

Analogy as a Mode of Intuitive Understanding in Ricoeur

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ABSTRACT: Traditionally, the ideas of “intuitive” and “discursive” forms of understanding have been seen as near opposites. Whereas an intuitive understanding could have a direct grasp of something, a discursive understanding would always depend on what is given to it, as mediated by concepts. In this essay, I suggest that Paul Ricoeur’s conception of analogy presents a way of overcoming this opposition. For Ricoeur, an analogy works within discursive understanding, but it depends on an eventful insight that leads beyond what is merely given in discourse. The analogy “gives more” for thought. Yet, as I argue, what analogy gives for thought is always explicable in conceptual terms: any intuitive understanding is commensurate with a discursive one. I illustrate Ricoeur’s mediation of discursive and intuitive understanding in particular with his conception of metaphor, which vividly depends on overcoming a discursive contradiction by analogical and intuitive means. Before introducing Ricoeur’s conception, I discuss the Kantian background of the intuitive/discursive distinction. In particular, I suggest how Goethe’s attempt to revitalize a notion of intuitive understanding can be compared to Ricoeur’s conception, though Ricoeur improves upon Goethe by grounding intuition in the specific phenomenon of analogy.

KEYWORDS: Paul Ricoeur, Analogy, Intuition, Immanuel Kant, J.W. von Goethe.

Since Kant at least, the idea of an intuitive form of understanding has commonly been set in opposition to a discursive one. A discursive intellect knows its objects piece-wise, in its fragmentary employment of the ever-finite set of concepts at its disposal; an intuitive intellect, by contrast, would not be bound to a mediated, partial view of things, but could attain immediate insight into the whole that remains inaccessible to any conceptual grasp. Thus, Kant, for one, suggests that only an infinite and divine intellect could be an intuitive one, since this kind of intellect would be the very origin of the whole that it knows, always prior to its conceptually accessible moments. (See Kant 1987/1790: 291/Ak. 5:407) If we follow Kant’s way of separating the intuitive from the discursive, it becomes axiomatic that there is no discursive path to intuitive knowledge, that instead we can always

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only assume that our knowledge belongs in a coherent whole, without ever gaining access to it. Moreover, our hope for intuitive understanding could only be funded by our dissatisfaction with the discursive, concept-laden understanding we actually possess.

The opposition between discursive and intuitive understanding finds a significant challenge in the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur, particularly in his conception of *analogy*. For Ricoeur, analogy is a discursive phenomenon that gives rise to an intuitive understanding: by means of analogical thinking, the discursive mode of understanding that otherwise binds human thinking becomes a source of productive insight.

By “analogy” I mean simply what Ricoeur often refers to as “seeing-as” (*voir comme*). A case of analogy would simply be the positing of some term A as, or in terms of, something else, B. (Ricoeur 1975: 270–1/214) The relation between the terms is neither identity, nor total difference. All that is needed is an *indirect* grasp of something: not an immediate comprehension of A, but only A through B. Analogy in this sense is obviously quite pervasive, since to say “the experiment was a failure” and “her lover is a chameleon” would both count as seeing one thing as something else. Even to see a storm *as* a threat (without explicit predication) could be included here. These all are indirect “seeings.” What Ricoeur is concerned with, however, is not simply the near truism that all seeing comes with a background understanding, that there are no bare facts without an interpretation, but rather with the productive character of analogy. Seeing-as, according to Ricoeur, is an “act” of understanding; it does not simply reflect on the given, but gives something for understanding. (Ricoeur 1975: 270/213) It is not to denounce objectivity but to promote novel understanding that Ricoeur speaks of seeing-as.

Seeing-as does not merely offer a different perspective on the world, but, according to Ricoeur, can correspond with a “being-as” (*être-comme*); that is, it can disclose something true about the world. (Ricoeur 1985: 225–6/155) This makes analogy somewhat dangerous, however. If analogy is productive of an understanding, how can its insight be trusted? In fact, analogy seems prone to the same dangers as the ordinary appeal to “intuition.” The one who asserts “That’s just how I *see* it” (insisting perhaps on some implicit analogy) leaves us just as empty as the one who appeals to some intuitive good sense, which is perhaps little more than a confident feeling or instinct. However, while analogy and intuition are perhaps dangerous when separate, Ricoeur offers us a way to think them together in such a way that they jointly make available new contents of understanding, while neither becomes invulnerable as a source of knowledge.

Thus, in the following I will defend a notion of intuitive understanding that is limited by the indirect and discursive character of analogy in Ri-

coeur's thought. Unlike hermeneutical thinkers who wish to emphasize a form of truth outside discourse, Ricoeur was careful to fully exploit the power of discourse as a productive source of understanding.¹ I wish to show that, in doing so, Ricoeur in fact comes around to including intuition as a complement to discursive thinking. By intuition, I mean an apparently immediate insight, a novel belief that presently outruns its justification.² An intuition "occurs" to one, often without obvious explanation.³ But Ricoeur's analogical hermeneutic should be considered to suggest, somewhat paradoxically, a form of *discursive intuition* — intuition brought about through language in discourse. As he remarks, there is "no intuition without construction." (Ricoeur 1975: 238/195) In Ricoeur's thought analogy is that constructive edifice that gives rise to intuitive understanding. Since intuition is grounded in discursive phenomena, however, it does not become a source of *sui generis* cognition. As we will see, the intuitive value of analogy is only revealed by its explicit interpretation.

