

# METAPHORS IN LITERATURE-TO-DANCE INTERSEMIOTIC TRANSLATION

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## Abstract

In 1903, C. S. Peirce made a distinction between icons and iconic signs, or hypoicons, and briefly introduces a division of the latter into images, diagrams, and metaphors. When a literary artwork is intersemiotically translated into a choreographic one, we observe three types of translation according to Peirce's hypoiconic division -- imagetic, diagrammatic, metaphorical. Our major proposal here is to introduce this division, and to provide some examples of its applications in cases of dance intersemiotic translation from literature, with focus on metaphorical translations.

## The problem

Despite its theoretical relevance, and despite the frequency with which it is practiced, the phenomenon of IT remains virtually unexplored in terms of semiotic modeling. How to describe the complex mechanisms and processes operating in literature to dance IT?

## The “most fundamental division of signs”

The morphological variety of semiotic processes is usually reduced to three (non-excludent) classes of signs based on sign-object relation (icon, index, symbol). Generally speaking, an iconic sign communicates a habit embodied in an object to the interpretant, so as to constrain the interpreter's behavior, as a result of a certain quality that the sign and the object share. The icon is a type of sign inextricably linked to its object, an analogue of its own composition, formal, structural, and/or material nature. We are especially interested in iconic sub-division in hypoicons.

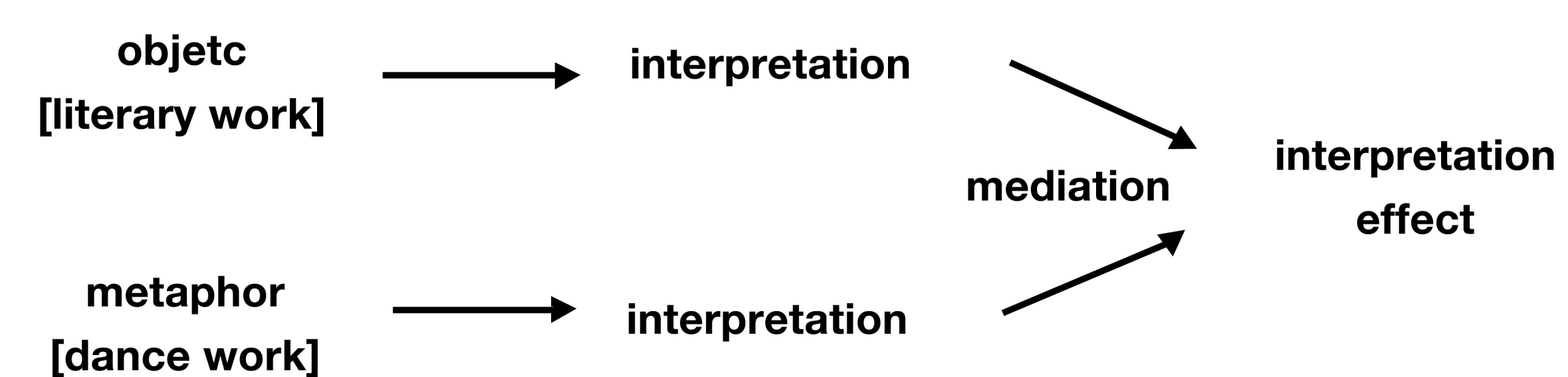
## Hypoicons -- images, diagrams, and metaphors

Hypoicons may be roughly divided according to the mode of Firstness of which they partake. Those which partake of simple qualities... are images; those which represent the relations, mainly dyadic, or so regarded, of the parts of one thing by analogous relations in their own parts, are diagrams; those which represent the representative character of a representamen by representing a parallelism in something else, are metaphors. (CP 2.277)

The image is an icon that directly represents the material of which it is made. Diagrams represent, through the relations between its parts, the analogous relations that constitute the related parts of the object it represents. The metaphor is an icon of analogical relations between interpretative effects. The object of a sign which is a metaphor is the effect a sign whose qualitative properties are analogous to those of its interpretant. If a sign is a diagram when its object is analogous to its structural arrangement, a sign is a metaphor when its object is analogous to the (interpretative) effects produced by it. If two signs are similar because their structural arrangements are similar, or the relations between their parts are similar, we observe a diagram. However, if they are analogous because are analogues of their representative characters, or the interpretative effects produced by two or more entities, which must be signs, then we interpret a metaphor.

## Metaphor and Metaphorical Translation

We observe a metaphorical IT when, in the case of literature-to-dance IT, a dance work (sign) translates the literary work (object) mediated by another interpretation of the literary work. The dance work, as a metaphor of the literary work, makes a parallelism with something else (some interpretation effect).



## “Bluebeard – while listening to a taped recording of Bela Bartok’s ‘Duke Bluebeard’s Castle’” (1977) by Pina Bausch

The dance work is a metaphorical translation of the Charles Perrault's “La barbe blue” fairy tale since it draws a parallelism to a specific interpretation of it. It is a translation oriented by another interpretation of the same tale: Béla Bartók's “Duke Bluebeard's Castle” (1918). The opera makes a psychological (and psychoanalytic) interpretation of the fairy tale. Consequently the old moral of the story (“Curiosity, in spite of its appeal, often leads to deep regret”) is missed. Béla Bartók provides another interpretation to a new context.

Following this direction, Pina Bausch addresses the fairy tale through a psychoanalytical approach. The original narrative is left behind; the translation takes the audience to other subjects and forms that are beyond the original. The dance work is focused on the general male-female relation, which could be inferred from the fairy tale through Bartók's interpretation. As an example we can say that, in the dance work, the high number of characters (men and women) numerically multiply the couple of protagonists. The repetition displays the metaphorical relation to the source, by showing its universality: it represents issues of every relationship between men and women.



## Conclusion

According to the perspective introduced here, IT can be described as a hypoiconic process. We hope the general ideas outlined here can support an epistemology of translation, with consequences in a research agenda that should be carefully detailed, and exhaustively exemplified.

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