

## **Situating Metaphors in The Tempest and The Macbeth : A Study from Paul Ricoeur's Theoretical Perspective**

**Dr. Sanjib Kumar Sarma**

Asstt. Prof. & HOD

Department of English

Dispur College

Guwahati

**Abstract :** It is an established fact that metaphor is a powerful figure of speech which like symbol and simile enriches the periphery of language by discharging its usual function of concretizing facts. I.A. Richards in his book 'The Philosophy of Rhetoric'(1936) has introduced two terms- 'vehicle' and 'tenor' to define metaphor. Whereas vehicle stands for the metaphorical word, 'tenor' is used for the subject to which the metaphorical word is applied. To Richards, a metaphor works by bringing together the disparate thoughts of the 'vehicle' and the 'tenor' so as to effect a meaning which is born out of their interaction. While elaborating Richards' philosophy, Max Black proposes in his essay under the title 'Metaphor' that each of the two elements in a metaphor has a system of association that leads to a new way of conceiving the principal subject through the principle of association and similarity. Paul Ricoeur theorizes metaphor not only as an ornamental device but also emphasizes on cognitive significance of it. His theory of metaphor is two –fold i.e. substitution theory and the theory of tension. Whereas the former deals with substitution of one word for another and the later is considered to be an agent generating a tension in a phrase leading to semantic innovation which provides a new value to the statement.

Under the aforesaid background, the present paper is an attempt to explore the multiplicities of meaning in the language of Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' and 'The Macbeth' and to show how both the plays demonstrate various aspects of metaphoric performance in the light of the theories of I.A.Richards and Paul Ricoeur.

**Keywords :** Metaphor, Substitution Theory, Theory of Tension, Performance.

Metaphor is a powerful figure of speech which transfers the meaning of a name or descriptive phrase to an object by analogy or substitution. Like simile, metaphor typifiedes the elision of the comparison. In literature it allows the author to extend the range of references. Shakespeare, for example, says that love is like war, or life like the sea, he thus use images of war and of the sea when describing love and life. John Donne in his Elegie : “To his Mistrers Going to Bed” metaphorically addresses his” mistress as ‘Oh my America, my new found lande’. Metaphor is a part of image making process. Metonymy, on the other hand is the continuity disorder closely related to the figure Synecdoche, an attribute of a thing stands for the thing itself for example ‘the deep’ for ‘the sea’, the ‘gigant’ for the mountain. Roman Jakobson, who propounded the theory of binary opposition emphasized Two Aspects of Language and Two types of Aphastic Disturbances in 1956 (David Macey : 252) Jacobson categorised the distinction developed elsewhere between the two axes of language, one is termed as syntagmatic and other paradigmatic. The syntagmatic may be thought of as a horizontal line where one word is associated with another through contiguity, the second as a vertical line where meanings can be substituted one for another. This study of language disorder resulting from memory loss known as Aphasia, Jakobson extends this model to metaphor and metonymy. He further emphasized saying “Romantic and Symbolist poetry is described as being predominantly metaphoric”. Considering this statement we can very rightly agree that these metaphorical functions in accordance with rhetorical principles are direct influence of Shakespearean structure of language with the use of metaphors, similies, images, antithesis, paradox, personification and many more. All these figures of speech are more predominantly applicable to his plays, and in ‘Macbeth’ and the ‘Tempest’, his use of rhetorical devices appropriated into the general atmosphere’ of valuating Renaissance ambition for power. Paul Ricoeur in his book ‘The Rule of Metaphor’ theorize metaphor not only as an adorative device but also emphasizes on cognitive significance of it with his theory of tension and theory of substitution. Substitution of one word for another and other is considered to be an agent generating a tension in a phrase leading to semantic

innovation which provides a new value to the statement. In the backdrop of the above discussion, the present paper is an attempt to highlight Shakespeare use of metaphor as a powerful rhetorical device in Macbeth and 'The Tempest' and to show how both the plays demonstrate various aspects of metaphoric performance.

Metaphor is a kind of analogy that uses figurative language connecting one thing to another to highlight how they are alike. Metaphor is so common place that we use dozens of them every day without ever realizing it like 'Life is a journey', Metaphor' the word comes from the Greek word 'metapherein' meaning to 'transfer' Metaphors can be classified in a range of different ways, based on various criteria but it has two main parts, classically known as the tenor and vehicle, which are connected by a verb. I.A. Richards in his book 'The Philosophy of Rhetoric' (1936) has introduced two terms – 'Vehicle' and 'tenor' to define metaphor. Whereas 'Vehicle' stands for the metaphysical word, 'tenor' is used for the subject to which the metaphorical word is applied. To Richards, a metaphor works by bringing together the disparate thought of the 'vehicle' and 'tenor' so as to effect a meaning which is born out of their interaction. While elaborating Richard's philosophy, Max Black proposes in his essay under the title 'Metaphor' that each of the two elements in a metaphor has a system of association that leads to a new way of conceiving the principle subject – through the principle of association and similarity.