In order to clarify what is at stake in a notion of intuitive understanding, I will begin by giving a brief historical exposition of what is perhaps the *locus classicus* of the issue, the debate surrounding "intellectual intuition" in the wake of Kant, who famously denied that finite beings possess an intuitive understanding. In particular, I will show how a notion of "intuitive perception" was significant for J.W. von Goethe in his scientific studies, precisely as a mode of comprehension, and not as an independently valid source of content. With a historically clarified understanding of intuition in mind, I will point out why Ricoeur's conception of analogy lends itself to be considered under the rubric of intuition as understood in the post-Kantian context. Simply put, analogy presents a synthetic understanding within the unity of an event. The eventfulness of analogy gives it the singularity associated with an insight, while its disclosure of a synthesis, a resemblance, gives it

1. Tengelyi (2007: 162) assigns to Ricoeur's concept of metaphor the development of a "particular kind of truth," which he designates as the "expression of a lively experience in language." While I agree that the experiential aspects of Ricoeur's thought are central to his understanding of the metaphorical presentation of truth, I will argue that Ricoeur presents not a different conception of truth, but a novel conception of the production of understanding.

2. The role of intuition in philosophy, especially in terms of the value of intuition for epistemic justification, has become the topic of lively topic debate in analytic philosophy. See especially Cappelen (2012) and Chudnoff (2013). While I will not discuss this connection explicitly in what follows, I expect that Ricoeur's understanding of role of analogy in a form of intuitive understanding could make a welcome (though indirect) contribution to this debate.

3. It should be noted here that, unless otherwise specified, the use of "intuition" here has little to do with Kantian *sensible* intuition (see section 2.3 below for the way Ricoeurian analogy subordinates any sensory or imagistic aspect of resemblance to the verbal). Though Ricoeur himself distances his hermeneutics from Husserlian phenomenology, Ricoeurian analogy shares the "intellective" character of Husserl's "categorical" or later "eidetic" intuition. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for requesting clarification on this point.

productive content. This is both a transgression of Kant and an appropriation of him: while analogy presents an understanding more comprehensive than immediate sensible experience, Ricoeur uses Kant's own notion of a "productive imagination" to explain this possibility. Once analogy is seen as a mode of intuitive understanding, we can examine how it can disclose novel content for knowledge. I will argue that, while the analogy leads to an understanding that is coextensive with the resemblance it constructs, this understanding is always subject to the need for explication. If the seeing-as of analogy is always an understanding, there can be no assertion of such understanding, of truth, that hides from *interpretation*, which articulates the content of analogy in discursive form. Analogy does not allow us, in Kantian terms, to exceed the bounds of all possible experience. But we can show how intuitions, because of their disclosure *as* analogies, may precede all explication, that explication may depend on a prior seeing-as. Analogy, then, both constrains and enables the reach of an intuitive understanding.

1. The Idea of an Intuitive Understanding

The need to formulate the nature of an intuitive understanding came to be pressing in the light of Kant's critical philosophy. Not only did Kant put limits on the kinds of objects finite understanding can come to know, but also on how one can come to know them. The basic limitation is twofold: human cognition requires both concepts and sensible intuition. (Kant 1998/1787: 254/B 146) Concepts depend for their meaning on what is given to the senses, and sensibility only 'makes sense' through general concepts. Sensibility, for Kant, is fundamentally receptive, and understanding must wait, as it were, for the matter it provides. (See Förster 2012: 141) Kant calls human understanding *discursive* because of this dependence on concepts, which are mere representations or marks of sensible experience. Kant writes, "All our *concepts* are marks, accordingly, and all *thought* is nothing other than a representing through marks." (Kant 1992/1800: 564/Ak. 9:58) Accordingly, the universality of concepts is simply the rule by which we bring various sensible intuitions under one such mark. A further implication of discursivity is the fact that our "marks" do not bespeak the nature of anything; they do not comprehend any essence. Since the universality of concepts is only their generality, to analyze them is only to discover what they are useful to name. (Förster 2012: 150, 251)

Kant formulates the discursive limits of understanding in contrast to a different kind of understanding, which he claims we can conceive of, but do not possess. This of course is an intuitive understanding, or intellectual intuition. Eckart Förster has recently argued that, even though Kant

excludes both intuitive understanding and intellectual intuition from human understanding, the two have importantly different senses. (Förster 2012: 152) For our purposes, the most significant difference is that Kant portrays intellectual intuition (such as God would be capable) as able to produce the objects of its knowledge and thus know them immediately (Kant 1998/1787: 255/B 145), while the role of an intuitive understanding is to overcome additive restrictions on discursive knowledge, leaping as it were to an understanding of a whole without requiring synthetic cognition of the parts. Kant writes, “We can also conceive of an understanding which, since it is not discursive like ours but is intuitive, goes from the *synthetically universal* (of the intuition of a whole as such) to the particular, i.e., from the whole to the parts.” (Kant 1987/1790: 291/Ak. 5:407) While intellectual intuition would differ from ours in its production of content, an intuitive understanding differs mainly in its mode of apprehension, which Kant nevertheless discounts for us as well.

