



EXTENDED METAPHOR

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ABSTRACT

The fundamental structural characteristic of a metaphor is that it is a conceptualization of the source domain (the "figurative" or "vehicle" language) in terms of the target domain (literal, or "tenor") on two levels. Sentence-level explanations of the phenomena are offered by the majority of linguistic approaches to metaphor. However, literary metaphor is often discursive; a work as a whole has a metaphorical "undercurrent" that can take many different forms, including several "single" metaphors. Therefore, in order to properly account for metaphors, it is necessary to do the following: account for metaphors discursively as opposed to sententially; deal with the resolving "undercurrent" stratum as opposed to the superficial "single metaphor" stratum; and represent the double-layered conceptual structure of metaphors. A new conceptual discourse model of text-worlds is presented here, which naturally captures the conceptual layering inherent in language generally (and not just in metaphor), which treats the 'undercurrent' aspect as being equivalent to 'gist' or 'macrostructure' in text linguistics (using the concept of the 'megametaphor'), and which automatically provides a discursive account of the phenomenon of extended, or sustained, metaphor

Introduction: Although the clouds and ocean billows are compared in a single sentence, there are other metaphors that may be extended into many sentences, paragraphs, or even full stories. We refer to these as expanded metaphors. With an extended metaphor, you may use a variety of topics, concepts, images, and circumstances to construct your comparison in great depth. This is a regular occurrence in both poetry and prose. To Kill a Mockingbird is an excellent example of a literary work whose metaphor is there from start to finish. Although

the author used a metaphor to explain certain events in the novel, the story itself has nothing to do with the real killing of mockingbirds. [1:31]

What Impact Does an Extensive Metaphor Have?

Writers can expound on a comparison between two items or concepts by using extended metaphors. By continuing to compare the two things, you might find more similarities rather than stopping at just one. For instance, Miss Harridan, the school director, compares kids to plants in the movie *Daddy Day Care*. You might be able to utilize more complex analogies like the following to compare children's education to gardening: We "feed" our kids ideas on a daily basis, much like we water plants; We eliminate harmful behaviors or eradicate the weeds surrounding our plants; We spend time gently caring for both plants and children. [3:87]

Remember, however, that although you may find several points for your extended metaphor, it will always have its limits. It's very rare to find a perfect analogy between two totally different ideas.

In the gardening example above, we might wonder if the metaphor of a plant shriveling under intense heat applies to children—although it might, to some degree, such as in the case of traumatized children, but children may adapt or have the ability to move away from the “heat” of troubles, unlike plants, which are literally stuck in the ground.

Another function of an extended metaphor is humor. Some writers purposefully draw out a metaphor to show the absurdity of the connection.

Most importantly, authors use extended metaphors to highlight imagery and corresponding emotions, especially when writing about abstract ideas.

Allegory vs. Extended Metaphor

An allegory represents abstract ideas with figures, characters, or events in pictorial, dramatic, or narrative form. An allegory can use extended metaphor, but an extended metaphor does not automatically constitute an allegory.[4:84]

Examples of Extended Metaphor in Literature

In the Bible, when King David sins by killing Uriah and taking his wife Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan confronts him with an allegory that also uses extended metaphor.

Nathan tells King David a story about a poor shepherd who only had one pet lamb, who ate out of his plate. But a rich neighbor, while entertaining a guest, seeks to kill the poor man's lamb instead of his own.

After the king reacts with anger and disgust to this story, Nathan reveals that David was that rich man, who sought to destroy Uriah, represented by the poor shepherd in the story. The effective use of the extended metaphor helped Nathan get his message across to King David, who may not have listened had he spoken directly from the get-go. [2:56]

Example #2. “Hope’ is the thing with feathers” by Emily Dickinson

“Hope” is the thing with feathers –

That perches in the soul –

And sings the tune without the words –

And never stops – at all –

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –

And sore must be the storm –

That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –
I've heard it in the chilliest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet – never – in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of me.

This poem likens hope to a bird. First, she describes hope as “perching in the soul,” “singing the tune without the words,” and then proceeds to describe hope as not being easily abashed. Finally, she says that hope never “asked a crumb of me.”

Example #3. *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare

The Bard is known for including many metaphors throughout his plays. Take this example from *Romeo and Juliet*:

ROMEO: “But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

Who is already sick and pale with grief.”

In this passage, Romeo compares Juliet to the sun, a bright but untouchable object. Shakespeare extends the metaphor by adjuring Juliet to rise quickly and chase the moon away—which he also describes as being pale in comparison with Juliet’s beauty.

1. **Ocean’s Odyssey** – Life as an endless ocean, with each wave a new challenge.
2. **Garden’s Growth** – Existence likened to a garden, each experience a blooming flower.
3. **Time’s Tapestry** – Life depicted as a tapestry, woven with threads of moments.
4. **Melody of Mind** – Thoughts as a symphony, each note a different idea.
5. **Castle of Character** – Personality likened to a castle, with each room a trait.
6. **River of Reality** – Life’s journey as a river, meandering through experiences.
7. **Mountain of Memories** – Past experiences depicted as a mountain range, each peak a memory.
8. **Forest of Feelings** – Emotions as a dense forest, each tree a different feeling.
9. **Desert of Desires** – Desires likened to a desert, vast and endless.
10. **Sky of Dreams** – Aspirations as the sky, limitless and expansive.[5:77]

Using Extended Metaphor

As a writer, extended metaphors allow you to add depth to your writing, which will give your readers a more fulfilling experience.

Just make sure you know how to use the appropriate symbolism, so that readers will be able to connect to the story.

Conclusion

Extended metaphors are a cornerstone of expressive literary writing, allowing authors to weave intricate and meaningful parallels throughout their work. This guide delves into the nuances of crafting extended metaphors, offering practical tips and insights drawn from literary greats. Whether you’re a budding writer or a seasoned author, understanding how to skillfully employ extended metaphors can profoundly enrich your storytelling, adding layers of depth and engaging your readers on a deeper, more symbolic level

One of the best examples of an extended metaphor in literature is John Donne's poem "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning." In this poem, Donne compares the spiritual and emotional connection he shares with his wife to a pair of compasses. This metaphor extends throughout the poem, symbolizing not only the physical distance between them but also their enduring, unbreakable bond. The compasses represent their separate lives yet illustrate how they remain connected at the core, reflecting the depth and resilience of their relationship. This masterful use of extended metaphor showcases Donne's ability to convey complex emotions and ideas through powerful and enduring imagery.

Extended metaphors in literature are a powerful tool, where a single metaphor stretches across a significant portion of the narrative, deepening the thematic impact. These metaphors create a layered understanding of characters, settings, and themes, allowing writers to weave intricate connections and meanings throughout their work.

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