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Analyzing metaphor in argumentative discourse

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Abstract This paper is aimed at providing the building blocks of a method for analyzing metaphor in argumentative discourse. It focuses on two specific argumentative uses of metaphor: (1) metaphor as (part of) a standpoint and (2) metaphor as (part of) an argument. After an explanation of some basic argumentation theoretical insights concerning types of standpoints and arguments, it will be demonstrated how these insights can be applied by analyzing a number of concrete examples of the use of metaphor in argumentative discourse.

Keywords: analogy, argumentation, argument classification, metaphor, metaphorical argument, metaphorical standpoint, *Periodic Table of Arguments*, typology of arguments, typology of debate propositions

Invited paper.

0. Introduction

How to analyze metaphor in argumentative discourse? This question can be addressed from the perspective of metaphor theory as well as from the perspective of argumentation theory¹.

Within metaphor theory, the dominant tradition before 1980 saw metaphor as a poetic or rhetorical device, i.e. as a special means of expression with an effect on the addressee that was deviant from ordinary language use and held to be typical of specific types of discourse, like poetry, political oratory, and so on. After 1980, when a number of publications caused a revolution in this field of study, metaphor came to be regarded as a conceptual device, a tool for thinking about one thing in terms of something else (e.g. STEEN 2013). This tool was not only considered ubiquitous in language but also fundamental for our thought in that it enabled people to deal with abstract, complex and less well understood phenomena in terms of more concrete, simple and better understood phenomena. A great number of studies showed how metaphor is important for understanding, reasoning, imagining, and communicating the same patterns emerging across different language, cultures and periods in comparable manifestations (e.g. GIBBS 2008).

¹ I would like to thank Gerard Steen, Giulia Frezza, and Andreas Finsen for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper. I would also like to thank Andreas Finsen for providing some of the examples analyzed in this paper and for discussing how to reconstruct them.

It is interesting to see how metaphor has not been singled out for extensive argumentation-analytical attention in this context. The dominant school of metaphor analysis in cognitive linguistics does highlight the important role of entailments of conceptual phenomena (e.g. LAKOFF & JOHNSON 1980, KÖVECSES 2010). But these are conceptual analyses that do not engage in the analysis of metaphor in argumentative discourse, nor do they make clear distinctions between for instance reasoning and argumentation. And although there are some specific case studies about, for example, argumentation by analogy in politics (MUSOLFF, 2004), these are exceptions that are isolated islands in an archipelago of discourse-analytic studies of metaphor with little systematic and exhaustive input from the discipline of argumentation theory.

Within argumentation theory, metaphor is traditionally viewed as a stylistic device that is used for ornamental purposes only. The historical background of this view is situated in classical rhetoric, where metaphor is conceived as a trope related to the virtue of style called “ornamentation” (*ornatus*), which is headed under the third task of the speaker, the “wording” (*elocutio*) of the speech². From the 1950s, the traditional view has been questioned by scholars such as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, who started studying the argumentative dimension of metaphor by relating it to their description of the discursive techniques that people use in order «*to induce or to increase the mind’s adherence to the theses presented for its assent*» (PERELMAN & OLBRECHTS-TYTECA 1969: 4, original italics). But although they were «the first to analyze metaphor systematically in the context of argument schemes based on analogy» and other scholars have elaborated on their theoretical considerations, it remains unclear «in which manifold way metaphor is related to other forms of similarities in texts» and also «which inferential processes we should assume to take place when understanding metaphors in specific types of texts and how these (processes) are connected with the explicit textual elements and argument schemes of analogical reasoning» (UEDING 2001: 1102, my translation).

In my view, these desiderata concerning the analysis of the argumentative use of metaphor still hold. In studying the relation between metaphor and argument, some present-day scholars stick to the traditional conceptualization of metaphor as a stylistic device (e.g. GARSSSEN 2009). This approach is premised on the idea that elements of argumentative discourse, if expressed in figurative language, can be transformed into literal language. Now this assumption may hold in many cases, but there is no reason to believe that argumentative content can always be reconstructed in this way. It makes sense, therefore, to not *a priori* exclude figurative language from having an argumentative function as such.

Other scholars tend to view the relation between metaphor and argument along the same lines as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. Their approach is premised on the idea that metaphor is to be conceived in terms of argument schemes based on analogy, in which the concept of similarity plays a pivotal role (see e.g. OSWALD & RIHS 2014: 141-143, SANTIBÁÑEZ 2010: 947-978, SVAČINOVÁ 2014: 71-72). Again, I do not think that this assumption holds in all cases. Although it is true that metaphorical expressions can sometimes be reconstructed as part of an argument scheme based on analogy or as supportive of arguments functioning within such a scheme, it may also be the case that they play a role in other types of arguments (or

² For a more detailed account of the conceptualization of metaphor in classical rhetoric see e.g. Lausberg (1998: 250-256) and Ueding (2001: 1103-1115).

even in other types of elements that occur in argumentative discourse such as standpoints or starting points).