In the philosophically busy years following Kant’s critical work, many of his prohibitions were taken as solicitations, and Kant’s ban on intellectual intuition was stubbornly transgressed. Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and several of the early Romantics all developed a positive conception of intuitive understanding, many of them singling out the notion as foundational for philosophic knowledge. (See Beiser 2002: 299–301, 395–397, 580–584) However, the figure who made one of the more fruitful and distinctive uses of a notion of intuitive understanding was Goethe, in his lifelong scientific study of nature. In his influential treatment of the post-Kantian period, Eckart Förster places special significance on Goethe’s scientific studies, which were an attempt to apply the Spinozan idea of a *scientia intuitiva* to the study of nature. (Förster 2012: 94) What Goethe gathered from Spinoza (as well as from his reading of Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*) was the conviction that a comprehension of some natural whole or essential idea was necessary for the understanding of the derivative parts, especially in living nature. Goethe writes, “The things we call the parts in every living being are so inseparable from the whole that they must be understood in and with the whole.” (Goethe 1949: I, 842/8) While of itself, this statement may have met ready approval by Kant, Goethe understands such a principle in more than the “regulative” manner Kant would endorse. Goethe wanted to demonstrate positively that scientific understanding could not depend on additive knowledge of individual experiments, taken as collections of phenomenal data. Rather, through the investigation of individual phenomena, Goethe grants us the capacity to gain an insight into the essence or idea that pervades the phenomena. Referring to what he calls a “sublime impression,” Goethe writes, “The mind may perceive the seed, so to speak, of a relation which would have a harmony beyond the mind’s power to comprehend or experience

once the relation is fully developed.” (Goethe 1949: I, 842/9) Goethe thus suggests the capacity to transcend ordinary understanding toward a comprehensive grasp of relations. This is what Goethe calls *intuitive perception*, citing Kant’s denial of such intuition only to affirm it.⁴ For Goethe, such perception was accomplished through discerning an archetype, what he called an *Urphänomen* (“archetypal phenomenon”), thanks to which the “eye of the mind” intuits the essence of some natural process. (See Hindrichs 2011) He writes,

In the process [of observation] we become familiar with certain requisite conditions for what is manifesting itself. From this point everything gradually falls into place under higher principles and laws revealed not to our reason through words and hypotheses, but to our intuitive perception through phenomena. We call these phenomena *archetypal phenomena* [*Urphänomene*] because nothing higher manifests itself in the world. . . (Goethe 1949: I, 69/195)

Strange as it may appear, this notion granted Goethe some success, especially in his theory of colors, for which it was precisely an understanding of the singular relation between light and darkness in colors that enabled him to perceive the image of the color-wheel that is still in currency.⁵ In this case especially, as Förster writes, “It is only in the context of the specific ‘whole’ to which [the colors] belong that the individual angle and the individual color are what they are: the whole makes the individual part possible and determines it.” (Förster 2012: 271) The totality of relations between the colors is an intuited whole, then, without which no individual color is completely understood.

The Goethean idea of an intuitive understanding, however, despite its dependence on a mysterious “eye of the mind,” was nevertheless bound by the fact that an intuited whole, since it captures the “idea” that animates the actual parts, must be totally faithful to the particulars. Förster explains, “Every idea also requires for its *physical* realization a material basis onto which it can imprint itself, but which in turn constrains and limits it. . . [.] Once [the idea] has been discovered, however, its effects can be re-discovered in experience.” (Förster 2012: 275) The intuition of the whole does not provide knowledge of something over and above the phenomena, but the very animating form that unites the phenomena. Goethe coined the term

4. See Goethe’s “Judgment through Intuitive Perception” (“Anschauende Urteilskraft”) in his (1949: I, 877–8/31).

5. Here he describes what he takes as the *Urphänomen* in his theory of color: “On the one hand we see light or a bright object, on the other darkness or a dark object. Between them we place turpidity and through this mediation colors arise from the opposites; these colors, too, are opposites, although their reciprocal relationship they lead directly back to a common unity.” (Goethe 1949: I, 69/195)

“morphology,” the study of form, through his conviction that attention to changes of form in organic nature was significant for understanding their connection to a whole.⁶

Goethe’s intuitive understanding intended to unite analysis and synthesis. While a synthetic perception is always needed for the grasp of the archetypal unity governing the phenomena, this unity could always be analytically explicated. (See Hindrichs 2011: 60) Thus, Goethe himself saw his understanding to incorporate the Spinozan ideal of science within a broadly Kantian framework. Goethe did not, however, abandon the discursive content of human understanding, in that nothing *separate* from sensible material (“intuition” in the sense acceptable to Kant) is given in the *Urphänomen*; it is not as if the intuition of the whole contains material beyond possible experience. According to Förster, in Goethe’s understanding, “all the properties of the relevant phenomenon must (discursively) be sought out and gathered together, in order then (intuitively) to bring the whole *as a whole* into view so that the idea can emerge.” (Förster 2012: 255)

Goethe’s conception gives us an outline of how an intuitive understanding might play a role in understanding generally, though we would be right to harbor some doubts. Notwithstanding the incomplete (though not negligible) success of Goethe’s scientific studies,⁷ Goethe leaves us somewhat unsure about the source of intuitive knowledge. Indeed, he insists on the repetition of experiments and he emphasized the study of transitions in the changes of phenomena, but his notion of an “eye of the mind” seems to name a gap in his theory. How does this “eye” come to “see” the whole? We may be convinced that a grasp of the whole would be necessary for an understanding of parts, but this conviction is not proof of its possibility, especially insofar as Kant’s characterization of human understanding holds. Thus, the theory of intuitive understanding requires a further grounding than Goethe could give, even if Goethe modeled how an intuitive understanding might be practiced.

