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## Resemblance and Identity in Wallace Stevens' Conception of Metaphor

**Abstract:** Aristotle and the classical rhetoricians conceived of metaphor as a figure of speech in which one thing is given a name or an attribute of another thing on the basis of some resemblance that exists between the two things. Wallace Stevens conceived of metaphor not as the production of pre-existing resemblances observed in nature but the "creation of resemblance by the imagination" (NA: 72). Resemblance, and not identity, according to Stevens, is the fundamental relation between the two terms of metaphor. This is akin to contemporary accounts of metaphor in terms of the phenomenological or experiential seeing of one thing as another thing (Yoos 1971; Davidson 1979; Camp 2006a,b; Semino 2008; Ritchie 2013). Seeing one thing as another thing on the basis of resemblance or similarity implies that the one thing is *not* the other. I do two main things in this paper: one, I appraise the theoretical value of Wallace Stevens' conception of metaphor as the creation of resemblance by the imagination; and two, I pose a challenge to the view that takes resemblance as fundamental to metaphor, arguing that in the cases I present, thinking of the relation as identity and not resemblance, concurs with our ontological commitments to the things compared in the metaphor. In the final analysis, I suggest that Stevens' conception of metaphor as *metamorphosis* can meet the challenge: rather than thinking of the 'is' (identity) of metaphor as an 'as' (resemblance), for Stevens, the 'as' (resemblance) of metaphor metamorphosize into an 'is' (identity).

**Keywords:** metaphor, metamorphosis, resemblance, identity, seeing-as

The nature of metaphor has been examined from different perspectives: some theorists have treated it as a figure of speech while others have considered it as a figure of thought;<sup>1</sup> some have regarded it mainly as an ornament of language

<sup>1</sup> The division of figurative language into 'figures of speech' and 'figures of thought' is a fluid one. To place metaphor in one category rather than the other is a matter of emphasis instead of essence. Classical works on rhetoric by Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian, have treated metaphors as primarily figures of speech for embellishing language. In his *Elements of Criticism*, Kames (1785: 206) treats metaphor as a figure of thought. McElroy (1889: 237) divides 'figures of speech' into two: 'figures of diction' and 'figures of thought' and lists metaphor as a trope under 'figures of diction'. In recent times, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) treat metaphor as a 'figure of thought'.



while others have deemed it an integral part of language use;<sup>2</sup> some have seen it as an abuse of language<sup>3</sup> while others think it is a mark of genius in using language;<sup>4</sup> some have thought of it as a linguistic phenomenon<sup>5</sup> and others have regarded it as a cognitive phenomenon;<sup>6</sup> some theorists think metaphor belongs exclusively to the domain of pragmatics<sup>7</sup> while others treat it in the domain of semantics.<sup>8</sup> And there are varied perspectives on the nature of metaphor within each of the categories or perspectives above. There seems, therefore, to be no uniform conception of the phenomenon of metaphor.

It is, however, generally agreed that in metaphor one talks of, thinks of, conceives, or sees, one thing in terms of another thing. In metaphor, one compares or likens one thing, entity, or element, to another thing, entity, or element. But what makes it a metaphor to say that one thing, X is another thing, Y? If there are two things involved in a metaphor, if there are two things being compared or referred to, the critical question then is what makes this particular way of comparing two things different from other comparisons that also involve reference to two things; for the mere talking about two things cannot be what makes some utterances metaphorical and others non-metaphorical. In other words, conceiving of one thing in terms of another thing logically implies that there is a connection or interaction between the two things to justify such a conception.

What makes an utterance or a sentence a metaphor is its underlying principle and not its external mark. There has to be a difference between, for instance, saying of the boy, Santiago, the hero of Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* that he is a shepherd (when he is) and saying of the Jewish rabbi of the New Testament of the Bible, Jesus, that he is a shepherd (when he is not) – and the difference cannot lie in the syntactic structures of the sentences used. Other figures of speech like metonymy ('the pen is mightier than the sword', 'the town quarreled with the

2 Whately (1861: 239) regarded metaphor among the principal ornaments of style. Modern writers on metaphor all agree on the ubiquity and pervasiveness of metaphor in speech and in thought. Thus, more contemporary views treat metaphor as an integral part of language; as Quine (1979: 162) puts it, metaphor "governs both the growth of language and our acquisition of it".

3 Thomas Hobbes (1991 [1651]) in the *Leviathan*.

4 Aristotle (1984) in his *Poetics*.

5 Bickerton (1969); Matthews (1971).

6 Black (1955, 1962, 1979, 1993); Lakoff & Johnson (1980); Gibbs (1992).

7 Davidson (1979); Searle (1979, 1993); Martinich (1996).

8 Stern (1985, 2000).

gown') and synecdoche ('the White House is stiff-necked', 'South Africa won the rugby game') often take the 'x  $\theta$  y' structure, where  $\theta$  is the relation between the two things usually expressed by the copula 'is'. The difference between metaphor and the other figures of speech like metonymy and synecdoche lies primarily in the relation between the things or elements that constitute them. Both metonymy and synecdoche have an underlying principle of *association* between the X and Y: in metonymy the comparison is between two related nouns while synecdoche trades on the association of the two nouns. In irony, the relation is that of *contrast*. What makes an expression or utterance a metaphor ultimately resides in the  $\theta$ ; it is by saying that one thing  $\theta$  – and not that it is 'as  $\theta$ ' or 'as' or ' $\theta$ -like' – another thing that gives force and meaning to the expression identified as a metaphor. A task of a theorist of metaphor is to explain how the  $\theta$  of metaphor is different from that of a literal statement, an identity statement or the  $\theta$  of the other figures of speech. This is the angle from which I want to approach Wallace Stevens' conception of, and contribution to, the nature and significance of metaphor in his poetry and prosaic writings. The critical question, then, is this: how does Stevens conceive of the fundamental element of metaphor? In Section I, I present Stevens' conception of metaphor and appraise its merits among classical and contemporary conceptions of the fundamental relation between the terms of metaphor. I pose a new challenge to this conception of metaphor in Section II, where I argue that construing the fundamental relation as resemblance, rather than identity, in the cases I present, causes a shift in one's ontological commitments to the number of things referred to in the metaphor. I consider some possible objections to the cases I discuss in Section II and I proffer a suggestion as to how Stevens' conception of metaphor as *metamorphosis* may circumvent the challenge in the final section.