In this paper, therefore, I will take a different approach to the analysis of the argumentative use of metaphor. Instead of conceptualizing metaphor exclusively as a presentational device or in terms of argument schemes based on analogy, I distinguish between two crucial manifestations of metaphor in argumentative discourse: (1) metaphor as (part of) a standpoint and (2) metaphor as (part of) an argument³.

The central aim of this paper is to provide the building blocks of a method that can be used for analyzing the role of metaphor in argumentative discourse. In Section 1, I discuss the various ways in which a metaphor may occur in elements of argumentative discourse that can be labeled as ‘standpoints’ because the acceptability of their propositional content is doubted or criticized⁴. First, I expound a typology of propositions developed in debate theory. I explain the main characteristics of the propositions distinguished within this typology and provide a number of non-metaphorical examples. Then, I illustrate how to use the typology by reconstructing a number of concrete examples of metaphor as (part of) a standpoint. In Section 2, I discuss the various ways in which a metaphor may occur in elements of argumentative discourse that can be labeled as “arguments” because they are put forward in support of disputed claims⁵. First, using the theoretical framework of the *Periodic Table of Arguments* as a point of departure, I present a three-step method for analyzing metaphor as (part of) an argument. Then, I illustrate the use of this method by analyzing a number of concrete examples and identifying which types of arguments are involved. Finally, in Section 3, I briefly summarize my findings and indicate directions for further research.

1. Metaphor as (part of) a standpoint

Within present-day debate theory, as well as in some approaches within argumentation theory, it is common to make a distinction between three types of propositions that participants in a debate may put forward (SCHUT & WAGEMANS 2014: 25-33):

- (1) propositions of policy (P)
- (2) propositions of value (V)
- (3) propositions of fact (F)

Propositions of policy (P) usually predicate of a specific act (course of action, policy) that it should be carried out. In addition, they may also include as their constituents an actor, an object of the act, and a temporal indication. An example in which all of

³ The distinction is in line with the conclusion of a research project carried out by van Nimwegen, who remarks that «the reconstruction of metaphorical argumentation [...] should begin with the question if the metaphor functions as the standpoint or as support» (2015: 23).

⁴ For a general description of the nature and reconstruction of standpoints see e.g. van Eemeren et al. (2014: 13-16).

⁵ For a general description of the nature and reconstruction of arguments see e.g. van Eemeren et al. (2014: 1-7, 19-21).

these constituents are present is “The city of Amsterdam should legalize soft drugs in 2017”.

The second type, propositions of value (V), predicate of an entity (thing, person, event or act) that it has a specific value or that it can be judged or evaluated in a specific way. Examples of this type are moral judgments such as “Circumcision is reprehensible”, aesthetic judgments such as “*Interstellar* is a great movie”, legal judgments such as “This act is to be qualified as murder”, and logical judgments such as “This proposition is true”.

The third and last type, propositions of fact (F), predicate of an entity (thing, person, event, or act) that it has a specific empirical property that, within the specific context of use, does not count as evaluative or recommending. Propositions of fact are connected to observation and measurement rather than to judgment and prudence. An example of this type of proposition is “The earth is flat”. As is clear from this example, the truth or acceptability of propositions of fact is considered to be debatable rather than to be established beforehand. The difference between propositions of fact and propositions of value is not that while the former express *objective truths*, the latter only express *subjective opinions*. In as far as they are used in argumentative discourse, all three types of propositions express the opinion of the arguer, the acceptability of which can always be doubted or criticized.

In order to enable an analysis of the argumentative function of the constituents of these types of propositions, I indicated in Figure 1 for each type of proposition what sort of predicate *Q* is attributed to what sort of subject *X*⁶.

	<i>subject (X)</i>	<i>predicate (Q)</i>
<i>proposition of policy (P)</i>	act A (course of action, policy)	to be carried out
<i>proposition of value (V)</i>	entity E (thing, person, event, act)	judgment J
<i>proposition of fact (F)</i>	entity E (thing, person, event, act)	characteristic C

(FIG.1) Subjects and predicates of the three types of propositions.

How to use the typology of debate propositions in the analysis of metaphor as (part of) a standpoint in argumentative discourse? I explore this issue by giving some concrete examples, identifying the type of standpoint involved, and indicating the role of the specific metaphor involved.

The first example is taken from the domain of philosophical discourse. In *The structure of behavior*, the philosopher Merleau-Ponty argues against the view that the physiology of the nerve system can be understood as a keyboard, a metaphor that continues to reverberate in debates in contemporary cognitive science.

Example 1

The organism cannot properly be compared to a keyboard on which the external stimuli would play and in which their proper form would be delineated for the simple reason that the organism contributes to the constitution of that form (MERLEAU-PONTY 1967: 13).

