University of Groningen

Metaphor and metamorphosis

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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2016

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Boven, M. (2016). *Metaphor and metamorphosis: Paul Ricoeur and Gilles Deleuze on the emergence of novelty*. University of Groningen.

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PROPOSITIONS

1. Paul Ricoeur and Gilles Deleuze both develop a specific conception of novelty that goes against existing theories of metaphor. Ricoeur's strategy is to criticize these theories from within and to draw a theory of the living metaphor from them. Deleuze, in contrast, rejects thinking in terms of metaphors altogether. His view can best be understood in terms of a process of metamorphosis. (Chapter 1)

2. The notion living metaphor, understood as 'seeing the similar within the dissimilar,' lays the foundation for what I have called Ricoeur's model of productive tensions. (Part 1)

3. Ricoeur's response to the problem of novelty can best be modeled on his theory of the living metaphor. A living metaphor does not rely on an already existing resemblance, but creates a similarity that was not perceived before. It exceeds the boundaries of ordinary language and intimates a new connection between distant categories. As such it enables a stereoscopic vision. (Chapter 2)

4. Augustine's definition 'time is a distention of the mind [*distentio animi*]' provides an excellent illustration of a living metaphor in Ricoeur's sense. In Augustine's *Confessions*, a first attempt is made to draw a philosophical concept of time from this living metaphor by finding the similar (the temporal vocabulary that is sought) within the dissimilar (the psychological and spatial vocabulary that is given). As seen from Ricoeur's perspective, Augustine's attempt goes a long way, but does not fully succeed to explicate the implicit novelty of the living metaphor. (Chapter 3)

5. Deleuze's conception of novelty can best be understood as a process of metamorphosis that has two moments: a mutual metamorphosis that sets the process in motion and a continuous metamorphosis of proliferating series that keeps it alive. This defines the underlying dynamic of what I have called the model of organizing encounters. (Part 2)

6. Deleuze's oeuvre can roughly be divided in three kinds of works: single-signature, double-signature, and multi-signature works. The single-signature works try to set a process of metamorphosis in motion but often fail to bring it to an end. The double-signature works effectuate mutual metamorphoses in which something starts to pass between Deleuze and the philosopher he is discussing, creating a creative coupling that results in interesting new ideas. The multi-signature works, finally, attempt to move beyond the mutual metamorphosis by creating a continuous metamorphosis of proliferating series that never stops charging itself. (Part 2)

7. Following Deleuze's essays, in literature the mutual metamorphoses emerge through the employment of specific writing procedures in which the author injects the ordinary language with a strange undertone so that it starts to tremble and is pushed to the limit. Such a creative coupling of a decomposed and an ordinary language results in a poetic language. (Chapter 5)

8. Each of the three components that, according to Deleuze and Guattari, make up Kafka's oeuvre is dominated by a specific kind of metamorphosis. It is only in the novels, however, that the process of metamorphosis gets its most radical form, generating a continuous metamorphosis of proliferating series. (Chapter 6)

9. Deleuze's interpretations of Spinoza can be read as an attempt to formulate a metamorphic ontology of expression. From the perspective of this ontology, novelty emerges within encounters between bodies, but can only do so if these encounters are selected and organized. (Chapter 7)

10. The three forms of thinking that Deleuze and Guattari distinguish in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*—science, art, and philosophy—should be understood as their attempt to differentiate between three different ways in which encounters can be organized and made productive. (Chapter 8)

11. The word philosophy links two forces together: *philia* (friendship) and *sophia* (knowledge). Some have argued that we should get rid of this linkage. In their view, it provides us with a random tandem. As alternative they argue for a revival of the unicycle, which revolves around *sophia* and gets rid of *philia*. However, as has been taught by history, this unicycle is named sophistry.

12. In the wake of Deleuze, the sedentary (remaining in one place) is often pitted against the nomadic (moving from place to place). Another kind of philosophy can be envisioned, however, a philosophy of obsessions that is based on the principle 'remaining-in-order-to-move'. The word obsession has a military origin and is derived from the Latin verb *obsidere* (to besiege). Something besieges the mind, troubles it, preoccupies it, and tries to fill it, to take it over. Its military origin gives it a negative undertone, but this is not decisive. It has an older layer yet. It comes from *ob* (against) and *sedere* (sit). From this perspective philosophy can be defined as: sitting opposite to in order to be moved. Being sedentary in order to become nomadic.

13. Philosophy is like literature insofar as it does not describe the world as it is, but invokes a possible world. In philosophy this possible world is conceptual in nature. Reading an important work of philosophy necessitates becoming immersed in this possible world. As such, the act of reading provides a concrete experience of a mutual metamorphosis. In the intensity of reading the distinction between author and interpreter becomes hard to trace. And it becomes as difficult as it is important to see what should be attributed to the author and what to the interpreter. This is not a shortcoming, but the only way in which—at least initially—philosophy can develop and renew itself, without losing its depth and nuance.

14. Het Nederlandse woord proefschrift beschrijft de ervaring van het schrijven van een dissertatie beter dan haar Engelse equivalenten. Het schrift wordt geproefd ('Hij heeft het schrift geproefd en is dronken geworden'). Het is een beproeving ('Het schrift heeft zijn krachten tot het uiterste beproefd'). Er is een proeve afgelegd ('Er is gebleken dat hij zich in het schrift heeft bekwaamd').[1]

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[1] The Dutch word 'proefschrift' (literally: 'test writing') describes the writing of a dissertation much better than its English equivalents. Something is tasted (*geproefd*) ('He has tasted writing and has become drunk on it'). It is an ordeal (*beproeving*). ('The writing has sorely tried him'). A test (*proeve*) has been taken ('It has been shown that he has trained himself in writing.')