The tenor in a metaphor is the original subject whereas the vehicle in metaphor is both the words and concepts that are invoked by the words. The 'tenor' and 'vehicle' are generally connected by a verb that somehow equates them. The vehicle has a number of dimensions, attributes or variables which may be mapped or transferred back on to tenor and hence create new meaning. In analysis of discourse and the understanding of metaphor, the separation of tenor and vehicle is a basic step. This first step is followed by understanding the dimensions of the vehicle and how these are mapped back onto the tenor and how meaning is changed or extended as a result. The vehicle and meaning created are akin to Saussure's idea of signifier and signified in the field of Semiotics, Metaphors can be classified in a different range from complexity level of usage. They are Absolute metaphor (separated subject and vehicle). Active metaphor (new

and not established), Complex metaphor -- (multi layered), Comound metaphor – (with many parts), Dead metaphor – (normal language, no longer recognized) as metaphor, Dormat metaphor – (Weak connection between vehicle and subject), Dying metaphor – (unfashionable cliché), Extended metaphor – (One subject, many sub-elements), Implicit metaphor – (Incomplete description), Mixed metaphor – (Mismatched combination of metaphor), Pataphor – (Extreme form of metaphor), Root metaphor – (Unrealized basic driver), Single metaphor – (Single meaning and linkage), Submerged metaphor – (Use a part as metaphor for something else), Synchdochic metaphor – (Use a part as metaphor for the whole).

Through the process of language, metaphor justifies the comparison between human mind with natural object. Shakespeare's irresistible interest in Renaissance humanism, Shakespeare made extensive use of metaphor. Shakespeare made extensive use of metaphor throughout the whole play. In Act-I, Scene II of the play he made use of metaphor to convey the indecisive consequence of Macbeth fight with Macdonwald, because war is by nature uncertain and unpredictable. Sergeant narrates before King Duncan how two armies of Macbeth and Macdonwald are in the battle field like 'two drowning men' – a metaphor that indicates indecisiveness of the battle. In Macbeth, Shakesphare used metaphor and personification as two besom friends – are constantly coming to the aid of other. In the study of the characterization of the play, the audience understand what the dramatis personac say and exchange each other. No one knows Macbeth so closely as his wife, and every line of this analysis of character should be weighed and illustrated best through Lady Macbeth's speech. Her speech not only reveals much about Macbeth's character but her own character.

“The ravn himself is, hoarse  
That, croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan,  
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top full  
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood!”

Together with Macbeth's aggressive ambition,

Lady Macbeth also goes wild with the hope of becoming the Queen of Scotland. Lady Macbeth is elated with joy and happiness dreaming as forthcoming Queen of Scotland by reading the letter of Macbeth about the three prophecies made by the witches. In the mean time, a messenger delivers the news that king is coming to Macbeth to night. It is in this context, that Shakespeare, in the mouth of Lady Macbeth, uses metaphor in which the lady compares the messenger, hoarse for lack of breath to a raven – a large glossy black species of crow an ominous mythological bird associated with suffering and death. The bird's croaking lead to be prophetic of disaster. Lady Macbeth transfers her own feelings to the bird and gives, clear indication to her plot of direct cruelty to kill Duncan. Her 'direst cruelty! Can be correlated with Macbeth's blind ambition to becoming the king of Scotland and his jealousy and revenge for Malcolm, the son of Duncan, declared as the prince of Cumberland. Lady Macbeth further compares night with deep darkness.

Come, thick night,

And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,

That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,

Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,

To cry, "Hold, hold!"

Lady Macbeth invokes the night to fall quickly and cover the earth with its darkness like a dress and make the environment murky and dusky like hell. She wants darkness, so that no one can notice the fatal wound made on the king by her sharp knife. She wants the blanket of night to hide a murder, so that no one can watch her hideous crime. She wants darkness, so that no one notices the fatal wound made on the king by her sharp knife. She wants the blanket of night to hide a murder, so that no one can watch her hideous crime. She wants so much darkness, that even the brightness of heaven cannot prevent her crime. Shakespeare uses metaphor successfully through her speech comparing night and darkness as its dress. Another speech in act

I, scene V of the play, Lady Macbeth advises her husband when Macbeth tells his wife that Duncan will arrive at their castle that night and shall return the next morning.