6. See Goethe (1949: II, 114–19/57–60), “Observation on Morphology in General.”

7. The late Stephen Jay Gould, renowned paleontologist and evolutionary biologist, credits Goethe with the pertinent invention of morphology and says he is an “exemplar” of formalist method in science. He even claims Goethe provides a “test case” of the relation between scientific thinking and the discovery of an “essence” of scientific phenomena. See Gould (2002: 281–91). Thus, though no one would claim Goethe was entirely successful in his scientific studies, the fact that his approach yielded any scientific gains is itself impressive for a man whose attention was divided among his many interests, apparently without diminishment.

2. Analogy as Discursive Intuition

I hope to show that Paul Ricoeur's conception of analogy provides a justification for a variation on the kind of intuitive understanding that Goethe thought was both possible and necessary for the understanding of phenomena. But Ricoeur finds the source for productive insights of the Goethean variety strictly within the experience of discourse. Ricoeur himself was generally hesitant to speak in terms of intuition, especially because of this term's association with Husserl's phenomenology. If intuition in Husserl's sense (whether sensible or eidetic) was an originary, immediate givenness, and thus itself a legitimation of knowledge (see Husserl 2014: 43 [§ 24]), Ricoeur's turn to hermeneutics was in part constituted by his rejection of such unmediated foundations: "The Husserlian demand for the return to intuition is countered by the necessity for all understanding to be mediated by an interpretation." (Ricoeur 1986: 51/28) Intuition is paired with *interpretation* as its opposite, in need of replacement by the latter. Describing a tendency he detects already in Husserl, Ricoeur writes, "Step-by-step, the inversion of the theory of intuition into the theory of interpretation begins." (Ricoeur 1986: 74/45) Thus, Ricoeur can say that phenomenology culminates in hermeneutics, precisely as phenomenology's supposedly intuitive evidence rightly becomes the "explication of evidence." (Ricoeur 1986: 81/49–50) Whether as culmination or improvement, Ricoeur stresses the turn to interpretation against intuition in the sense of an immediate given.

Despite the hesitance of Ricoeur to use the language of intuition, his driving hermeneutical concerns can be fruitfully tied to the problem of an intuitive understanding as framed by Kant and Goethe. Namely, Ricoeur was convinced that privileged phenomena "give more" to thought, that symbolic phenomena in particular teach us something more than we knew before we encounter them. (See Ricoeur 1960: 323ff./347 ff.) Yet given that we always bring our own conceptual resources to bear in the encounter with these phenomena, how can they give us something new to understand? I wish to show that Ricoeur's account of analogy, as it functions in the experience of discursive phenomena, holds the key to this question. Though Ricoeur treats a number of discursive forms, his conception of analogy is perhaps best seen in his discussion of metaphor. I will thus focus my attention on showing how intuitive understanding can be connected with the "semantic innovation" Ricoeur ascribes to metaphorical language. Along the way, I will provide a few indications of how Ricoeur's conception of analogy in metaphor could be extended to his treatment of symbol and narrative.

Intuitive understanding, on Ricoeur's account, comes about through metaphor thanks to a threefold structure, characteristic of analogical under-

standing: (1) the experience of disparity; (2) the event of understanding; and (3) the productive imagination.

2.1. *The Experience of Disparity*

To begin, we must clarify that in Ricoeur's account, metaphor must be seen as originally non-analogical and non-intuitive. Prior to any analogy, metaphor presents disparity. This results from Ricoeur's treating the metaphor in terms of the sentence rather than the word, as syntactic rather than semiotic. Traditional theory, beginning with Aristotle, considered the metaphorical predicate to be a substitute for a literal term that gives the real sense. Thus, if one says "the heart is a pale dove," one inserts "pale dove" as an ornamental replacement for the real meaning — perhaps "fragile thing" in this case. When one discovered the relations between these terms one would find the sense that the metaphor hides. Here, metaphor is a matter of "poetic license" that only obscures understanding for the sake of beauty. (Ricoeur 1975: 29/19) Perhaps the most significant feature of the traditional account is that the metaphorical resemblance is already contained in the selection of the predicate. The meaning of the literal predicate is just what the metaphorical predicate replaces. The metaphor expresses an analogy, rather than producing it.

Ricoeur argues, however, in line with the semantic theory of Émile Benveniste, that the sentence is the most basic unit of discourse, and that metaphor must therefore be understood at the level of sentence meaning. Ricoeur still recognizes that the metaphor has at least two central parts, which he calls the "tenor" and "vehicle," after I.A. Richards. (Ricoeur 1975: 105/80) The tenor, in traditional grammatical terms, would be the principle subject and vehicle its predicate.⁸ But Ricoeur prefers this alternate terminology because it indicates the inseparability of the two. The tenor does not "mean" by itself, but only conveys its sense through the vehicle when the two are combined a sentence. However, to see the tenor as bound to its metaphorical predication means that the metaphorical statement is strictly contradictory. In terms of the sentence, Ricoeur argues, the metaphor takes the form of an ordinary predication but is nonsense when thus understood. Metaphor must initially be perceived as a "category mistake" in Gilbert Ryle's terms, "a deviation in relation to a pre-existing logical order, . . . a dis-ordering in a scheme of classification." (Ricoeur 1975: 31/21–22) Ricoeur insists that, "interpretation of metaphor is not possible unless one first per-

8. Bernard Dauenhauer (1983: 3) explains this in photographic terms by speaking of the tenor as the "focus" while the sentence is the "frame." This helps to indicate that, despite the turn to the semantic level, the tenor is the principle subject of metaphorical alteration.

ceives the incompatibility of the non-figurative meaning of the lexeme with the rest of the context.” (Ricoeur 1975: 232/182) Unlike simile, metaphor does not immediately signal resemblance between its terms; instead it suggests dissonance. Hence Ricoeur speaks of metaphor as a “semantic impertinence.” (Ricoeur 1975: 246/194)