## Metaphor as resemblance

While Stevens used metaphor profusely in his poetry – some titles of his poems even contain the word 'metaphor'<sup>9</sup> – he did not present what can be characterized as a 'account' or a 'theory' of metaphor. Indeed, as Frye (1957: 363) has observed, Stevens' "conception of metaphor is regrettably unclear, though clearer in the poetry than in the essays". Stevens is, however, clear on how he conceives of metaphor in his attempt to understanding the relation between the mind and the world, language and reality – one of the core problems in philosophy. His answer

9 Four of such poems are: "Metaphors of a Magnifico" (CP: 19), "The Motive for Metaphor" (CP: 288), "Thinking of a Relation between the Images of Metaphors" (CP: 355–56) and "Metaphor as Degeneration" (CP: 444–45).



to the question of the fundament of metaphor, or the connection between the two terms of metaphor is: *resemblance*. According to Stevens:

In metaphor (and this word is used as a symbol for the single aspect of poetry with which we are now concerned – that is to say, the creation of resemblance by the imagination, even though metamorphosis might be a better word) – in metaphor, the resemblance may be, first, between two or more parts of reality, second, between something real and something imagined or, what is the same thing, between something imagined and something real as, for example, between music and whatever may be evoked by it; and, third, between two imagined things as when we say that God is good, since the statement involves a resemblance between two concepts, a concept of God and a concept of goodness. (NA: 72)

Stevens is here interested in the basis of poetic expression and how a theory of poetry can be formulated. But he thinks that one cannot formulate an accurate theory of poetry without examining the structure of reality, for according to him, “reality is the central reference for poetry” (NA: 71). The resemblance between two things, for Stevens, is an essential component of the structure of reality. One can observe that resemblance is a constitutive relation between things in nature or reality because all things resemble each other. Resemblance is a unifying relation: it binds the two or more parts of reality that is being juxtaposed in one’s awareness. Stevens reasons that just as it is in nature, so it is in poetry: the relation of resemblance is intrinsic to poetic expression. But in poetry, the relation of resemblance is given expression in the distinctive figurative device of metaphor, or metamorphosis, as Stevens will prefer.

One significant difference between resemblance in nature and resemblance in metaphor is that the former exists to be ‘perceived’ but the latter is ‘created’. In nature one merely perceives or observes the resemblance between things; this is the reason why everything resembles every other thing in nature. Rather than perceiving or observing the similarities between the two things, in metaphor, the resemblances or similarities are *created*; and they are created by the power of *imagination*. Resemblance in metaphor, according to Stevens, “is an activity of the imagination; and in metaphor, the imagination is life” (NA: 73). We can appreciate the beauty of Stevens thinking in his bringing together the concepts of reality, poetry, metaphor and imagination by the thread of resemblance which connects all four concepts: reality is the reference point of poetry and thus to understand poetry requires an understanding of the structure of reality; the cardinal component of reality is resemblance which unites the parts of reality, and by analogy, resemblance is crucial to poetry; since poetry is a creative and imaginative process, the relation of resemblance is created by the imagination through the dreamworks of metaphor.

Stevens conception of metaphor as the creation of resemblance by the imagination is intuitively appealing and it shares certain resemblances with some classical conceptions of metaphor especially in the rhetorical tradition, and it is also akin to some contemporary conceptions of metaphor. But more crucially, it has merits over these classical and contemporary conceptions of metaphor. I shall discuss three virtues of Stevens’ conception of metaphor which make it intuitively appealing.

The first virtue of Stevens conception of metaphor is his emphasis on *creation* rather than *perception* of existing resemblances between the two things of metaphor. Aristotle and most classical rhetoricians were more committed to explaining the nature of metaphor than many contemporary theorists are. That is, they were more interested in identifying the fundamental element of metaphor, the  $\theta$ , that joined the two terms of the metaphor. They conceived of the fundamental element of metaphor as that of *resemblance* or its cognate terms *similarity*, *analogy*, *comparison*. They focused on the way metaphors express pre-existing similarities between the target and source concepts by a process of feature-mapping. Some cognitive accounts also view metaphor as a species of analogical reasoning by means of some sort of structure-mapping.

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle elevates metaphor among other tropes and poetic devices stating that as metaphor cannot be learnt from others, “it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars” (1459 5–8). And in the *Rhetoric*, he issues the admonishment that “in using metaphors to give names to nameless things, we must draw them not from remote but from kindred and similar things, so that the kinship is clearly perceived as soon as the words are said” (1405<sup>a</sup> 33–35). Aristotle’s conception of resemblance as the foundation of metaphor is predicated on the view that a metaphor is a verbal expression that encapsulates the similarities that one perceives between things drawn from different domains of discourse. A metaphor is very perceptive or insightful if the resemblance one observes is between two things which are remarkably dissimilar.

The idea of transfer of words and comparison of terms based on similarity, resemblances, and analogy which is thought to be crucial to the definition and analysis of metaphor feature prominently in the works on rhetoric and literary criticism which focused on the use and abuse of metaphors. Below is a sample of the definitions that have been offered by some famous rhetoricians and literary critics:

“METAPHOR – This is a figure founded entirely on the resemblance which one object bears to another. Hence it is much allied to simile, or comparison, and is indeed no other than a comparison, expressed in an abridged form.” (Blair 1787: 372)



"A word substituted for another, on account of the resemblance or analogy between their significations." (Whately 1861: 253)

"Metaphor, or Poetic Transfer, indicates the resemblance of two objects by applying the name, attribute, or act, of one directly to the other; it is the transferring of a name from that to which it properly belongs to another object which strikes the mind as having the same peculiarities." (Quackenbos 1896: 279)

"A metaphor is an implied simile. It consists in giving to one object the name, attribute or acts of another on the basis of some resemblance between the two." (Clark 1893: 150)

"A metaphor is an expression imputing to one object the name or qualities of another, - as to call a brave man a lion, a crafty man a fox, a capricious and spiteful woman a cat, or to speak of the mantle of sleep, a cloud of witnesses, or the rapidity of thought. This figure is founded on the apparent resemblance between the thing whose name or attributes are mentioned and the thing to which they are applied." (Robinson 1893: 250)

What runs through the various definitions above is not only the emphasis on resemblance as the basis of metaphor but the medium through which the relation of resemblance is achieved: by means of perception. This emphasis on the perception of resemblance ultimately leads to a theory of metaphor as a linguistic or verbal phenomenon. It is, therefore, not surprising that the classical theorists of metaphor thought of metaphor as 'transfer' of words or a comparison (in words) of two or more things.

