

*Muzyka i metafora. Koncepcje kompozytorskie Pierre'a Schaeffera, Raymonda
Murraya Schafera i Gérarda Griseya*

[Music and Metaphor. The Compositional Thought of Pierre Schaeffer,
Raymond Murray Schafer and Gérard Grisey],
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E w a S c h r e i b e r

Abstract

Many contemporary scholars write about the cognitive and aesthetic value of metaphors. These include not only literary critics, but also philosophers, linguists and scholars of cultural studies. The classic definition of metaphor, understood as transferring a term for one thing onto another, originates in the writings of Aristotle. The initial meaning of metaphor was defined within the framework of poetry and rhetoric; however, in ancient times, issues related to the metaphor were already becoming part of a larger philosophical system encompassing logic, ontology, epistemology and aesthetics. Creating a successful metaphor attested to philosophical acuity, whereas the power of a metaphor's image was closely linked to the theory of poetic *mimesis*.

The twentieth-century theories of metaphor are equally capacious. In the interaction theory of metaphor, founded among others by Max Black and Nelson Goodman in the 1960s, semantics and creating new, revealing meanings are at the forefront, while the cognitive role of the metaphor is manifested by the development of an original vision of reality. In cognitive theory of metaphor, developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in the early 1980s, the metaphor assumes an essential role as a basic figure of thought which enables the understanding of one thing in terms of another. The metaphor influences thinking in all its forms, it is verbalized in the language of poetry, everyday speech or in the language of science. It is due to these modern theories, highlighting the broad-ranging impact of this figure of speech, that the study of metaphor has become one of the fastest growing disciplines of research. It is worth noting that these theories are closely connected with the leading philosophical and aesthetic currents of the second half of the twentieth century. These were, in succession, phenomenology, hermeneutics, semiotics and cognitive science.

Music, as one of the many objects of reflection, is similar to other subjects, but also unique in many respects. The issue of metaphor has been permeating into musicology starting from the 1980s. This process has been contributing to a new understanding of the traditional divisions between analysis and interpretation, structure and

expression, as well as is the musical and the extramusical. The concept of metaphor also allows one to grasp the history of thought on music and the character of musicological discourse from a different perspective.

This publication is a contribution to musicological research on metaphor. Its first basic aim is to introduce the concept of metaphorical imagination and link it to the reception of twentieth-century theories of metaphor in musicology. In formulating the concept of the imagination, it is helpful to refer to not only the twentieth-century theories of metaphor derived from Anglo-American circles, but also the slightly older, rich French philosophical tradition of studies of the imagination: the thought of Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Ricoeur or Gaston Bachelard. Metaphorical imagination is a concept revealing the non-verbal and verbal dimensions of metaphor and thus can enhance those contexts, which can be particularly useful when reflecting on music. These include such phenomena as aspect perception, described by Ludwig Wittgenstein. Aspect perception is based on distinguishing and emphasising selected aspects of a perceived object and links knowledge to sensory experience. Marcus B. Hester refers this phenomenon to metaphor in poetry, whereas in musicology, the idea of aspect perception was developed by Roger Scruton and Nicholas Cook. The imagination also plays a significant role in creating concepts, as it mediates between the level of the senses and language, the individual and general. The problem of schemata created in the imagination and serving as the basis for developing concepts is derived from the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, and became an important element of the cognitive theory of metaphor in the twentieth century. Finally, the creative function of the imagination helps to explain the functioning of the metaphorical meanings of music. In the phenomenological tradition, the distance to reality, made possible by the workings of the imagination, is linked to the creative potential of the imaginary. The creative potential of the imagination can in turn be connected with the interaction theory of metaphor, where discarding the literal meaning of words in favour of their metaphorical meaning results in a new vision of the world. This is how Robert S. Hatten or Carl R. Hausman explain the emergence of original meanings of music. The imagination understood in a social context (Nicholas Cook) governs the use of basic concepts within a given musical culture.