The fact that a metaphor, when finally understood, does not seem to be contradictory in this way should not prevent from ignoring this stage of incomprehension. When someone sings melancholically, “She’s a jar, with a heavy lid” (Tweedy & Bennett 1999), the very “is” that ties together the woman and a jar leads me to their identification, which as such is a contradiction. If there were a natural resemblance between heavy-lidded jars and the woman in question, the line would suggest nothing outside the ordinary logical order (nor, for that matter, if the song was simply a gendered, personifying ode to a piece of storage equipment). Instead, the connection brings about shock, a disturbance, an offense to the understanding. This is significant for our understanding of analogical intuition, for in Ricoeur’s understanding the poetic metaphor is not first the inscription of an insight; it is the vehicle of incomprehension. Moreover, the reader’s encounter with metaphor may in fact be a pronounced case of misunderstanding in general, for anyone who assented to a metaphor in its literal sense would exemplify a categorical confusion. Likewise, when Ricoeur speaks of symbols, especially those coming to us from an obscure historical context such as an archaic religion, he claims their meaning is always “opaque.” (Ricoeur 1969: 285–86/290) Since the meaning of a symbol is one intended at a level beyond its literal sense, this superficial opacity is partly what constitutes the symbol as such; to understand a symbol at its surface is to misunderstand it. (See Piercey 2011: 193–94) The encounter with the symbol prior to adequate interpretation conveys a kind of negative disparity, while the metaphor asserts a positive one. The symbol or metaphor *by themselves* do not convey the analogy that would give them their meaning.⁹ Yet it is through misunderstanding and thanks to such disparity that understanding can appear.

2.2. *The Event of Understanding*

If the metaphor is in itself a disparity, a positive assertion of contradiction, how can it contribute to understanding? To summarize Ricoeur’s thinking on the issue, the metaphor leads to understanding in a *productive event*. Since there is no natural resemblance between the tenor and vehicle in the metaphorical statement, metaphor has a meaning only as an analogy is produced

9. “But in symbol I cannot objectivize the analogical relation that binds the second meaning to the first [the literal sense].” (Ricoeur 1969: 286/290).

in its wake. Ricoeur explains, “metaphorical meaning . . . is not the enigma itself, the semantic clash pure and simple, but the solution of the enigma, the inauguration of the new semantic pertinence.” (Ricoeur 1975: 271/214) The metaphorical enigma provokes a search for a resemblance, though this resemblance is not contained in the contradiction itself. We see how the woman from the song quoted above could be *like* the heavy-lidded jar when we “see” that she conceals her secrets, that she is keeping something in that cannot be pried out. The metaphorical enigma here *becomes* an analogy. In the metaphor, “tension, contradiction, and controversion are nothing but the opposite side of the reconciliation in which metaphor ‘makes sense.’ [...] [R]esemblance is itself a fact of predication, which operates between the same terms that contradiction sets in tension.” (Ricoeur 1975: 247/195) While metaphor in its bare discursive presence is opaque, it provokes the search for a sense within its contradiction that could resolve the opposition: but this sense is made, not given. The analogy that is eventually “heard” in the metaphor is coterminous with the discovered meaning. “Authentic” or “living” metaphors are, for Ricoeur, “at once meaning and event.” (Ricoeur 1975: 127/99) This is because the meaning of metaphor must “occur” to a reader or hearer, since it is the immediate resolution to a contradiction presented to her. (Ricoeur 1975: 126–27/98) The meaning discovered in the contradiction is an “event that means or signifies, an emergent meaning created by language.” (Ricoeur 1975: 127/99)

According to Ricoeur, the power to “see” the analogy within the contradiction posed by the metaphor cannot be explained purely on the conceptual level, but the result of this seeing is always a new understanding, a conceptual gain.¹⁰ I suggest that the analogy resists conceptual explanation only in the sense that, given the semantic impertinence of the metaphorical statement, neither the conceptual content of the tenor and vehicle respectively nor their predicative combination is sufficient to determine the eventual analogical resolution of the statement. Though as I will amply stress below, the analogy is always explicated in conceptual terms, a new meaning eventually attributed to the tenor first functions as an indeterminate “=x”, the resolving term of the analogy. We might say that the “x” is first posited as the conviction *that* the terms have a resolution, even before *what* that resolution is has been realized. Nothing can give sense to the variable other than some conceptual content, but the intuition *of* some resolution must come first.

10. The case is parallel with symbols: “The symbol gives: I do not posit the meaning, the symbol gives it; but what it gives is something for thought, something to think about. [...] [A]] has already been said in the enigma and yet it is necessary even to begin again and rebegin everything in the dimension of thought.” Ricoeur (1969: 284/288). The enigma has its own power to present, but what is received occurs for determinate thinking.