Stevens' emphasis on the creation of resemblances by the imagination locates metaphor within the creative industry: metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon. As much as metaphor trades on similarities, often it is the case that metaphor also reflects dissimilarities between things, or allows us to 'create similarities' (Black 1962: 37) where none has hitherto been recognized. Punter (2007: 9) notes that "although metaphor undoubtedly deals in likeness, similarity, it also deals in unlikeness and dissimilarity. Metaphor makes us look at the world afresh, but it often does so by challenging our notions of the similarity that exists between things; how alike they are; and in what ways, in fact, they are irreconcilably unlike". Blasko (1999: 1682) also stresses the 'creative' processes involved in the making of metaphors. He notes correctly that "metaphor asks us to stretch our imagination, draw our own links, and in so doing often brings us to new insights". Stevens' conception of metaphor, is therefore, a precursor to the cognitive accounts of metaphor developed by Black and as highlighted by Blasko and Punter above. His conception of metaphor does not fall prey to the criticism levelled against the 'Substitution View' for his conception places metaphor within a cognitive theory of figurative language. By regarding metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon, by treating the making of metaphor as a creative activity, Stevens' conception of metaphor is more attractive than that of the classical rhetoricians

although both Stevens and the classical rhetoricians conceived of resemblance as the stock-in-trade of metaphor.

The second virtue of Stevens' conception of metaphor in comparison with the classical rhetoricians' view of metaphor is that, for Stevens, poetry does not proscribe certain metaphorical expressions; poetry does not set out rules to distinguish the use and abuses of metaphors; poetry does not determine the aptness and correctness of metaphors. This stems from the view that metaphor is a creative activity by the imagination. Stevens accords the imagination with all the powers and liberty to construct or create resemblances from dissimilar things. According to him, the "imagination is the power of the mind over the possibilities of things" (NA: 136); and that "the imagination is the power that enables us to perceive the normal in the abnormal, the opposite of chaos in chaos" (NA: 153). This implies that the metaphor-maker in exercising his imaginative prowess can create metaphors that can be elegant or inelegant, vivid or dull, insightful or un insightful. But the inelegant and dull metaphors are no less metaphors than the elegant ones, and poetry, while it may appreciate the one and not the other, cannot proscribe any metaphors in its domain.

This is in contrast with the views by some theorists in literary criticism who were interested in laying down rules for the acceptance and rejection of metaphors. For instance, according to Blair, "as metaphors should be drawn from objects of some dignity, so particular care should be taken that the resemblance, which is the foundation of the metaphor, be clear and perspicuous, not far-fetched, nor difficult to discover" (1787: 382). He also suggested that:

trite and common resemblances should indeed be avoided in our metaphors. To be new, and not vulgar, is a beauty. But when they are fetched from some likeness too remote, and lying too far out of the road of ordinary thought, then, besides their obscurity, they have also the disadvantage of appearing labored [...] whereas metaphor, like every other ornament, loses its whole grace, when it does not seem natural and easy. (Blair 1787: 382)

But when the metaphor seems too natural and easy, it is usually not creative. Blair's view is premised on the fact that the metaphor-maker produces metaphors based on the similarities she observes in nature, and as such those resemblances can easily be perceived and witnessed by others. However, since for Stevens, the resemblances are created by the unfettered power of the imagination, the naturalness or easiness of metaphors is not a measure of the elegance or appropriateness of metaphors.

Related to the two virtues above is the third virtue which is that in treating metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon, Stevens' view does not entail the deviancy



or literal falsity of metaphors. Stevens' view of metaphor is akin to some contemporary accounts of metaphor that construe metaphor as a *seeing-as* phenomenon. A theory of metaphor that subscribes to the seeing-as mode of perceptual experience must answer two main questions: (1) what is involved in seeing *x as y*? (2) what is the basis for seeing *x as y*? Let us call these the *mode-requirement* and the *grounding-requirement* respectively. Thus, if there are two objects involved in a metaphor, say *x* and *y*, and our understanding of the metaphor involves seeing one of the objects, *x*, as (or 'in terms of'<sup>10</sup>, 'under the aspect of') the other object, *y*, then we should be able to state what that seeing experience involves and the grounds or basis upon which such seeing experience is founded.

Whenever the 'seeing-as' phenomenon is applied to metaphor, the grounding-requirement is either explicitly stated or implied in the general metaphorical discussion; but seldom do writers give an explication of what the 'seeing-as' phenomenon involves. 'Seeing-as' is both contrastive and comparative: it acknowledges a contrast between the objects or elements in the metaphor while simultaneously looking for grounds for their connection in the metaphor. Although the 'as' in 'seeing-as' is not the same as the 'as' in a simile (nor can it be replaced with the 'like' of a simile), the grounds for 'seeing *x as y*' in a metaphor and explicitly saying that '*x is like y*' are invariably the same. The main candidates that ground a perception of *x as y* are *resemblance*, *similarity* (*likeness*) and *analogy*. And since these are no different from the grounds of an explicit comparison – simile – it comes as no surprise that one is often tempted to either assimilate metaphor into a simile, or reduce it to a simile (as a compressed simile), or provide an analysis of metaphor as no different from that of a simile. One can observe this characterization of the 'seeing-as' phenomenon and its basis on similarity or likeness, and the analysis of metaphor as no different from simile in Davidson. Davidson writes that "a metaphor makes us attend to some likeness, often a novel or surprising likeness, between two or more things" (1979: 31) and this is because "metaphor makes us see one thing as another by

10 Consider this characterization of metaphor by Gentner and Bowdle (2002: 18): "Metaphor is a statement characterizing one thing in terms of another, where the two are normally considered to be unlike: for example, 'Time is a river'. Metaphors involve the juxtaposition of concepts from separate domains of experience; they ask us to think of something in terms of something else that is radically different". To see one thing 'in terms of' another thing can be subsumed under the 'seeing-as' locution. Although 'thinking of *x as y*' is phenomenally different from 'seeing *x as y*', with respect to metaphor, both expressions could mean the same as for instance, 'conceiving *x as y*'.

making some literal statement that inspires or prompts the insight" (1979: 45). Likening metaphor to simile, Davidson echoes the dominant views in the rhetoric tradition in the following:

The simile says there is a likeness and leaves it to us to pick out some common feature or features; the metaphor does not explicitly assert a likeness, but if we accept it as a metaphor, we are again led to seek common features (not necessarily the same features the associated simile suggests; but that is another matter) ... A metaphor directs attention to the same sorts of similarity, if not the same similarities, as the corresponding simile... Metaphor and simile are merely two among endless devices that serve to alert us to aspects of the world by inviting us to make comparisons. (Davidson 1979: 38)

The general problem with the 'seeing-as' phenomenology of understanding metaphor is the underlying commitment to the view that metaphor is 'obviously' or 'literally' false, or that it involves some sort of absurdity or inconsistency when it is given a literal rendition. Implicit in construing the metaphorical '*x is y*' as 'seeing *x as y*' is the view that inherent in the metaphor is some falsity or absurdity: it is false that *x is y*; or that *x is not* 'literally' *y*, and that the maker of the metaphor does not intend to make such an 'absurd' assertion, hence, if she is to be meaningful then we are led by his assertion to 'see', 'imagine' or 'conceive' *x as y*. This view indicates a reduction of metaphor to the literal; that is, the recognition and interpretation of metaphor depends on the awareness of an absurdity or contradiction when one tries to give it a literal rendition. This absurdity or contradiction is thought to be of the essence of the identification of an utterance as metaphorical; it is the 'only way' of making sense of an utterance as metaphorical – first subjecting it to a literal interpretation, and if the literal interpretation is blocked by it being absurd or contradictory, then one considers its metaphorical sense.<sup>11</sup>

On this view, an expression is regarded as a metaphor only when it is determined to be literally false. According to Beardsey (1976: 219), "in the usual case,

11 It is important to point out that adopting a seeing-as model of understanding metaphors does not necessarily lead to adopting a literalist conception of metaphor or the treating metaphors as absurd. For instance, Camp's (2006a; 2006b; 2008) and Moran's (1989) conception of seeing-as does not entail a reductive or literalist view of metaphor. Hence, the discussion and criticism of the seeing-as view here is targeted towards a *variant* of the seeing-as view that subscribes to a reductive and literalist conception of metaphor. Nonetheless, as I point out below, seeing one thing *as* another thing implies that the one thing *is not* the other thing, for if the one *is* the other then there will be no need to think of it *as* the other. This is the sense in which the seeing-as view implies that the metaphorical '*x is y*' is false.



to recognize a controlled sentence as metaphorical involves discerning two senses of the predicate term, in one of which the sentence is false". He notes that "there is an asymmetry in the relationship between the two senses involved, which distinguishes one as a literal, the other as a metaphorical, sense" (1976: 219). By a literal sense of a term, he means "a standard dictionary sense, comparatively invariant through sets of contexts", and a metaphorical sense is "a set of collateral properties of objects denoted by the term – a sense which the term has only in a metaphorical context" (1976: 219). Based on this, he remarks that "the metaphorical warrant is provided by a certain absurdity, and in fact usually an implicit contradiction, in the sentence, when the predicate is taken in a literal sense" (1976: 31).

Davidson concurs with Beardsley on this that "if a sentence used metaphorically is true or false in the ordinary sense, then it is clear that it is usually false. The most obvious semantic difference between simile and metaphor is that all similes are true and most metaphors are false" (Davidson 1979: 41). He adds that "generally it is only when a sentence is taken to be false that we accept it as a metaphor and start to hunt out the hidden implication. It is probably for this reason that most metaphorical sentences are patently false, just as all similes are trivially true" (1979: 42). Martinich takes a stronger position on this and claims, among others, that "every metaphorical proposition is false" (1996: 430), "every metaphor either is (or is thought to be) literally false or is supposed to be false" (1996: 430), and "one crucial mark of a metaphor, I have claimed is that it would be false if it were asserted" (1996: 433).

By implicitly endorsing the 'deviancy' or 'falsity' of metaphor, the seeing-as phenomenology becomes very unappealing. Cohen (1975, 1976) and Binkley (1974) are among those who have pointed out that not all metaphors are deviant or literally false. For Cohen there are a number of metaphors that are true both on their literal and metaphorical interpretations. Among such metaphors are the following: "No man is an island", "Moscow is a cold city", "Jesus was a carpenter", "He lives in a glass house", "He is a clown". If it is accepted that these metaphors are 'twice-true', then it is untenable to assume that 'every metaphor is false'. The identification of an utterance as a metaphor is not necessarily a result of seeing the utterance as literally false as the seeing-as view of metaphor suggests. To assume that this is the case, is to make the literal 'obligatory' and the metaphorical 'optional'. The metaphorical realm will be an optional arena that must not be ventured unless some sort of falsity or inappropriateness of the literal is discovered. This realm represents a step away from the literal realm, a step which, I suppose, would not exist were all expressions and utterances taken in a literal or normal way. But an utterance can be regarded as a metaphor immediately as opposed to being mediated by first recognizing an absurdity.

It is worthy of note that seeing-as does not give a favorable account of the twice-true metaphors above. In most instances of metaphors, one says 'x is y' when x is literally *not* y rendering the metaphor literally false. The cases of twice-true metaphors are meant to exemplify the view that there are some metaphors whose literal contents are also true. Seeing x as y implies that x is *not* y; construing 'x is y' as seeing x as y means that 'x is y' is false. This means that applying seeing-as to twice-true metaphors will yield the unsatisfactory result that their literal contents are false. There is a difference between (metaphorically) seeing Jesus as a shepherd when he is (literally) *not* a shepherd and (metaphorically) seeing Jesus as a carpenter when he is (literally) a carpenter, but the seeing-as view is not able to account for this difference. It is not able to distinguish metaphors whose literal contents are false from those whose literal contents are true. This stems from the fact that in seeing one thing as another thing the possibility that the one thing literally is the other thing is ruled out. 'As' is not 'is', and so considering the utterance as an 'as' preserves the impropriety that arose from a literal construal – in this case the impropriety due to literal falsity. What this reveals is that seeing-as has a tacit endorsement to the assumption that every metaphorical sentence is literally false, an assumption which by the examples of twice-true metaphors, is false.

The upshot of this commitment to the deviancy and falsity of metaphor is that the seeing-as phenomenology diminishes, or eliminates, the aesthetic component of metaphor. It merely treats metaphor as a linguistic phenomenon and subjects it to the same rules and conditions as any other linguistic device. But metaphor is also figurative; it is a 'figure of speech'. Its role of embellishing and ornamenting language has not ceased. Its aim of allowing us the liberty to express our views and perspectives in words that cannot be couched literally is still in place. It is a creative enterprise, enriching us with new insights, while making us 'geniuses' along the way. Focusing on its deviancy or falsity is as superficial as focusing on the wall on which a painting is hanged: they both distract one from the pleasure and beauty the metaphor and painting portray. It is my contention that while both the seeing-as view and Stevens' conception of metaphor share a common foundation – resemblance – Stevens' conception does not entail construing the metaphor as deviant or false.