Since Merleau-Ponty provides a reason for why he thinks that the organism is not to be compared with a keyboard, we can take the phrase “the organism can be compared to a keyboard” as a reconstruction of the standpoint that he is aiming to

⁶ For a more detailed explanation of this way of characterizing the constituents of propositions see Wagemans (2014: 25-42).

refute. On the basis of the typology of debate propositions, the proposition expressed in the standpoint can be identified as a proposition of fact (F). The standpoint does not contain any other elements than the metaphor itself: the entity belonging to the target domain (E_T), “the organism”, is the subject (X) of the proposition, while the entity belonging to the source domain (E_S), “a keyboard”, is its predicate (Q). The reconstruction is depicted in Figure 2.

The organism (X) can be compared to a keyboard (Q) (F)

(FIG. 2) Metaphor as a standpoint expressing a proposition of fact.

The second example of metaphor as a standpoint is taken from the domain of political discourse. In discussing the state of the military, the U.S. army officer Lt. Col. Ralph Peters was asked whether “honor should dictate” that a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs should comment on the release of Bowe Bergdahl, who is charged with desertion. In the interview, that was part of the program *The O’Reilly Factor* broadcasted by Fox News Channel on April 21, 2015, Peters stated, among other things, that “our soldiers are lions”.

Example 2

Honor only dictates to honorable men. And unfortunately, beginning with Rumsfeld, we have appointed some very, very weak three – and four – star generals, men and women who do not have the courage of their already weakened convictions. [...] Our soldiers are lions, but they’re led by far too many craven, politicized weaklings (CAREY 2015).

Now imagine that Peters is asked to defend his statement that “our soldiers are lions” against the background of the fact that one of them has been charged with desertion. In this case, the metaphor functions as a standpoint and we can see that “our soldiers”, the entity belonging to the target domain (E_T), is the subject (X) of the proposition expressed in that standpoint, while ‘lions’, the entity belonging to the source domain (E_S), is its predicate (Q). Since it is clear that the arguer does not want to convey that the soldiers he is talking about literally belong to the biological species of lions, but rather that they should be judged as brave, the type of proposition is not to be identified as a proposition of fact but rather as a proposition of value (V). The analyst, when reconstructing the standpoint, is therefore advised to substitute the entity belonging to the source domain with the specific judgment represented by that entity, which functions as the predicate of the proposition involved. The reconstruction is depicted in Figure 3.

Our soldiers (X) are brave (Q) (V)

(FIG. 3) Metaphor as a standpoint expressing a proposition of value.

In the examples discussed so far, the standpoint contained no other elements than the metaphor itself. Such standpoints, so I propose, can be called “metaphorical standpoints”. On the basis of the description of the content of the various types of propositions in Figure 1, I have specified in Figure 4 the content of the propositions expressed in such metaphorical standpoints.

	<i>subject (X)</i>	<i>predicate (Q)</i>
<i>proposition of value (F)</i>	entity E_T belonging to the target domain	entity E_S belonging to the source domain
<i>proposition of value (V)</i>	entity E_T belonging to the target domain	judgment J represented by entity E_S belonging to the source domain

(FIG. 4) Subject and predicate of metaphorical standpoints.

Metaphor may not only function as a standpoint, but also as part of a standpoint. This is the case, for instance, when there is a difference of opinion regarding the quality or the use of a metaphor (VAN NIMWEGEN 2015: 22-23). Apart from the elements of the metaphor itself, such a standpoint also contains elements expressing a value judgment about that metaphor or a recommendation concerning its use. The following two examples are meant to illustrate how to determine the role of the metaphor in these cases.

In the first example, Anderson is criticizing a specific metaphor used by scientists working in Computational Theory of Mind (CTM) by pointing out what he calls an «important disanalogy» between the elements from the source and target domains.

Example 3

My specific criticisms of CTM [Computational Theory of Mind] [...] emerge over the course of this volume, but it is worth an initial if brief reflection on an important disanalogy between the brain and a computer: whereas a computer is typically understood as a device that carries out a specific instruction set on (and in response to) inputs, brain responses to stimuli are characterized instead by specific deviations from intrinsic dynamics (ANDERSON, 2014: xx).

Since Anderson provides a reason for having a negative point of view regarding the quality of the brain-as-a-computer metaphor, the implicit standpoint he is defending can be reconstructed as “The brain is a computer is not an accurate metaphor”. On the basis of the typology of debate propositions, the standpoint can be identified as a proposition of value (V). In this case, the metaphor “the brain is a computer” is the subject (X) of that proposition, while the judgment regarding its quality “not an accurate metaphor” is its predicate (Q). The reconstruction of this standpoint is depicted in Figure 5.

The brain is a computer (X) is not an accurate metaphor (Q) (V)

(FIG. 5) Metaphor as part of a standpoint expressing a proposition of value.

The analysis illustrates that in cases where an arguer expresses a point of view regarding the quality of a specific metaphor as metaphor, the metaphor functions as the subject (X) of the proposition of value (V) expressed in the standpoint.

Sometimes people do not provide a positive or negative judgment concerning the metaphor itself, but point at the positive or negative consequences of the use of that metaphor. This is the case in the next example, in which philosopher Peter Hacker criticizes the use of the metaphor that humans are machines in *Gesprek op 24*, a program that was broadcasted on Dutch national television on June 7, 2013⁷.