This is how, in my reading, Ricoeur binds intuition (in the sense of an eventful insight) and discursive analogy together. Indeed, though Ricoeur speaks of metaphor as a creation of meaning *within* language, if he places seeing-as outside the strictly verbal resources of the metaphorical statement, this is only accurate with an expanded sense of language, which includes the subjective activity of its users.¹¹ The innovation of meaning is indeed partly due to the “open texture” of language, which includes a “permeability of semantic fields.” (Dauenhaur 1983: 4) But this openness itself only enables, but does not accomplish, the innovation that will emerge. Instead, Ricoeur allocates the mediation of meaning to the subject, the reader (or listener) capable of resolving the metaphorical contradiction.¹² It is here that he is willing, on occasion, to speak of *intuition*, though he always makes this moment of vision dependent on its verbal articulation. Glossing on Aristotle, Ricoeur insists that there is “no intuition without construction. Indeed, the intuitive process, bringing together what is disparate, contains an irreducibly discursive moment.” (Ricoeur 1975: 248/195) The intuition mentioned here, which Ricoeur associated with conjoining the disparate, is elsewhere identified with the seeing-as in metaphor: “To explicate a metaphor is to enumerate all the appropriate senses in which the vehicle is ‘seen as’ the tenor. The ‘seeing as’ is the intuitive relationship that makes sense and image hold together.” (Ricoeur 1975: 269/212) Moreover, Ricoeur even claims that “‘seeing as’ designates the *non-verbal* mediation of the metaphorical statement.” (Ricoeur 1975: 271/214) If Ricoeur insists, as he does, that the metaphorical statement by itself only provides a contradiction, it is coherent that the resolution of the contradiction would lie outside the metaphor itself, in the subject provoked by the metaphor. This resolution relies on a subjective realization of the analogy.

2.3. *The Productive Imagination*

Ricoeur somewhat paradoxically insists both that seeing-as is a non-verbal achievement, even speaking of it as an “intuitive talent,” and that it “contains an irreducibly discursive moment.” (Ricoeur 1975: 270/213; 248/195) We mu-

11. Stephanie Theodorou seems to take Ricoeur’s suggestion of a creation of meaning too far when she suggests, “the logical disruption of naming brought about by a metaphor beings about a wider range of semantic and ontological signification: the new name creates a new form of being.” See Theodorou (2005: 134). Besides conforming Ricoeur’s theory to a transformation on the level of names, Theodorou seems to assume too much continuity between Ricoeur and Heidegger’s understanding of the task of hermeneutics. I will mention only briefly below some central points of difference between Ricoeur and Heidegger.

12. Likewise, David Klemm (1983: 102–105) speaks of certain “subjective conditions” necessary for understanding texts, particularly in the “suspension” of the ordinary of meaning in metaphorical language, which precedes the “conceptual elaboration” that achieves the understanding of the text.

st understand how Ricoeur ties these aspects together in his understanding of analogy. Perhaps surprisingly, in several places across his oeuvre Ricoeur explains this power of understanding in terms of the Kantian “productive imagination.” To recall, unlike the reproductive imagination, which can produce images only out of a store of sensible intuitions already gathered, the productive imagination for Kant is the mysterious origin of “schemata,” the mental links between pure concepts and sensible intuition. (Kant 1998/1787: 272/A 138/B 177) Since “pure” for Kant means non-empirical, a pure category like “substance” cannot be immediately applied to something empirical like a table. Instead, the productive imagination, according to him, provides the mediating image of something permanent in time, which allows the desk before me, for example, to be ‘seen as’ a substance. (Kant 1998/1787: 273/A 144/B 183)

Ricoeur adopts Kant’s productive imagination and schemata to illustrate the mediation of sense in analogy, which he employs in the cases of symbol, metaphor, and narrative.¹³ In each instance, Ricoeur speaks of “schema” when a sense must be produced from the analogy in its disparate, contradictory form. With metaphor in particular, a schema is not required to mediate pure concepts with sensible experience but to overcome the disparity of the metaphorical statement with the sense made in the resemblance between tenor and vehicle. Ricoeur calls this realization of resemblance the “iconic moment,” but his very adoption of the Kantian productive imagination intends to “bracket” the visual sense of imaginary resemblance, to the benefit of verbal meaning that results from the analogy. He insists,

The only way to approach the problem of imagination from the perspective of a semantic theory, that is to say on a verbal plane, is to begin with productive imagination in the Kantian sense, and to put off reproductive imagination or imagery as long as possible. Treated as schema, the image presents a verbal dimension; before being the gathering-point of faded perceptions, it is that of emergent meanings. (Ricoeur 1975: 253/199)

Ricoeur gives imagination preeminently the function of *verbal* articulation, in deference to Kant. As Robert Piercey articulates Ricoeur’s point, “to imagine something is to find oneself called to speak about it in a certain way.” (Piercey 2011: 194) The imagination, for Ricoeur, first has to make meanings from the “semantic shock” (*choc sémantique*) of the metaphor before it can image the metaphor in a visual manner. (Ricoeur 1986: 242/168) The sense of the metaphor, then, is the production of a verbal schema. A metaphorical statement such as, “He slithered back into his office,” can be

13. Respectively: Ricoeur (1969: 286–90/291–94); Ricoeur (1975: 253/199); Ricoeur (1983: 11–12/ix–x).

visually evocative, productive of a new image, only once we understand how “slithering” can refer to the demeanor of a man rather than a snake. The schematic “discursive” meaning enables the imagery. The “schematism” for Ricoeur as for Kant is the “rule for producing images” (Ricoeur 1986: 243/169; emphasis added) not itself an image. In metaphor, the schema is the verbal meaning that resolves the contradiction between tenor and vehicle, while the productive imagination is the source of this verbal meaning itself.