The composite view that metaphor is a compressed simile, that metaphor involves comparison of two things based on the perception of resemblances and similarities between them, that metaphor is a substitution of an object, word or term for another, that metaphor is a deviation from the literal or ordinary way of using language, has been dubbed as the 'Substitution' or 'Comparison' Views of metaphor. The Substitution View has been criticized by such modern



writers, particularly in the analytic tradition of philosophy, as Black (1955, 1962), Beardsley (1962, 1978), Davidson (1979), Searle (1979). Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and most works in the tradition of 'Conceptual Metaphor Theory' can also be included not only as a challenge to the Substitution View but also a challenge against theories that treat metaphor as a mere linguistic phenomenon.

The challenge to the Substitution or Comparison View has mainly been the observation that this view ignores the cognitive aspects of metaphor: whereas it locates metaphor in language as a linguistic phenomenon, it fails to acknowledge the conceptual and cognitive aspects to the meaning and interpretation of metaphors. It fails to recognize the role of the intention of speakers (Searle 1979) in the making and understanding of metaphors. It treats metaphor as mainly a tool in rhetoric and poetry, and fails to recognize the ubiquity of metaphor in everyday conversations (Lakoff & Johnson 1980).<sup>12</sup> Another criticism has been that metaphor is cognitively different from the simile and cannot be reduced to simile (Beardsley 1978; Black 1955, 1962);<sup>13</sup> metaphors are not mere comparisons (Beardsley 1978; Black 1962; Searle 1978). Stevens' conception of metaphor is a cognitive account of metaphor that conceives of resemblance as fundamental to metaphor and from the virtues outlined above, it can be seen that it is not liable to the criticisms levelled against the Substitution View.

### A challenge to resemblance as the foundation of metaphor

The positive view of Stevens on metaphor as the creation of resemblances by the imagination is connected to his view that a metaphor is not an assertion of identity between two things. In metaphor, according to Stevens, "we are not dealing with identity" for "both in nature and in metaphor identity is the vanishing point of resemblance" (NA: 72). In his commentary on Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" Caldwell (1972) reveals three reasons why metaphor has

12 Kirby (1997) has however, pointed out that this challenge is not wholly true as Aristotle also recognized the use of metaphors in everyday discourse.

13 But Davidson (1979) thinks that metaphors and similes, while differing in form, do not differ in cognitive content, if there is such a thing as a 'cognitive content' of metaphors and similes. Fogelin (1988) thinks that metaphor can be paraphrased into a corresponding simile but the corresponding simile statement is itself figurative and not literal as it is often supposed. Ross (1993) has argued for a version of the Comparativist theory that converts an 'x is y' into an 'x is like a y' over the relation of similarity.

to avoid the relation of identity. One reason is that, on Stevens view, metaphor has to seek an interaction between two things. Caldwell presents his analysis of Stevens' poem in this way:

Each stanza of "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" is a metaphor consisting of two terms corresponding to what Stevens would speak of as the imagined and the real, the idea and the thing, or the invisible and the visible. Each interaction of terms resolves itself, we might say, in thing-as-idea or in idea-as-thing, which in turn may interact with each other as secondary metaphors. The "thing-as-idea" I take to refer to a concept of reality as it is held in the mind or imagination, the real in the form of an idea. The "idea-as-thing" is, conversely, an idea "reified," a mental construction projected into the world and naturalized there, an idea in the form of the real. The world images our ideas, and our ideas image the world: 'trees = umbrellas'. (Caldwell 1972: 323)

In this 'thing-as-idea' and 'idea-as-thing' framework, there cannot be an interaction if the two terms of the metaphor are identical. Generally, if two things are identical, it precludes any interaction between them. Another reason why the relation cannot be construed as identity is because of the disparity between the terms of metaphor, for the terms of metaphor are often culled from different domains of discourse. From the third Stanza of "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird", Caldwell notes that "the disparity of the concrete terms prevents actual identity from occurring" (1972: 325). The third reason for avoiding identity in metaphor is the irreversibility of metaphorical expressions. In logical identities, A is B is equivalent to B is A, and the reversibility does not change the significance and truth value of the statements. But in metaphor, reversing the terms of the metaphor amounts to a change in significance and truth value; indeed, reversing the terms result in a different metaphor altogether. For instance, the metaphor 'my life is a prison' is not equivalent to its reverse, 'a prison is my life' in terms of significance and insightfulness.

A classic example of a poem where Stevens demonstrates that metaphor does not trade on the relation of identities is the "Metaphors of a Magnifico" whether the poet is not able to produce a metaphor or a good metaphor because she is unable to escape the labyrinth of the identity A is A into a metaphorical realm, A is B:

Twenty men crossing a bridge,  
Into a village,  
Are twenty men crossing twenty bridges,  
Into twenty villages,  
Or one man  
Crossing a single bridge into a village.

This is old song  
That will not declare itself . . .



Twenty men crossing a bridge,  
 Into a village,  
 Are  
 Twenty men crossing a bridge  
 Into a village.

That will not declare itself  
 Yet is certain as meaning . . . (CP: 19)

The imagination is not able to overcome the identity and create resemblances between the two things – twenty men crossing a bridge into a village – and something else. In all these, Stevens upholds that resemblance, and not identity, is the foundation of metaphor.

But is resemblance or comparison the ‘foundation’ of metaphor? Is the underlying principle of metaphor that of similarity? Should the ‘ $x \theta y$ ’ of metaphor be construed as ‘ $x$  resembles  $y$ ’ or that ‘ $x$  is similar to  $y$ ’? The claim that resemblance (or similarity, or comparison) is the underlying principle of metaphor seeks to preserve the kindred relationship between metaphor and simile: metaphor and simile do not differ in quality – they have the same underlying principle – they differ only in form. If this claim is true then metaphor is equivalent to a corresponding simile: ‘ $X$  is  $Y$ ’, metaphorically, is equivalent to ‘ $X$  is like  $Y$ ’, in a simile. Although, most modern theorists will argue that metaphor is not an ‘elliptical simile’, there is a tendency to capture the connection between the two things in the metaphor as that of comparison or resemblance. And since we are comparing two things in the metaphor, we can reflect that comparison explicitly by the help of a simile. Thus, both metaphor and simile involve a comparison between two things; the difference between the metaphor and the simile is not that one is an ellipsis of the other but that one explicitly states that a comparison is being made while the other does not.