⁷ For a similar reconstruction of this example see van Nimwegen (2015: 23).

Example 4

If we start thinking about ourselves in a way in which some neuroscientists recommend we do, namely as machines, it will provide us with a range of excuses which are not really legitimate excuses, it will diminish our sense of responsibility, and answer-ability for ideas, and those are very deleterious social consequences and moral consequences (VAN DER WIELEN, 2013).

Since the arguer provides a reason for holding a point of view concerning the use of the metaphor, he is apparently anticipating doubt or criticism regarding its acceptability. We can therefore reconstruct the phrase “We should not think about ourselves as machines” as the implicit standpoint. Unlike in the former example, the standpoint in this example is not to be identified as a proposition of value but as a proposition of policy (P). On the basis of the description of the content of the constituents of this type of propositions given in Figure 1, ‘the act of thinking about ourselves as machines’ is the subject (X) of this proposition and ‘not to be carried out’ is its predicate (Q). The reconstruction of this standpoint is depicted in Figure 6.

The act of thinking about ourselves as machines (X) should not be carried out (Q) (P)

(FIG. 6) Metaphor as part of a standpoint expressing a proposition of policy.

When expressing a point of view regarding the use of a specific metaphor, so this analysis illustrates, the metaphor functions as the object of the act that is the subject (X) of the proposition of policy (P) expressed in the standpoint.

The typology of debate propositions is generally applicable in that it can be used for the purpose of identifying the type of any proposition in the discourse, whether that proposition functions as a standpoint or as an argument. For the analysis of metaphor as (part of) an argument, however, it is not enough to only identify the type of *proposition* at issue but rather to identify the type of *argument* involved. In the next section, I will explain which additional theoretical distinctions can be helpful in accomplishing this task.

2. Metaphor as (part of) an argument

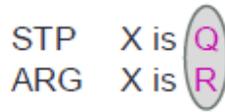
I now turn to discussing the various ways in which a metaphor may play a role in elements of argumentative discourse that can be labeled as arguments. More specifically, I present a three-step method for identifying the type of argument involved that is based on a standard for classifying arguments called the *Periodic Table of Arguments* (WAGEMANS 2016).

The theoretical framework of the *Periodic Table of Arguments* combines three distinctions regarding specific characteristics of arguments⁸. The first distinction is between predicate arguments and subject arguments. In order for an argument to function as an attempt to establish or increase the acceptability of the standpoint it supports, the propositional content of that argument should share exactly one element with that of the standpoint, while the transfer of acceptability from the argument to the standpoint is facilitated by the alleged existence of a specific relation between the non-shared elements.

⁸ For a more detailed explanation of these distinctions and their sources see Wagemans (2016).

In the case of predicate arguments, which are of the general form “X is Q, because X is R”, the shared element is the subject (X), while the transfer of acceptability is facilitated by the alleged existence of a specific relation between the predicate of the argument (R) and that of the standpoint (Q) (see Figure 3).

PREDICATE ARGUMENT



(FIG. 7) The linguistic structure of a predicate argument.

An example is “The suspect was driving fast, because he left a long trace of rubber on the road”, in which the arguer uses the relation between the predicates “driving too fast” and “leaving a trace of rubber on the road” in order to establish or increase the acceptability of the standpoint.

In the case of subject arguments, which are of the general form “X is Q, because Y is Q”, the shared element is the predicate (Q), while the transfer of acceptability is facilitated by the alleged existence of a specific relation between the subject of the argument (Y) and that of the standpoint (X) (see Figure 4).

SUBJECT ARGUMENT



(FIG. 8) The linguistic structure of a subject argument.

An example is “Biking on the lawn is forbidden, because walking on the lawn is forbidden”, in which the arguer uses the relation between the subjects “walking on the lawn” and “biking on the lawn” in order to establish or increase the acceptability of the standpoint.

Once it is analyzed whether there the mechanism behind the argument is based on a relation between the predicates or between the subjects, the question arises how to further characterize this relationship. In order to answer this question, it is helpful to make use of the distinction explained in Section 1 between propositions of policy (P), propositions of value (V), and propositions of fact (F). When providing an argument in support of a standpoint, the arguer always instantiates a specific combination of types of propositions (PP, PV, PF, VP, VV, VF, FP, FV, or FF). Each of these instantiations employs a different relation between the predicates (in the case of predicate arguments) or between the subjects (in the case of subject arguments) as the underlying mechanism of the argument.

