: MIT Press.

Quine, W.V.O. 1975. 'The Nature of Natural Knowledge' in: Guttenberg, S. (ed.) *Mind and Language*. Oxford: Clavendon Press. pp 67-82

Ransdell, J. 1986. 'On Peirce's Conception of the Iconic Sign' in: Bouissac, P. et al. (eds.) *Iconicity: Essays on the Nature of Culture. Festschrift for Thomas Sebeok*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag. pp 51-74

Ratterman, M.J. and Gentner, D. 1998. 'The Effect of Language on Similarity: the Use of Relational Labels Improves Young Children's Performance in a Mapping Task' in: Holyoak, K. et al. (eds.) 1998. *Advances in Analogy Research: Integration of Theory and Data*

from the Cognitive, Computational and Neural Sciences. NBU Series in Cognitive Science. Sofia: New Bulgarian University. pp 274-282

Reber, A. 1993. *Implicit Learning and Tacit Knowledge: An Essay on the Cognitive Unconscious.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Reve, G.K. van het. 1966. *Nader tot U.* Amsterdam: Van Oorschot.

Ricoeur P. 1978. 'The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination and Feeling' in: Sacks, S. (ed.) *On metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp 141-157

Ricoeur, P. 1991. 'The Function of Fiction in the Shaping of Reality' in: Valdes, M. (ed.) *A Ricoeur Reader*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf. pp 117-136

Ricoeur, P. 1993. *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*. Transl. of *La Metaphore Vive* (1975) by Robert Czerny. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Rorty, R. 1987. 'Hesse and Davidson on Metaphor' in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 1987: pp 283-297

Russell, B. 1905. 'On Denoting' in: *Mind* 14.

Scheffler, I. 1982. 'Four Questions of Fiction' in: *Poetics* 11, 4-6: pp 279-284

Schellenberg, E. 1996. 'Expectancy in Melody: Tests of the Implication-Realization model' in: *Cognition* 58: pp. 75-125

Searle, J. 1979. *Expression and Meaning*: *Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Searle, J. 1983. *Intentionality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stein, G. 1922. *Geography and Plays*. Boston: Boston Four Seasons Company.

Stein, G. 1988. *The World is Not Round*. San Francisco: North Point Press. (First published in 1939)

Strawson, P. 1969. 'On Referring' in: Olshewsky (ed.) *Problems in the Philosophy of Language*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. (First published in 1950)

Strawson, P. 1982. 'Imagination and Perception' in: Walker, R. (ed.) *Kant on Pure Reason*. Oxford University Press. (First published in 1971)

Stroud, B. 1982. 'The Transcendental Argument' in: Walker, R. (ed.) 1982. *Kant on Pure Reason*. Oxford University Press. pp 117-131.

Todorov, T. 1981. *Introduction to Poetics*. Transl. of *Qu'est-ce que le Structuralisme* (1968) by R. Howard. Brighton: The Harvester Press.

Tootell, R. M. Silverman, E. Switkes, R. De Valois. 1982. 'Deoxyglucose Analysis of Retinotopic Organization in Primate Striate Cortex' in: *Science* 218: pp 902-904

Tzara, T. 1992. *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*. Transl. of *Sept manifestes Dada, lampisteries* (1963) by Wright, B. London: Calder Publ.

Valdes, M. (ed.) 1991. *A Ricoeur Reader*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Vygotsky, L.S. 1986. *Thought and Language*. Cambridge Mass: MIT Press. (First published in 1934)

Whorf, B.L. 1956. 'An American Indian Model of the Universe' in: Carrol, J. (ed.) *Language, Thought and Reality*. Cambridge Mass: MIT Press. pp 57-64

Wittgenstein, L. 1958. *Philosophical Investigations*. Second edition. Reprinted in 1988. Oxford: Blackwell.