I present here a reason for rejecting the claims that the simile and the metaphor have the same underlying principle – similarity, resemblance – and that a metaphor can be translated into a corresponding simile. The argument is that if the underlying principle of metaphor is the same as that of the simile then translating one into the other should not be problematic. The comparison here between metaphor and simile is to illustrate the point that *identity*, rather than resemblance, is ultimately at stake when understanding metaphors; the issue of identity is not a problem for simile which merely indicates how one thing resembles another thing. Consider the following set of metaphors:

The soul is the *only* bird that sustains its cage  
 Despair is the *final* arm which gives victory

Speech is the *sole* mirror of the soul  
 Juliet is the *last* bird to fly out of my life

What could be a corresponding explicit comparison of (1)? Perhaps, something like this: ‘the soul is *like* the only bird that sustains its cage’. But this rendition is wrong: it assumes that there is a single bird that sustains its cage and the soul is *like* that bird. That is, it assumes that there exists one unique bird that sustains its cage, and whatever that bird is, it resembles (but not the same as) the soul. But the metaphor in (1) asserts that the soul *is* that bird and not that it resembles or is similar to it. The same can be said about the other metaphors: Juliet is not *like* the last bird, she *is* the last bird; speech is not *like* the sole mirror of the soul, it *is* the sole mirror, etc. One significant feature about this set of metaphors is an assertion of some sort of an *identity* relation between the two elements of the metaphors; there is an assertion of *sameness* rather than similarity between the two elements. This sameness relation cannot be captured by the corresponding simile whose animating spirit is resemblance or similarity. The point is that if the simile and the metaphor have the same underlying principle, resemblance, then there should be no difficulty translating the metaphorical into a corresponding simile. Stated differently, the metaphor invokes the idea that the two things being compared are the same while the simile does not bring up the idea of identity and hence their underlying principles cannot be the same.

Another crucial feature of this set of metaphors is that an assertion of any of them commits one to the ‘existence’ of a single element; that is, the reference of the metaphor is to a single element or entity. For instance, in (1), the soul is the same entity as the bird that sustains its cage; in (4), Juliet is not different from the last bird that flew out of my life. Interestingly, when we construe the underlying principle as that of resemblance or similarity, we have a change in our ontology: we are now committed to the existence of two different entities. We are committed to the existence of one entity – the soul – and another entity – a unique bird that sustains its cage – and the relation between the two entities is that one resembles the other. In this way, our attention is drawn to the ways in which the two entities could resemble each other and we begin to look for, or create, the similarities. But if the metaphor commits us to the existence of one entity while the corresponding simile commits us to two things then there is a qualitative difference between the two, a difference other than that of form. If construing the underlying principles of metaphor and simile as the same – resemblance – results in different ontological commitments then it stands to reason that the underlying principles cannot be the same. Hence, similarity or resemblance cannot be the fundamental element of a metaphor. This conclusion



suggests also that in metaphor the assertion of an identity between two things is crucial; it is what makes it metaphorical.<sup>14</sup>

The sense of identity crucial to the understanding of metaphors can be found in a number of poems by Wallace Stevens. Consider this poem, "The Brave Man":

The sun, that brave man,  
Comes through boughs that lie in wait,  
That brave man.

Green and gloomy eyes  
In dark forms of the grass  
Run away.

The good stars,  
Pale helms and spiky spurs,  
Run away.

Fears of my bed,  
Fears of life and fears of death,  
Runaway.

That brave man comes up  
From below and walks without meditation,  
That brave man. (CP: 138)

In this poem, Stevens is conceiving of the sun as 'that brave man'. But should this metaphor be construed as the sun resembling a certain brave man or that the metaphor was couched on the basis of a resemblance between two things – the sun and a brave man? My suggestion is that to construe the metaphor as a conception of one thing in terms of another thing on the basis of resemblance assumes that there is 'the sun' and 'that brave man' – two things – and since there has to be an interaction between the two things, the one is not identical to the other. However, to say that 'the sun, that brave man' is not to talk about two things but one, that is that, the sun is demonstratively the same as that brave man. How the identity is achieved, I shall suggest below, is to think of Stevens

14 The sense of ontological commitments in the discussion here is to do with the *number* of things or objects that the utterance commits one to; this sense is not coterminous with that of the *existence* of things in the metaphorical utterance. Using a metaphor does not commit one to the existence of the things referred to in the metaphor, that is, the things referred to or compared in the metaphor need not exist. What is instructive here is the number of things that the metaphorical sentence is referring to or presuming to exist in one's ontology.

understanding of metaphor as metamorphosis, a way in which the resemblance *as* transforms into an *is* of identity.

The same sense of identity can be observed in the poem "Thinking of a Relation between the Images of Metaphors". At the end of that poem, Stevens writes:

State the disclosure. In that one eye the dove  
Might spring to sight and yet remain a dove.

The fisherman might be the single man  
In whose breast, the dove, alighting, would grow still. (CP: 357)

Here, it is correct to construe the metaphor as not involving two distinct things but that the fisherman and the single man in whose breast the dove will alight are the same.

In the fourth stanza of "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" Stevens asserts an identity between a man, a woman, and a blackbird:

A man and a woman  
Are one.  
A man and a woman and a blackbird  
Are one. (CP: 93)

Examining Stevens' idea of metaphor with respect to the above poem, Frye (1957) says something interesting with regards to identity and similarity:

When a man, a woman and a blackbird are said to be one, each remains what it is, and the identification heightens the distinctive form of each. Such a metaphor is necessarily illogical (or anti-logical, as in 'A violent disorder is an order') and hence poetic metaphors are opposed to likeness or similarity. A perception that a man, a woman and a blackbird were in some respects alike would be logical, but would not make much of a poem. ... A world of total simile, where everything was like everything else, would be a world of total monotony; a world of total metaphor, where everything is identified as itself and with everything else, would be a world where subject and object, reality and mental organization of reality, are one. Such a world of total metaphor is the formal cause of poetry. (Frye 1957: 364)

As Frye points out, construing the metaphor in terms of resemblance – how alike a man, a woman, and a blackbird are – will be logical but it will not be a good poetic metaphor. The elegance and suggestiveness of the metaphor lies in its couching an identity between two or more dissimilar things.