The productive imagination for Ricoeur is like Goethe’s “eye of the mind,” but what it perceives is discursive meaning: “we see images only insofar as we first hear them.” (Ricoeur 1986: 245/170) Ricoeur’s adoption of the Kantian schematism helps explain how he considers analogy to come about through an intuitive power while remaining within the grasp of the understanding. According to Ricoeur, then, coming to realize the meaning of a metaphor or other symbolic forms is a productive event of the understanding.¹⁴ Since this realization is “at once event and meaning,” the intuitive grasp of a resemblance arrives concurrently with a grasp of a new semantic pertinence. When the metaphor invites us to see the tenor as the vehicle, this contradictory identity only leads us to discover an alternative in the analogy, which is “no longer the resemblance between two ideas, but that very resemblance the ‘seeing as’ establishes.” (Ricoeur 1975: 270/213) After Marcus Hester, Ricoeur calls seeing-as an “experience-act.” It is at once a mystery, an event that “cannot take place. . . without intuitive passage” (Ricoeur 1975: 271/214), and a productive schema, an act that establishes a determinate conceptual meaning. For this reason, it seems quite appropriate to call Ricoeurian analogical understanding “discursive intuition.”

3. Explication and Analogical Understanding

At this stage, I would like to broaden the scope of this inquiry in order to set the insights gathered mainly from the Ricoeurian account of metaphor (but which apply to his idea of analogy in general) within a larger question concerning the nature of understanding. As we have seen, for Kant, the

14. Ricoeur proposes a similar resolution of contradiction in the reading of literary narrative, this time in the disparity between the world the text and the world of the reader, which can likewise be overcome through analogical understanding. Ricoeur often emphasizes the incompleteness of a text in the face of its readers, and thus the need for the act of reading to complete the text. Citing Roman Ingarden, he writes, “. . . a text is incomplete, first, in the sense that it offers different ‘schematic views’ that the readers are asked to ‘concretize.’” Ricoeur (1985: 244/167). He suggests a kind of balance between text and reader: “. . . the configuration of the text in terms of structure becomes equal to the reader’s refiguration in terms of experience.” (Ricoeur 1985: 248/170) Later he calls this an “analogizing relation”. (Ricoeur 1985: 261/178) Thus, in narrative the analogy is only complete when the plot finds a relation to the world of the reader.

discursivity of the understanding leaves cognition confined to what we can experience sensibly, unable to produce a picture of the whole that could comprehend experience at large. Such an intuitive grasp, however desirable it would be, simply could not be justified as a legitimate possession of understanding. Yet Goethe protested that scientific study had to work within an intuitive comprehension, without which its sober analysis could not give sense to the holistic, organic movements of nature. Detailed experimentation had to give way to the discovery of an *Urphänomen* or morphology that would in some way stand for the whole of a natural process.

In Goethe's view, the comprehensive intuition was the gift of the "eye of the mind." For Ricoeur as well, the psychic source of intuitions is mysterious, but Ricoeur makes an improvement over Goethe in his understanding of intuitions in as much they are given specifically as analogies. While Goethe sought the source of intuition directly among the objects of his study (that is, within his "seeing"), Ricoeur credits novel understanding to an indirectness, to seeing-as. For Ricoeur, the analogy is the intuition. This allows us to see intuitions not as direct visions of a whole, but as indirect visions that mediate holistic knowledge within the schematic rule they provide. Metaphors are a pronounced case of this, but the productive nature of analogies is also evident when in ordinary experience we "see" (whether rightly or wrongly) a novel as a parody, the mind as a machine, injustice as a system. When an analogy "occurs" to us, we are led to draw connections between its "terms" that suggest a further grasp of the primary subject. We can remain ignorant on the source of these occurrences themselves without ignoring their contribution to knowledge. One could even reinterpret some of Goethe's own "intuitive perceptions" as productive analogies: the color wheel for example, though suggested by the angular emanations of light from a prism, could result from seeing the colors *as* a circle, such that colors are given diametric positions thanks to this intuited resemblance.¹⁵ "The colors are a wheel": the Goethean metaphor, whose sense demanded resolution in the wake of its (ultimately fruitful) assertion of categorical disparity. Without analogy — here we speculate — no "eye of the mind."

If intuitive knowledge is a grasp of analogy, we can add that there is no intuition without explication. If intuitive understanding is an event of seeing something *as* something else, then there is no avoiding the question: how so? That is, the sense(s) in which the terms of the analogy are related cannot be indeterminate. These senses are determined in the process of explication,

15. Thus, Goethe speaks of a "conformity" between the wheel and nature, in that the diametric oppositions shown in the wheel correspond to real relations that Goethe detected between colors: "This wheel conforms fully to nature in its arrangement, and will help in the present discussion because the colors placed diametrically opposite one another on the wheel are those which demand each other in eye as complements." Cf. Goethe (1949: I, 49/175).

always subsequent to the intuitive seeing-as. According to Jean Ladrière, “explication is a process that reconstitutes a given from some principle.” (Ladrière 1991: 113) Ladrière therefore sees explication as a kind of “deduction.” (Ladrière 1991: 119) In our case, the analogy provides the “principle” from which explication can deduce its determinate content. In terms of metaphor, Ricoeur writes, “To explicate a metaphor is to enumerate all the appropriate senses in which the vehicle is ‘seen as’ the tenor.” (Ricoeur 1975: 269/212) Though Ricoeur’s “expliquer” can also be rendered “to explain,”¹⁶ I believe explication better conveys the sense of unfolding (ex-“pli”) or drawing out a sense from a principle, rather than simply providing an external account of a meaning.¹⁷ The importance of explication in a hermeneutical context is in the fact that it works *from* an understanding as much as it contributes to an understanding. The intuited analogy provides one pole of a “hermeneutic circle,” of which explication provides the other. Ricoeur writes, “The most fundamental condition of the hermeneutic circle lies in the structure of preunderstanding which relates all explication to the understanding that precedes and supports it.” (Ricoeur 1986: 53/30) While in this context Ricoeur alludes to Heidegger’s notion of preunderstanding, in which explication would not be seen in discursive terms, his own work affirms explication in its primarily verbal dimensions. Sebastian Purcell cites this as a key difference between Heidegger and Ricoeur: the latter no longer needs to “regress” beneath the understanding for a more fundamental domain, since (arguably unlike Heidegger) he attributes rightful significance to the understanding. (Purcell 2013: 146–48) For Ricoeur, analogy itself gives a “plenitude” for interpretation (Ricoeur 1975: 124/96), but this plenitude must be drawn out in a determinate explication.