‘O never  
 Shall sun that morrow see!  
 Your face, my thane, is as a book where men  
 May read strange matters : to beguile the time,  
 Look like the time, bear welcome in your eye,  
 Your hand, y our tongue : look like the innocent flower,  
 But be the serpent under’ t,”

Lady Macbeth tells her husband that his face is like an open book, where any one can read the thoughts that go in his mind. She advises her husband to adapt himself to the practices in vogue, so that he can hoodwink the world around him. He must welcome the king with his eyes his gestures and his words, and the world must never get a clue of his brutal plan of murdering intent : that he should look as innocent as a flower but have the evil intentions of a snake.

In act I, scene VII of the play, Maebeth in a soliloquy, he lists out his reasons for killing Duncan. He proclaims that he has nothing to inspire him to murder the king, except his ambition. He can plead neither private grievance, nor public duty. He awares that his ambition is too high and surely it ends in disaster, the metaphor of O’er leaps itself” is slightly confused, but it means to overreach oneself.

“I have no spur  
 To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
 Vaulting ambition,k which O’er leaps itself,  
 And falls on the other”.

The above lines also explains a rider who in mounting on his horse takes too great a leap and falls on the other side of the animal. The first metaphor of the rider spurring a steel has led to

the second. Shakespeare, the creative genius poignantly shown swift transition from one peace of metaphor to another is indeed effective and imaginative.

Maebeth, the thane of cowder feels himself fallen down, the moment Duncan declared Malcolm as the Prince of Cumberland. Here he calls upon the elements of nature to be subservient to his diabolic desires fed with vaulting Renaissance ambition. Blinded by ambition for power, the Renaissance hero becomes a victim of the metaphysics of evil and lost his goodness. Like another Shakespearean hero Hemlet he is tossed between good and evil and his good self defers him from committing the murder of King Duncan. He is afraid of the consequence of the murder in the country. His mingled feeling of kingship, loyalty, hospitality and admirations for Duncan's generosity puts him in a state of fix. Therefore he contemplates that the virtues of noble Duncan will plead like angels against Maebeth's nepharious design of murdering the innocent king. Macbeth is overpowered with the emotion of pity which is metaphorically compares with a new born baby, naked and miserable such as would appeal to the sympathy of all men. Then this infant bestrides the wind for a charger to carry the news of Duncan's murder throughout the world. The figure of messenger seated upon the wind calls up a confused memory of a verse of the Bible (Psalms, xviii, 10) to Macbeth's mind and his imagination embodies pity as an angel riding on the wind:

“And pity like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
That tears shall drawn the world. I have no  
Spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which overleaps itself  
And falls on the other” ( 1. VII, 21-29)

In the above lines Shakespeare present a mixture of metaphors which corresponds to the conflict of emotions in Macbeth's mind. He thinks of his purpose to murder Duncan as a charger but he has no good motive (Spur) to urge it into action and so it stands still. Instantly the figure changes and his ambition is pictured as a rider springing into his saddle, who over leaps himself and falls on the other side of his steel Macbeth tends to means that his ambition to become the king would carry him too far if he would attempt to murder Duncan . At the same time, he feels chickened out in that he might be caught and that is the reason why he should not kill his king. Moreover, Macbeth is supposed to protect the king as his subject and kinsman and more predominantly, as his host. "A host should not kill a good guest. If he is killed, then pity itself "shall blow the horrid deed in every eye". This outpouring of pity for king Duncan would make things even more dangerous for Macbeth, because his vaulting ambition would not forgive him. "Fair is foul and foul is fair" (Act 1, Scene 1... Unit 1.) is also an extended metaphor that describes the state of affairs within Macbeth and without in Scotland. Evil and sinister things have taken the place of all that is good and just. Macbeth, a cruel ruler who consorts with witches and 'murders' sleep, the kind and venerable king Duncan and Banquo are brutally killed. In the midst of all these, inverness becomes a living hell for its inhabitants while Macbeth and his wife suffer from delusions and paranoia.

There are several example of metaphor use in Macbeth when clothing reference are made. Various times, clothing is used to allude to something very different than actual clothes :

The Thane of Cawdor lives, why do you dress me

In borrow'd robes?

Here, Macbeth is comparing the title of Cowdor to a robe. Macbeth is not wearing the robe a thane would wear. Therefore, he cannot understand why one would address him by the title.

Another example of direct metaphor is found in act 3, scene iv :

There the grown serpent lies, the worm that's fled (32)



Macbeth is comparing Banquo to a serpent or snake indicating his mistrust upon him and Banquo's son, Fleance, to a worm something which hides underground until the right circumstances arise to emerge.

