Kristóf NYÍRI

Metaphor and Visual Thinking

At the very beginning of the history of metaphor theory stands the Aristotelian view which holds that "a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars", and also that there is a parallel between metaphor and simile (*eikon*). Add to this the Aristotelian dictum that "the soul understands nothing without a phantasm", i.e. without mental images, and there clearly emerges the notion that both the creation and the understanding of metaphors essentially involves visual thinking. This notion remained prevalent for more than two millennia and is the obvious common-sense view even today; it has, however, under the impact of the linguistic turn, become almost incompatible with the mainstream metaphor theories of the twentieth century. Neither I. A. Richards nor Max Black allow a role for mental images in metaphor processing, while Lakoff and Johnson only gradually, and only partially, incorporated images into conceptual metaphor theory. By contrast, cognitive linguist Allan Paivio's *dual coding approach* had, by the 1990s, led to an empirically confirmed view according to which the verbal understanding of a new metaphor is typically preceded by the processing of perceptual, in particular visual, mental images. It is this view for which the envisaged talk will attempt to adduce further arguments.

Kristóf NYÍRI (1944) is Professor of Philosophy at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Department of Technical Education. He is member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and of the Institut International de Philosophie. He was Leibniz Professor of the University of Leipzig for the winter term 2006/07. His main fields of research are the history of philosophy in the 19th and 20th centuries, the impact of communication technologies on the organization of ideas and on society, the philosophy of images, and the philosophy of time. Some main publications: *Tradition and Individuality*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1992; "Electronic Networking and the Unity of Knowledge", in Stephanie Kenna and Seamus Ross (eds.), *Networking in the Humanities*, London: Bowker-Saur, 1995; "The Picture Theory of Reason", in Berit Brogaard and Barry Smith (eds.), *Rationality and Irrationality*, Wien: öbv-hpt, 2001; *Vernetztes Wissen: Philosophie im Zeitalter des Internets*, Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2004; "Time and Communication", in F. Stadler and M. Stöltzner (eds.), *Time and History*, Frankfurt/M.: ontos verlag, 2006; "Film, Metaphor, and the Reality of Time", *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (June 2009). Further information: http://mpt.bme.hu, www.hunfi.hu/nyiri. E-mail: knyiri@t-email.hu.