### Objections and responses to the challenge

Four possible objections to the above challenge of identity in metaphor: One, what the above argument shows is that there is a *difficulty* in capturing the



'content' of a metaphor by means of a corresponding simile but it does not imply that in many cases involving other metaphors it cannot be done. Two, the argument only shows that metaphors are different from similes but it does not show that the element of similarity (or resemblance) is not involved in both figures of speech. Three, the argument relies heavily on the definite article and that perhaps when the metaphor is of the form 'x is the F' we can capture the content by something like 'x is like an F'. And four, one can say that, for instance, 'Tom is like a fish out of water' even if there is no fish out of water so there are no commitments to existence and ontology with comparisons.

Objection one is right in pointing out that in many cases we are not able to provide paraphrases of metaphors but this difficulty in paraphrasing *some* metaphors does not imply that paraphrasing or giving corresponding similes to metaphors cannot be done. But the argument does not rest on the difficulty in providing corresponding similes to metaphors: the argument is that when we do provide such corresponding similes we encounter a qualitative difference between what the metaphor commits us to and what the corresponding simile commits us to. Similarly, we lose a crucial aspect of metaphor, which is, the identity relation that the metaphor alleges between the two things.

In response to the second objection, it is important to point out that the claim is not that metaphors do not involve any similarities or resemblances between the two things it connects together. The claim rather is that similarity or resemblance is not *fundamental* to understanding metaphor. But the point of comparison, that is, the essence of a simile is to look for ways in which the two things are alike or similar to each other. A simile, therefore, trades on similarity. If the simile is akin to the metaphor, that is, if the fundament of simile is the same as the metaphor, then we will expect that by applying the same principle we should achieve the same result. But the argument shows that there is a difference in the results, hence a difference in their animating principles.

Indeed, the similarity between the two things is not always something objective out there in the world ready to be perceived; it is usually something we 'create' when we associate the two dissimilar things – a soul and a bird. Thus, rather than 'resemblance' or 'similarity' being the 'foundation' of metaphor, it can be something derivative, something created where there was hitherto none to be perceived. For his fourth *stricture* on similarity, Goodman (1972: 440) declares that: "Similarity does not explain metaphor or metaphorical truth". He asks us to consider this:

Saying that certain sounds are soft is sometimes interpreted as saying in effect that these sounds are like soft materials. Metaphor is thus construed as elliptical simile,

and metaphorical truths as elliptical truths. But to proclaim that certain tones are soft because they are like soft materials, or blue because they are like blue colors, explains nothing. Anything is in some way like anything else; any sounds whatever are like soft materials or blue colors in one way or another. What particular similarity does our metaphor affirm? More generally, what resemblance must the objects a term metaphorically applies to bear to the objects it literally applies to? (Goodman 1972: 440)

Goodman is right when he says that we should reverse our order of explanation with respect to metaphor and similarity: "the fact that a term applies, literally or metaphorically, to certain objects may itself constitute rather than arise from a particular similarity among those objects. Metaphorical use may serve to explain the similarity better than – or at least as well as – the similarity explains the metaphor." (Goodman 1972: 440).

The third objection says that the argument depends on the definite article 'the' or the demonstrative 'that'. If the argument holds because of the definite article, then it shows that there is a certain *definiteness* about metaphor that a corresponding simile cannot capture. The corresponding simile can give us a sense of an *aboutness* but it cannot satisfy us with what is *absolute*, *definite*, and *certain*. The argument, however, works even without the definite article. For instance, take the metaphor 'God is love' and its corresponding simile 'God is like love'. The metaphor, in expressing an identity between God and love, in effect, implies that God is essentially, that is by his nature, love; the simile merely compares God to love and doesn't imply that one is essentially the other.

Finally, with respect to the fourth objection, in using a metaphor or any figure of speech, one does not need to commit herself to the existence of the things referred to in the metaphor. But the point of the argument is that there is a difference in the quantity of things that the metaphor and its corresponding simile commit us to: we talk of a unique thing in the metaphor while the simile says there are two things. The quantitative difference in the ontological commitments implies a qualitative difference between metaphor and simile. And this qualitative difference, we have seen, shows that metaphor does not fundamentally trade on the relations of similarity, resemblance and comparison.

### Metamorphosis as metaphorical identity

What is the relation between identity and resemblance in metaphor? Does Stevens' conception of metaphor allow any room for the notion of identity? Can Stevens' view of metaphor be reconciled with the challenge thrown above about the role of identity in understanding metaphors? We have seen above that in his conception of metaphor, Stevens treats identity and resemblance as an exclusive



disjunction: metaphor trades on resemblances and avoids identity. This will seem to suggest that Stevens eschews identity altogether in his view on metaphor. However, I want to suggest that a careful reading of Stevens will reveal that while he thought of resemblance as the fundament of metaphor, he nonetheless, conceived of metaphor as a transformative process that resulted in couching the terms of the metaphor into a whole unit. That is, Stevens' conception of metaphor entertained both the notions of resemblance and identity. This suggestion hinges upon two central claims in Stevens: one, the desire for resemblance is the driving force for the making of metaphor, but the desire for resemblance by itself is not the ultimate end of metaphor; and two, metaphor for Stevens is *metamorphosis*, that is, metaphor is a transformative process that translates or transmutes the two terms into a new reality.

Resemblance, for Stevens, is derivative rather than the ultimate end for the making of metaphor. According to Stevens "the study of the activity of resemblance is an approach to the understanding of poetry. Poetry is a satisfying of the desire for resemblance" (NA: 77). But the desire for resemblance is not an end in itself. As Stevens continues:

As the mere satisfying of a desire, it is pleasurable. But poetry if it did nothing but satisfy a desire would not rise above the level of many lesser things. Its singularity is that in the act of satisfying the desire for resemblance it touches the sense of reality, it enhances the sense of reality, heightens it, intensifies it. If resemblance is described as a partial similarity between two dissimilar things, it complements and reinforces that which the two dissimilar things have in common. It makes it brilliant. (NA: 77)

In the making of metaphors, one achieves this satisfaction of the desire for resemblance. However, this satisfaction is only ephemeral and probably pointless in itself unless it leads to a new sense of reality. The desire for resemblance should ultimately lead to a way in which reality is 'touched' and modified. Through the activity of metaphor, the creating of resemblances, reality is not only enhanced but it is also transfigured. Since the desire for resemblances lead to enhancing and intensifying reality, Stevens speaks of the desire for resemblance as a desire to enjoy reality. According to him, "if the desire for resemblance is the desire to enjoy reality, it may be no less true that the desire to enjoy reality, an acute enough desire today, is the desire for elegance. Euphuism had its origin in the desire for elegance and it was euphuism that was a reason in the sun for metaphor" (NA: 78). Thus the poet employs metaphor in her bid to satisfy the desire to enjoy reality by being elegant. This way, metaphor serves as a means for embellishing not just language but reality itself.