Reflections on metaphor and imagination lead to another issue – the manifestations of metaphorical imagination occurring in the ideas of three twentieth-century composers: Pierre Schaeffer, Raymond Murray Schafer and Gérard Grisey. Their concepts are considered both from the point of view of theoretical reflection, as well as the creative ideas connected to this reflection. The choice of these three composers was dictated by several considerations. Changes in the development of technology have introduced completely new elements into the music of the second half of the twentieth century. In their work, each of these three composers attempts to incorporate these new possibilities of sound registration and transformation. While doing so, they avoid speculative reflection, focusing rather on the direct study of sound. They emphasize the interdisciplinary character of their work, as well as the need to broaden one's knowledge and search for a new vocabulary to describe music. As a result of their thinking and creativity, each of these artists has significantly changed the way of thinking about music, its form, functioning and interaction with the listener.

An analysis of their texts shows that each composer's reflections are focused on one central metaphor, that is, the sonic object (Schaeffer), the soundscape (Schafer) and the organism of sound (Grisey). The metaphor of the object enhances concentration on a single sound and the analysis of its characteristics. The metaphors of the soundscape and organism allow a sound to be described within the context of space and time. These metaphors

allow an entire system of associated concepts to be created, serving to conceptualize music and influence the creative mind-set.

In analyzing the composers' writings, elements of interaction and cognitive theories of the metaphor were used. Pierre Schaeffer presents his deliberations within the context of phenomenological reduction, allowing previous convictions on music to be suspended. The rich and original reflection on listening allows one to refer the writings of Schaeffer to the issues of aspect perception, while the phenomenological and hermeneutic frameworks of metaphorical imagination facilitate the description of creating a new understanding of sound. A supporting role in the detailed classification of sound objects is also played by the theory of the metaphorical understanding of musical matter developed by Francesco Spampinato, which is based on semiotic and cognitive approaches to metaphor. An important part of interpreting the writings of Schafer is the model of the Great Chain of Being derived from Platonic philosophy. The Great Chain of Being has been described both within the framework of the cognitive theory of metaphor, and in the historical studies of Arthur O. Lovejoy. Finally, in Grisey's reflection, the organic metaphor becomes part of a scientific vision of the world, where the mechanical and the organic are perceived as two competing concepts. In interpreting the composer's writings, primarily focused on the problems of musical time, a special role is played by the philosophical concepts of time as a supplement to organic metaphor, with the concepts of Henri Bergson foremost among them.

In analyzing composed works, the metaphors used undergo a renewed selection and interpretation. Their influence is manifested in various ways – through the choice of sonic material and how it is shaped, the techniques of composition used, titles of the compositions and musical notation.

The book connects philosophical and aesthetic problems with musicological issues, and its scope proves to be very broad. The themes addressed, despite their number and diversity, continue and complement each other. The order of the chapters was planned according to the increasingly detailed character of the issues addressed. The first chapter discusses the theory of metaphor, developed within the framework of philosophy, aesthetics, literary studies and linguistics. The second chapter presents the contexts in which metaphor-related issues arise in musicological reflection. It is an attempt not only to summarize the current state of research, but also to discern the most important problems related to the subject of metaphor in musicology. These problems include a reflection on the status of research on music and musical analysis, on musical meaning and expression, as well as issues related to the spatial, kinesthetic treatment of music. The concept of metaphorical imagination facilitates a synthesis of the aforementioned contexts, while allowing important features of the metaphor to be emphasized. Finally, the third chapter analyzes the texts of the composers and discusses selected aspects of their compositions, serving to reveal specific metaphors, as well as how they influence the imagination of the composers and enrich their thought. The last part of the book shows that the role of metaphorical imagination can be fully appreciated only after a detailed analysis of the reflections and creativity of the aforementioned composers. It affects the perception of sound, musical time and the role of the listener, and helps composers to express their sense of creativity, their aesthetic and philosophical views.

The conclusions drawn as a result of the analysis and comparison of the three compositional concepts can serve not only as an important contribution to the currently developing study of metaphor, but also can provide new tools in studying contemporary music. Metaphors are an important element in the ideas of composers. They enable a better understanding of how to perceive music and its connection to the individual musical poetics of a specific

composer. Revealing the rich and diverse sources of metaphor also says much about the transformations underway in contemporary musical culture.