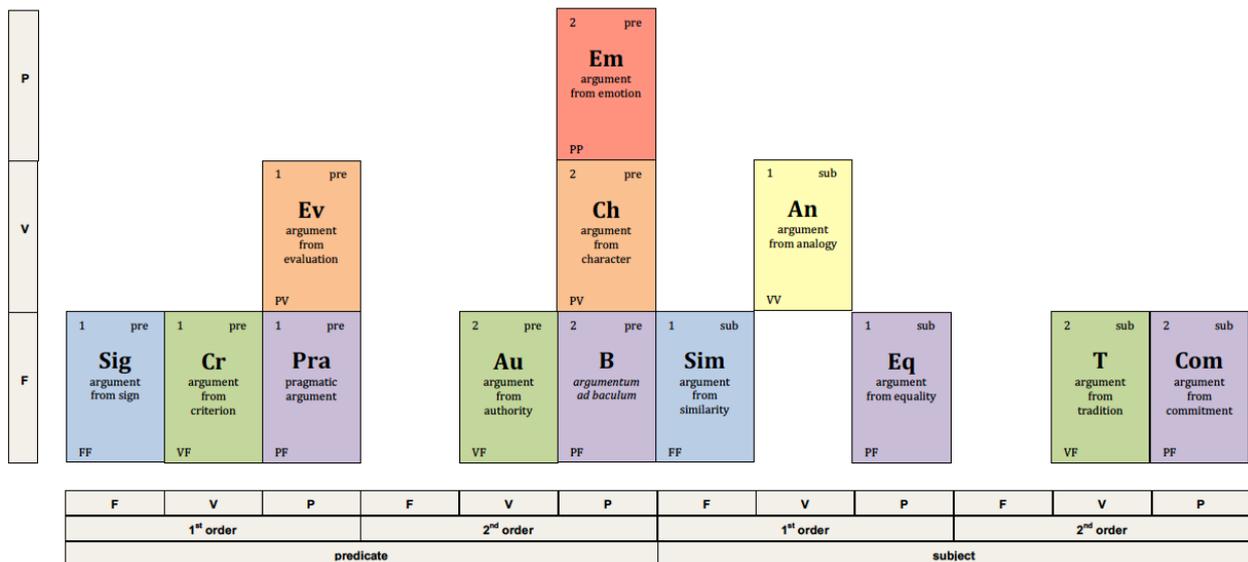
The predicate argument “The suspect was driving fast, because he left a long trace of rubber on the road”, for example, instantiates a combination of two propositions of fact (FF). In this case, the relation between the predicate of the argument and that of the standpoint can be characterized as a sign relation, because “leaving a long trace of rubber on the road” is taken to be a sign for “driving fast”. The subject argument “Biking on the lawn is forbidden, because walking on the lawn is forbidden”, to give another example, instantiates a combination of two propositions of value (VV). In

this case, the relation between the subject of the argument and that of the standpoint can be characterized as an analogy relation, because “walking on the lawn” is taken to be analogous to “biking on the lawn”.

The third and final distinction constituting the theoretical framework of the table is the distinction between first-order arguments and second-order arguments. Different from first-order predicate arguments, the predicate of the argument in second-order predicate arguments does not relate to the predicate of the original standpoint, but of the truth or acceptability of the standpoint as a whole. While a first-order predicate argument has the general form “X is Q, because X is R” and exploits the relation between R and Q, a second-order predicate argument has the general form “(X is Q) is true or acceptable, because (X is Q) is R”. An example of a second-order predicate argument is “The economy will grow, because the ECB has said so”. In this case, the arguer exploits the fact that a specific standpoint is uttered by an expert as an indicator of its truth or acceptability.

Second-order arguments are often regarded as fallacious because they do not establish or increase the truth or acceptability of the standpoint as such. For how could, in the example mentioned above, the sheer fact that the ECB has said something contribute to the truth or acceptability of what has been said at all? But second-order arguments nevertheless count as arguments, because they render standpoints true or acceptable in the eyes of an audience that accepts a certain (type of) authority.

When taken together, the three distinctions constitute a theoretical framework for argument characterization. Within this framework, types of argument are described as (1) subject arguments or predicate arguments; (2) PP, PV, PF, VP, VV, VF, FP, FV, or FF arguments; and (3) first-order or second-order arguments. This combinatory approach yields 36 types of arguments, which can systematically be ordered and presented in the form of a *Periodic Table of Arguments* (see Figure 9).



(FIG. 9) The *Periodic Table of Arguments* (as depicted in WAGEMANS 2016).

The *Periodic Table of Arguments* can be used for heuristic purposes, i.e. for generating arguments in support of a specific standpoint, as well as for analytic purposes, i.e. for identifying the types of argument used in an existing text or