The use of metaphor as a means for enjoying reality has a remarkable effect on one's sense of reality and how reality is configured. In the *Adagia*, Stevens was somewhat cryptic but revealing when he claimed that "metaphor creates a new reality from which the original appears to be unreal" (OP: 195). Merely juxtaposing two things on the basis of the resemblances between them is not enough for the employment of metaphor; merely enjoying the resemblances between two things for the purposes of euphuism does not suffice for the making of metaphor; merely enhancing one sense of reality is also not sufficient for the use of metaphor. One does more with metaphor other than creating resemblances: one creates a new reality. This is why metaphor is metamorphosis – changing the activity of resemblance into a reality. Stevens provides an analogy of how metaphor creates a reality of its own:

In this ambiguity, the intensification of reality by resemblance increases realization and this increased realization is pleasurable. It is as if a man who lived indoors should go outdoors on a day of sympathetic weather. His realization of the weather would exceed that of a man who lives outdoors. It might, in fact, be intense enough to convert the real world about him into an imagined world. In short, a sense of reality keen enough to be in excess of the normal sense of reality creates a reality of its own. (NA: 79)

Now, the mistake that the seeing-as view and the classical accounts of metaphor commit is that they conceive of metaphor as a figure of speech in which the *is* metamorphosis into an *as* so that when the metaphor says that 'x is y', it can be understood as seeing x as y. In Stevens view, the metamorphosis is reversed: seeing x as y, that is, perceiving or creating a resemblance between x and y, involves a transformative process that changes an *as* into an *is* so that the metaphorical assertion of 'x is y' is a resultant of the transformative process. The 'x is y' is an identity statement, a fusion of the x and y into a new reality.

There is obviously a difference between a literal identity statement of x is y and a metaphorical one. As mentioned earlier, a literal identity statement is reversible and reversing the terms of the statement does not cause a change in truth value. In other words, in literal identity statements, the terms are substitutable *salva veritate*. Not so with metaphorical identity statements. But the difference between the two lies in the sort of things that we are claiming to be identical. As Frege (1948) has pointed out, the identity statement, *The Morning Star is The Evening Star* is informative because while the two terms, *The Morning Star* and *The Evening Star* refer to the same object, they differ in cognitive significance, that is, they differ in the set of connotations associated with the two terms. Since we are talking about the same object when we use either term, the identity statement is true and informative. In metaphorical or poetic identity statements, the two



terms of the metaphor refer to different objects. And this is why the identity statement is *literally false*. However, to construe and evaluate the metaphorical identity in literal terms is to miss the point of the metaphor. In the case of metaphor, there is a creation of resemblance between the two dissimilar objects or terms which then translates into a new unit or reality. This is the sense in which the *as* metamorphosis into an *is*. The truth of literal identity statements inheres in the fact that the two terms refer to the same object; the truth of metaphorical identity statements lie in the fact that two different objects or terms have transformed into a new whole. Literal identity statements are both descriptive and referential: different senses, same reference. Metaphorical identity statements are often non-descriptive and non-referential. But metaphorical identity is creative and imaginative: it perceives or creates a resemblance between two things and then transforms this resemblance into a new reality.

This view of metaphor as metamorphosis is given vivid expression in both Owen Barfield's (1962) and Virgil Aldrich's (1968) account of metaphor. Aldrich (1968) asks us to draw a distinction between seeing that 'M is *like* A' – simile – and seeing 'M *as* A' – metaphor, although this distinction does not "preclude a shift from one mode of perception into the other" (1968: 76). According to Aldrich, seeing something *like* something else because of a likeness between the two involves a 'dyadic relation', which is "the relation of resemblance between them" (1968: 76). But a metaphor – seeing M *as* A – involves a 'triadic relation', viz., there is the thing to be seen, 'M', there is what 'M' is to be seen as, 'A', and there is a third element, 'B', which is the content of the seeing-as experience. 'B' is a 'function' or 'fusion' of both 'M' and 'A': Both M and A are transfigured (transformed) or "expressively portrayed" in B. "It (B) is a sort of image of A (what M is seen as), an image that M embodies or 'bodies forth'. Thus, the attitude of the percipient to what he thus experiences is *like* his attitude to an image he simply has, meaning that the logic of the report of the seeing-as experience is like the logic of image-reports" (Aldrich 1968: 77). Aldrich, like Barfield, considers the element of resemblance as crucial in metaphor although in metaphor the "resemblance is veiled and metamorphosed into a sort of identity" (Aldrich 1968: 74). There has to be a resemblance between 'M' and 'A' to allow for their fusion into 'B' and this trade on resemblance exemplifies the grounding-requirement in a seeing-as phenomenology of metaphor.

If my interpretation of Stevens is right, then this means that Stevens does not do away with identity altogether. Stevens' conception of metaphor as metamorphosis can, therefore, meet the challenge of identity posed in the previous section. In enjoying the resemblance between things, one transforms this resemblance into a new reality, a single thing that is a resultant of the fusion between

the two things. In this way, the metaphor commits one to a single entity in one's ontology even though this single entity arose out of a resemblance between two things.

## Conclusion

Stevens' conception of metaphor as a device for embellishing language and enjoying reality is significant to both classical and contemporary accounts of metaphor. In making the relation of resemblance as constitutive of metaphor, Stevens' view of metaphor is similar in spirit to these classical and contemporary accounts. But Stevens' view is remarkably different in character from the classical accounts because it makes metaphor a cognitive phenomenon – a mode of creating resemblances between things in nature. It is also different from some contemporary accounts because it makes the enjoyment of resemblances a conduit for transforming reality into a new composite reality. In Stevens, we see the notions of resemblance and identity coming together in metaphor: metaphor is transformative activity that conceives of the resemblances metamorphosed into identity; rather than construing metaphor as seeing one thing *as* another thing, the identity in the metaphor *x is y* is taken seriously, and thus metaphor is understood as transfiguring the seeing of one thing as another into an identity. Metaphor is poetic identification where "as and is are one" (CP: 476).

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