Samenvatting

Hoofdstuk 1 geeft een introductie op het probleem dat poëtische teksten vormen voor de semantiek. Eén van de oorzaken daarvan is dat poëtische teksten een metaforische lezing toelaten, waarbij de tekst wordt geinterpreteerd als betrekking hebbend op een door de interpretator geconstrueerd domein van verwijzing. Een systematische, waarheidsconditionele betekenistheorie voor poëtische tekst wordt daarmee onmogelijk. Vervolgens wordt onderzocht in hoeverre alternatieve semantische en cognitieve analyses van metaforische betekenis een dergelijke benadering van poëtische tekst kunnen beschrijven en verklaren. In dit opzicht is de theorie van Paul Ricoeur het meest veelbelovend. Ricoeur analyseert de rol van verbeelding in metaforische interpretatie met behulp van Kant's begrip van productieve verbeelding. Hij veronderstelt daarbij echter een criterium waarmee men metaforisch te interpreteren taalgebruik kan afbakenen van ander taalgebruik, hetgeen niet bruikbaar blijkt. Daarnaast gaat Ricoeur niet in op hoe niet-metaforische betekenis begrepen wordt, en met name wat daarbij de rol van verbeelding zou kunnen zijn.

Hoofdstuk 2 gaat in op Kant's analyse van de rol van verbeelding in de totstandkoming van conceptuele oordelen in het algemeen. Hij onderscheidt een reproductieve en een productieve functie van de verbeelding binnen empirische oordelen. De problematische relatie tussen deze twee functies binnen de Kritische filosofie besproken, mede op basis van de interpretatie van Gibbons, die stelt dat de productieve, subjectieve verbeelding in alle empirische oordelen primair werkzaam moet zijn.
Vervolgens wordt gespeculeerd op de mogelijkheid dat alle concepten, dus ook betekenisrepresentaties, op grond van productieve verbeelding tot stand komen, naar het model van hoe Kant beschrijft dat subjectieve universele concepten gevormd worden.

Hoofdstuk 3 omvat een uitwerking van de eerdere speculaties over cognitie. Daarbij worden eerst twee theorieen besproken die het proces van conceptformatie beschrijven aan de hand van de cognitieve representatie van de waarneming. De theorie van Bartsch beschrijft hoe taal een rol speelt bij begripsvorming, en met name hoe het leren van conventioneel taalgebruik binnen een taalgemeenschap daarbij een structurerende rol heeft. Het cognitieve proces van conceptformatie wordt daarbij geanalyseerd als het op neuro-fysiologisch, dwz. neuronaal, niveau verwerken van verschillende

waarnemingen, op basis van reele gelijkenissen tussen (uitings)situaties. Bartsch gaat daarbij niet in op psychologische aspecten van cognitieve representatie van concepten, maar beperkt zich tot een extensionalistische definitie in termen van verzamelingen situaties onder een aspect van gelijkenis.
De theorie van Barsalou presenteert een model van conceptformatie op basis van perceptuele processen. Concepten zijn bij hem gestructureerde clusters van 'perceptuele symbolen', namelijk functionele en selectieve representaties van eerdere percepten die op neuronaal niveau gerepresenteerd zijn. Hij beschrijft hoe een concept geactiveerd kan worden op grond van een waarneming. Daarbij neemt hij echter aan dat ook de betekenis van woorden, zelfs van abstracte termen, in causaal geffectueerde perceptuele representaties gegrond is.
Op basis van de kritische bespreking van deze beide modellen wordt de eerdere speculatie over een cognitief model uitgewerkt, waarin de rol van productieve verbeelding in zowel begripsvorming als in metaforische interpretatie centraal staat. In deze uitwerking worden concepten, ongeveer als bij Barsalou, gezien als clusters van in een specifieke context geactiveerde, gerelateerde representaties van eerdere waarnemingen, met inbegrip van de waarneming van van talige uitdrukkingen zelf. Deze relaties komen tot stand in de ervaring, alsook bij het aanleren van correct taalgebruik binnen een taalgemeenschap, als Bartsch beschrijft. Linguistische betekenis is daarmee niet te identificeren met een specifiek, stabiel cognitief gerepresenteerd concept, maar bestaat op een cognitief niveau uit een cluster van al dan niet talige representaties die door een uitdrukking binnen een specifieke context geactiveerd worden. Interpretatie en begrip bestaan aldus beide uit het vormen van een cluster van representaties waarbinnen het gebruik van een uitdrukking binnen een gegeven context herkend kan worden.