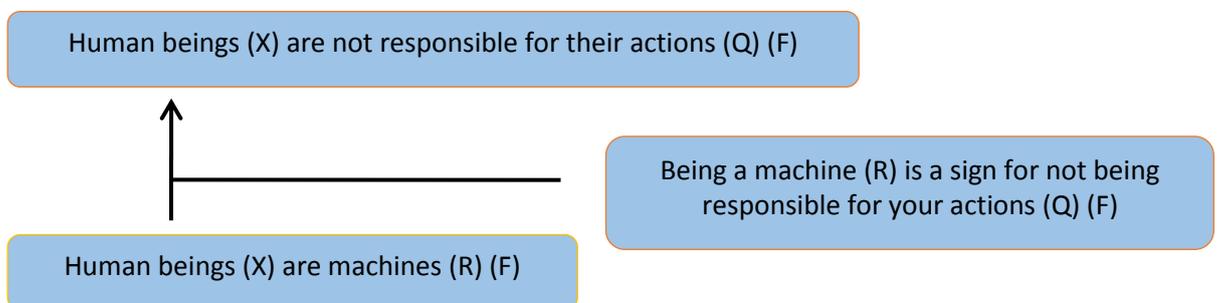
discussion. In the latter case, the three constituents of the theoretical framework of the table correspond to the three steps of a method for describing the characteristics of a specific argument. In the first step of this “Argument Identification Procedure”, the analyst determines whether the argument at issue is a predicate argument or a subject argument. In the second step, the analyst identifies the types of propositions involved and determines the nature of the specific relation between the predicates or subjects involved. And finally, as a third step, the analyst decides whether the argument is to be viewed as a first-order argument or as a second-order argument. How to use this method in the analysis of metaphor as (part of) an argument? I will explore this issue by giving some examples and identifying the type(s) of argument(s) involved.

As is clear from the definition of predicate arguments, a metaphor may function as an argument supporting a standpoint that has the entity belonging to the target domain (E_T) as the subject (X) of its proposition. This is, for instance, the case when the standpoint “Human beings are not responsible for their actions” is defended by the metaphor “Human beings are machines” (cf. Example 3).

Example 5

Human beings are not responsible for their actions, because human beings are machines.

Using the three-step method explained earlier in this section, the argument can be identified as a first-order predicate argument linking a proposition of fact (F) to another proposition of fact (F). This argument is listed in the *Periodic Table of Arguments* as the ‘argument from sign’. The identification of the type of argument allows us to formulate the relation between the predicates as “being a machine is a sign of not being responsible for your actions”. Since this proposition functions as a reason for ascribing to human beings the characteristic of “not being responsible for their actions” on the basis of ascribing to them the characteristic of “being machines”, we can reconstruct it as an implicit argument supporting the justificatory force of the metaphor as an argument from sign⁹. While the proposition expressed in the standpoint has the entity belonging to the target domain (E_T) as its subject (X), the proposition expressed in this implicit argument has the entity belonging to the source domain as (E_S) as its subject (R). In this way, the metaphor functions as an argumentative device that enables the transfer of what is ascribed to the entity belonging to the source domain (E_S) to the entity belonging to the target domain (E_T). The complete reconstruction is depicted in Figure 10.



(FIG. 10) Metaphor as an argument from sign.

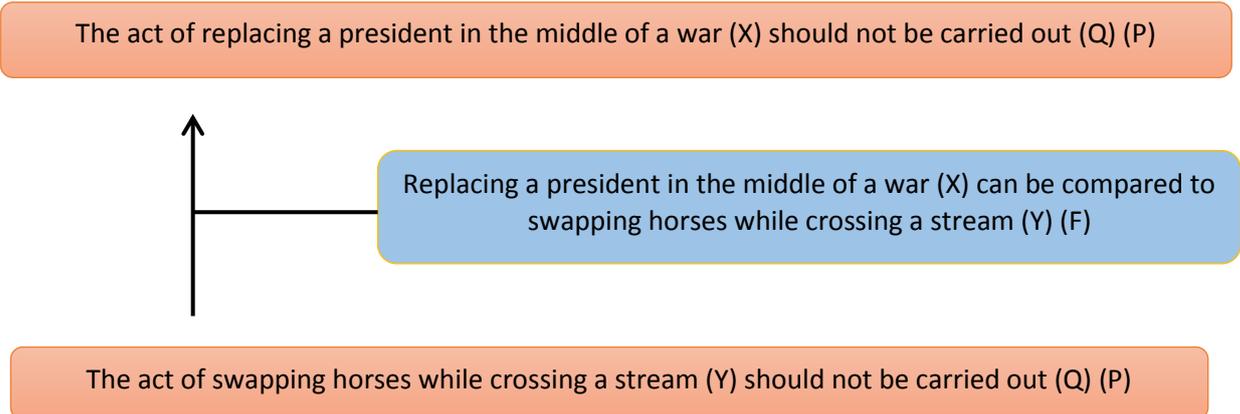
⁹ For a general overview of methods for analyzing implicit arguments see e.g. van Eemeren et al. (2014: 17-18).

One could also imagine a situation in which the metaphor as such is not (or only partly) mentioned in the argument. An example is to be found in the following fragment taken from a speech held by the former U.S. president Abraham Lincoln on June 9, 1864. Lincoln is defending the standpoint that he should not be replaced, given that the country is in the middle of a civil war¹⁰.

Example 6

I have not permitted myself, gentlemen, to conclude that I am the best man in the country; but I am reminded, in this connection, of a story of an old Dutch farmer who remarked to a companion once that “it was not best to swap horses while crossing a stream”.