This was clear in the case of metaphor, in which any realization of analogy was not owed to any inherent resemblance between the terms, but to the resolution achieved as the resemblance was constructed. The analogy discerned in the metaphor only *is* as it is subject to explication, as the relation between tenor and vehicle is drawn out. An analogical intuition, a seeing-as, provides the basis and even a preunderstanding of the resemblances to be found, but this preunderstanding lacks what an actual understanding would possess: the power of explication.

Because of the need for explication in any analogy, any seeing-as is subject to critique. Intuition, by itself, is not a source of justification, since any

16. As is usual in the translation of the Ricoeurian slogan: *Expliquer plus, c’est comprendre mieux* (“To explain more is to understand better”).

17. In the context of *La métaphore vive*, Ricoeur refers to the use of the English word “explication” by Monroe Beardsley. Cf. Ricoeur (1975: 121/94). However, he also connects explication to phenomenological *Auslegung* in “Phenomenology and Hermeneutics” (Ricoeur 1986: 69/41 and *passim*).

understanding drawn out from it will be subject to the conflictual realm of understanding in general. This is how we might understand Ricoeur's suggestion that seeing-as can disclose a "being-as" (cf. Ricoeur 1985: 225-6/155), namely as a *putative* being-as. We learn from the analogy something that may be the case, something that we had previously not thought to assert as being so, but the analogy in no way provides a verification of such "being."¹⁸ This does not mean analogy is somehow dispensable as a mode of understanding or as a source of content. For analogy provides the source for explication, without which analysis lacks a guiding idea for any putative understanding. It is not that one must reason analogically, as if it were a kind of method; it is rather that analogy makes certain reasons available in the first place.

4. Conclusion

We should recall Kant's characterization of an intuitive understanding: "We can also conceive of an understanding which, since it is not discursive like ours but is intuitive, goes from the *synthetically universal* (of the intuition of a whole as such) to the particular, i.e., from the whole to the parts." (Kant 1987/1790: 167/Ak. 5:407-8) Our reading of Ricoeur mediates between Kant's reservations about such an understanding and Goethe's assertion of its necessity. If analogy is the ground for the grasp of the "synthetically universal," in that it presents a relation between tenor and vehicle whose explication must be deduced from that relation, we can still agree with Kant that such an understanding is not a *direct* intuition of the whole as such. In this, we would surely chasten Goethe's desire to speak of discovering the "idea" or "essence" of phenomena; analogy proceeds indirectly, by positing a relation to something outside the original phenomenon. Nevertheless, inasmuch as genuine understanding may depend on some kind of prior seeing-as, as much as some original grasp of a synthetic whole may be prior to the analytical grasp of parts, a form of analogical intuition, which remains tied to its discursive form, may be seen as necessary as it enables discovery of holistic aspects of something through its relation to another.

To suggest that analogy allows us to grasp phenomena intuitively without contravening the need to interpret is to legitimate an alternative mode

18. This is not to recommend at the outset any privileged kind of verification or epistemic justification. It is only to deny that analogy contributes directly to epistemic justification, however the latter should be properly construed. Instead the explicative results of analogy should be subject to whatever form of epistemic justification are demanded by their kind of content (whether, for example, scientific or poetic).

of understanding, one as tied to the literary arts as to the exact sciences.¹⁹ It means that seeing—as often gives more to thinking, and eventfully so, since it occurs simultaneously with the understanding it produces. In reference to Ricoeur’s analogical phenomena — symbol, metaphor, and narrative — Sebastian Purcell writes

These qualify as events of meaning precisely because one will never be able to determine their existence through a critique of meaning or sense beforehand. They shatter the pretension of any such critical enterprise that would seek to assess their limits in an apriori way, and equally any claim to some form of pre-comprehension that only needs explication. (Purcell 2013: 151)

Purcell places Ricoeur between Kant’s pre-judgment of the limits of understanding and Heidegger’s founding of understanding on some prior ontological grounds.²⁰ Ricoeur’s version of intuitive understanding depends on analogies that “occur” to us, as “events of meaning,” but it also depends on — and is subject to — being understood. For this reason, Ricoeur understands intuition in such a way that it does not contravene and obviate discursive understanding through concepts, but complements it. Analogy presents a form of understanding that momentarily and “intuitively” transcends the “bounds of sense” (Strawson 1966), but what it gives us is always *more sense*.²¹

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19. In this connection, Ricoeur discusses the analogical role of models in scientific practice. See Ricoeur (1975: 302ff./239ff.). Here he mentions in passing the experience of intuition in the use of models: “To speak of intuitive grasp is only a shorthand way of indicating ease and rapidity in mastering the far-reaching implications of models” (Ricoeur 1975: 304/241).

20. For another account that places Ricoeur cautiously between Kant and Heidegger see Piercey (2011).

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