In de epiloog wordt teruggekeerd naar het onderwerp van poëtische interpretatie. Aangezien het proces dat Ricoeur specifiek acht voor poëtische interpretatie in het voorgaande als een algemeen cognitief proces is geanalyseerd, is iedere mogelijkheid om dergelijke interpretaties in termen van een specifiek, differentieerbaar gebruik van productieve verbeelding te karakteriseren weggevallen. Aldus is de relatie tussen poëtische interpretatie en poëtische tekst niet te herleiden tot een wezenlijk andere manier van lezen of begrijpen. Gesteld wordt dat in de interpretatie van een als poëtisch herkende tekst een subjectieve, niet-conventionele lezing toelaatbaar en zelfs sociaal wenselijk is, in tegenstelling tot in de meeste andere contexten. Aldus is de identificatie van poëtische interpretatie met de vrije verbeelding zelf een op conventies gebaseerde idealisering van wat de poezie vermag.

Titles in the ILLC Dissertation Series:

ILLC DS-1999-01 • Jelle Gerbrandy
Bisimulations on Planet Kripke
ILLC DS-1999-02 • Khalil Sima'an
Learning efficient disambiguation
ILLC DS-1999-03 • Jaap Maat
Philosophical Languages in the Seventeenth Century: Dalgarno, Wilkins, Leibniz
ILLC DS-1999-04 • Barbara Terhal
Quantum Algorithms and Quantum Entanglement
ILLC DS-2000-01 • Renata Wassermann
Resource Bounded Belief Revision
ILLC DS-2000-02 • Jaap Kamps
A Logical Approach to Computational Theory Building (with applications to sociology)
ILLC DS-2000-03 • Marco Vervoort
Games, Walks and Grammars: Problems I've Worked On
ILLC DS-2000-04 • Paul van Ulsen
E.W. Beth als logicus
ILLC DS-2000-05 • Carlos Areces
Logic Engineering. The Case of Description and Hybrid Logics
ILLC DS-2000-06 • Hans van Ditmarsch
Knowledge Games
ILLC DS-2000-07 • Egbert L.J. Fortuin
Polysemy or monosemy: Interpretation of the imperative and the dative-infinitive construction in Russian
ILLC DS-2001-01 • Maria Aloni
Quantification under Conceptual Covers
ILLC DS-2001-02 • Alexander van den Bosch
Rationality in Discovery - a study of Logic, Cognition, Computation and Neuropharmacology
ILLC DS-2001-03 • Erik de Haas
Logics For OO Information Systems: a Semantic Study of Object Orientation from a Categorial Substructural Perspective
ILLC DS-2001-04 • Rosalie Iemhoff
Provability Logic and Admissible Rules
ILLC DS-2001-05 • Eva Hoogland
Definability and Interpolation: Model-theoretic investigations
ILLC DS-2001-06 • Ronald de Wolf
Quantum Computing and Communication Complexity
ILLC DS-2001-07 • Katsumi Sasaki
Logics and Provability

ILLC DS-2001-08 • Allard Tamminga
Belief Dynamics. (Epistemo)logical Investigations
ILLC DS-2001-09 • Gwen Kerdiles
Saying It with Pictures: a Logical Landscape of Conceptual Graphs
ILLC DS-2001-10 • Marc Pauly
Logic for Social Software
ILLC DS-2002-01 • Nikos Massios
Decision-Theoretic Robotic Surveillance
ILLC DS-2002-02 • Marco Aiello
Spatial Reasoning: Theory and Practice
ILLC DS-2002-03 • Yuri Engelhardt
The Language of Graphics
ILLC DS-2002-04 • Willem Klaas van Dam
On Quantum Computation Theory
ILLC DS-2002-05 • Rosella Gennari
Mapping Inferences: Constraint Propagation and Diamond Satisfaction
ILLC DS-2002-06 • Ivar Vermeulen
A Logical Approach to Competition in Industries
ILLC DS-2003-01 • Barteld Kooi
Knowledge, chance, and change