Taking into account the contextual information provided above, the standpoint that is defended can be formulated as “One should not replace a president in the middle of a war” and the argument as “One should not swap horses while crossing a stream”. Using the three-step method explained earlier in this section, the argument that is given can be identified as a first-order subject argument linking a proposition of policy (P) to another proposition of policy (P). This argument is listed in the *Periodic Table of Arguments* as the ‘argument from comparison’. The identification of the type of argument makes clear that in this case, the relation between the subjects of the argument and the standpoint can be formulated as “replacing a president in the middle of a war can be compared to swapping horses while crossing a stream”. This metaphor supports the justificatory force of the argument, for it is on the basis of the comparison between the two situations that the property of “not to be carried out”, which is ascribed to the act of swapping horses while crossing a stream, can also be ascribed to the act of replacing the president in the middle of a war. Like in the previous example, the metaphor functions as an argumentative device that enables the transfer of what is ascribed to the entity belonging to the source domain (E_S) to the entity belonging to the target domain (E_T). The complete reconstruction is depicted in Figure 11.



(FIG. 11) Metaphor as supporting the justificatory force of an argument from comparison.

Analogous to the definition of a “metaphorical standpoint”, I propose to call an argument that does not contain other elements than the metaphorical expression itself a “metaphorical argument”. The previous two analyses concerned examples of such

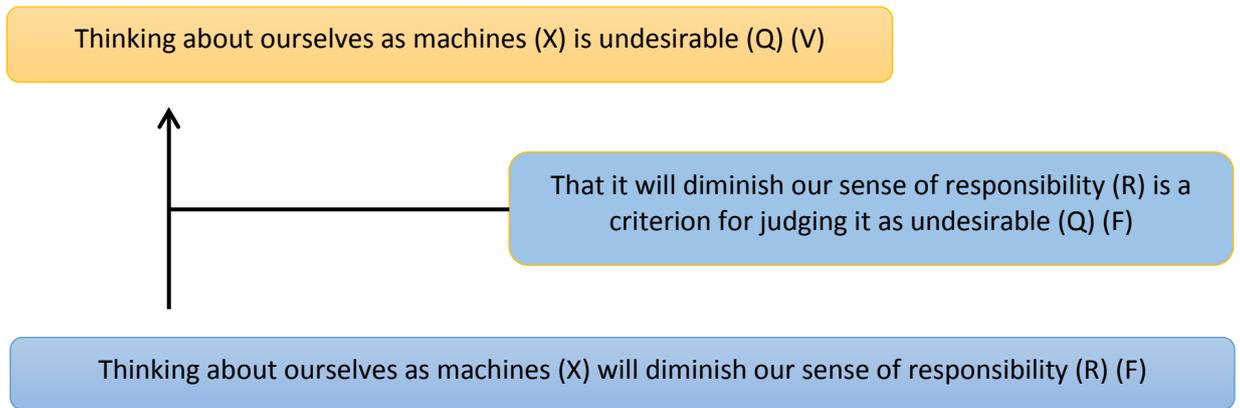
¹⁰ Alternative reconstructions of this example can be found in Eimers (2008), Garssen (2009) and Svačinová (2014).

metaphorical arguments. The next and final analysis concerns an example of metaphor as part of an argument, c.q. an adaptation of Example 3.

Example 7

Thinking about ourselves as machines is undesirable, because it will diminish our sense of responsibility.

In this example, the standpoint that ‘thinking about ourselves as machines is undesirable’ is defended by means of the argument that ‘it will diminish our sense of responsibility’. Using the three-step method explained earlier in this section, the argument can be identified as a first-order predicate argument instantiating the combination VF, which is listed in the *Periodic Table of Arguments* as the ‘argument from criterion’. The identification of the type of argument allows us to formulate the relation between the predicates as “that it will diminish our sense of responsibility is a criterion for judging it as undesirable”. Both in the standpoint and the argument, the metaphor functions as the object of the act that is the subject (X) of the proposition expressed. The reconstruction is depicted in Figure 12.



(FIG. 12) Metaphor as part of an argument from criterion.

Since metaphors may part of a proposition of policy or proposition of value, one could imagine many more examples of metaphor as part of an argument. I think, however, that this example suffices for the present purpose of illustrating how to use the three-step method of identifying the type of argument in analyzing metaphor as part of an argument.

3. Conclusion

In this paper I explored the relation between metaphor and argument by providing some building blocks for a method that can be used in order to systematically analyze the role of metaphor in argumentative discourse. Different from the traditional view of metaphor as a presentational device and the more recent view of metaphor as (supporting) an argument scheme based on analogy, I started from the assumption that metaphor may manifest itself as (part of) a standpoint and as (part of) an argument. Making use of a typology of propositions developed in debate theory and of a three-step method for identifying types of argument derived from the theoretical framework of the *Periodic Table of Arguments*, I analyzed a number of

concrete examples and indicated the role of the metaphor within the constellation of elements involved in the argumentation.

From these qualitative analyses it can be concluded, first of all, that when a standpoint does not contain any other elements than a metaphor, the entity belonging to the target domain (E_T) can be reconstructed as the subject (X) of the proposition expressed in the standpoint and the entity belonging to the source domain (E_S) as its predicate (Q). I have proposed to call these standpoints ‘metaphorical standpoints’ and have provided reconstructions of two examples of them, one expressing a proposition of fact (F) and the other expressing a proposition of value (V). In the latter case, the analyst may have to transform figurative language into literal language in order to reconstruct the standpoint, for it is the value judgment (J) that is represented by the entity belonging to the source domain rather than that entity itself that functions as the predicate of the proposition expressed in the standpoint (e.g. ‘brave’ instead of “lions”).

Second, when metaphor occurs as part of a standpoint, for instance in cases where something is said about its value or use, the analyses have shown that metaphor can be reconstructed as the subject (X) of a proposition of value (V) or as the object of the act (A) that is the subject (X) of the proposition of policy (P) expressed in the standpoint respectively.

Regarding the third possibility examined in this paper, arguments that do not contain any other elements than a metaphor, it seems appropriate to reconstruct the entity belonging to the target domain (E_T) as the subject (X) of the proposition expressed in the argument and the entity belonging to the source domain (E_S) as its predicate (Q). I have proposed to call such arguments “metaphorical arguments”. The analyses of two examples of them has shown that metaphorical arguments may be based on a relation between the predicates (e.g. a sign relation). This finding contradicts the view that metaphor should always be understood in terms of an argument scheme based on analogy. In fact, the only situation in which the concept of analogy (similarity, comparison) plays a role is when the metaphorical argument supports the justificatory force of an argument that can be characterized as a subject argument.

As to metaphor occurring as part of an argument, finally, the propositions involved can be reconstructed in the same way as metaphor occurring as part of a standpoint. Depending on the combination of types of proposition instantiated, the type of argument can be identified by using the three-step method derived from the theoretical framework of the *Periodic Table of Arguments*.

A brief summary of these findings can be found in Figure 13. For each of the four different manifestations of metaphor in argumentative discourse examined in this paper, I indicate the general form of the standpoint or argument and mention the corresponding examples (metaphorical expressions are in italics).

role of the metaphor	general form	example
metaphor as a standpoint (metaphorical standpoint)	E_T is E_S (F)	(1) <i>The organism can be compared to a keyboard</i>
	E_T is J (represented by E_S) (V)	(2) <i>Our soldiers are brave (lions)</i>
metaphor as part of a standpoint	(E_T is E_S) is J (V)	(3) <i>The brain is a computer</i> is not an accurate metaphor
	A concerning (E_T is E_S) should not be carried out (P)	(4) We should not think of <i>ourselves as machines</i>
metaphor as an argument (metaphorical argument)	E_T is Q, because E_T is E_S [predicate relation between E_S and Q]	(5) Human beings are not responsible for their actions, because <i>human beings are machines</i>

		[being a machine is a sign for not being responsible for your actions]
	E_T is Q, because E_S is Q [subject relation between E_T and E_S]	(6) One should not replace a president in the middle of a war, because one should not swap horses while crossing a stream [replacing a president in the middle of a war can be compared to swapping horses while crossing a stream]
metaphor as part of an argument	A concerning (E_T is E_S) is Q, because A concerning (E_T is E_S) is R [predicate relation between R and Q]	(7) Thinking of <i>ourselves as machines</i> , is undesirable, because thinking of <i>ourselves as machines</i> will diminish our sense of responsibility [that it will diminish our sense of responsibility is a criterion for judging it as undesirable]

(FIG. 13) Manifestations of metaphor in argumentative discourse.

I do not claim that the overview of possible manifestations of metaphor in argumentative discourse depicted in Figure 13 is exhaustive. The research findings do make clear, however, that the assumptions underlying the traditional view of metaphor as a presentational device and the more recent view of metaphor as (part of) an argument scheme based on analogy do not hold for all these manifestations. First of all, when reconstructing argumentative content, it is not always possible nor necessary to transform figurative language into literal language. From this we may conclude that the function of metaphor is not purely ornamentative but also argumentative. Second, metaphor cannot always be conceived in terms of argument schemes based on analogy but may also play a role as (part of) a standpoint expressing different types of propositions and as (part of) argument schemes that are based on other concepts than analogy. For the purpose of analyzing all these different argumentative functions of metaphor, the typology of debate propositions and the *Periodic Table of Arguments* have proven to be suitable tools.

The qualitative analyses carried out in this paper can be complemented by quantitative research on the role of metaphor in argumentative discourse. The theoretical building blocks provided in this paper may then be further developed into a fully-fledged method for analyzing metaphor in argumentative discourse by integrating the results of these two types of research. The building blocks may also be used to further explore ways of evaluating the quality or the use of metaphors. Since every type of argument can be criticized in a limited number of ways, the method for identifying the type of argument presented in this paper may be combined with a typology of criticisms in order to develop a method for evaluating the use of metaphor in argumentative discourse.

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