Metaphors are often found in literary language because they allow the writer to extend the range of references. Shakespeare, for example use metaphor in describing situation and character in most of his plays. Numerous examples can be found in Shakespeare's another play 'The Tempest' which is under title of our discourse. Prospero's character appears to be metaphor for Shakespeare himself in that through his writing, he can manipulate his characters just like Prospero manipulates everyone in the play. The Tempest, the storm represents the twist and turns of one's life and how quickly things can change because of one event. The storm brought justice to Prospero and love to Miranda, along with affecting all of the characters in the play. Representation is another character of metaphor so the title The Tempest itself is an implied metaphor. Gonzalo uses a metaphor when he personifies nature in a description of his ideal world:

All things in common Nature should produce  
Without sweat or endeavour: treason,  
felony, Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,  
Would I not have, but Nature should bring forth,  
Of it own kind, all foison, all abundance,  
To feed my innocent people. (II.1.155-60).

There are three metaphors in Antonio's temptation speech, when he speaks of steel as if it could obey, when he compares death to an external wink and when Gonzalo is described as a morsel:

Here lies your brother,  
No better than the earth he lies upon,  
If he were that which now he's like, that's dead.

Whom I, with this obedient steel, three incheses of it,  
Can lay to bed for ever, whiles you, doing thus,  
To the perpetual wink for age might put  
This ancient morsel..... (II. 1.275-81).

Another dialogue comparison of a dukedom... to a library:

My Library

Was dukedom large enough (1.2.128).

This quotation followed by another speech that compares Prospero's island to a hell.

..... The king's son, Ferdinand,  
With hair up staring, - then like reeds, not hair,  
Was the first man that leap'd cried, 'Hell is empty  
And all the devils are here. (1.2.213-216).

In The Tempest, the winds compared to a singer and metaphor comparing thunder to the sound made by an organ pipe.

"The winds did sing it to me, me the thunder,  
That deep and dreadful organ pipe, pronounced  
The name of Prosper : it did bass my trespass (3.3.97-99).

Comparison of heaven's approval to rain (aspersion) that promotes the growth of a seed.

No sweet expression shall the heavens let fall  
To make this contact grow. (4.1. 18-19)

Another most striking metaphor is seen in the comparison of humans to the immateriality of a dream.

We are such stuff

As dreams are made on, and our little life

Is rounded with sleep. ( 4.1. 168-170)

In the paragraphs quoted above Shakespeare present a mixture of metaphors which correspond to the emotions of Prospero, Gonzalo etc. Paul Ricoeur in the book ‘The Rule of Metaphor’ defines – the rhetoric of metaphor takes the word as it’s unit of reference. Metaphor, therefore, is classed among the single-word figures of speech and is defined as a trope of resemblance. As figure, metaphor constitutes a displacement and an extension of the meaning of words, its explanation is grounded in a theory of substitution”, Considering Paul Ricoeur’s theory the above statement rightly exemplify the extension of the meaning of the word. In the chapter ‘Metaphor and Semantic discourse’ Paul Ricoeur studies a theory of the statement – metaphor and a theory of the word metaphor are set provisionally in radical opposition. The conflict is prepared by distinguishing between a semantics – where the sentence is the carrier of the minimum complete meaning, and a semiotics, where the word is treated as a sign in the lexical code. Corresponding to the distinction between semantics and semiotics Paul Ricoeur Proposes a parallel opposition between tension theory and a substitution theory. The former theory applies to the production of metaphor within the sentence taken as a whole, the later concerns the meaning effect at the level of the isolated word. Ricoeur, further confirms that I.A. Richards, Max Black and Monroe Beardsley- also discussed within the above framework. I.A. Richards in his book ‘The philosophy of Rehtoric has explained metaphor by introducing the two term –‘vehicle’ and ‘tenor’ His theory can be explained with an example : “Anger is storm”. Here anger is ‘tenor’ and Storm is ‘vehicle’ and its dimensions are energy or danger that lead to destruction . Another example of Shakespeare’s metaphor “All the World’s a stage is very rightly comprehended by defining ‘world’ as ‘tenor’ and ‘stage’ as a ‘vehicle’ producing vastness of the world and its activity. Thus it is very aptly implied that each of the two elements in a metaphor has a system of association which Max Black also says that leads to a new way of conceiving the principal subject through the principle of association and similarity. From the aforesaid discussion we can come to the conclusion that Shakespeare very successfully situate the metaphors in most of his plays specially in the ‘Macbeth’ and The Tempest. A.C. Bradley, a

powerful Shakespeare scholar in his lecture IX comments on Macbeth's style and language and observes :

“In many parts of Macbeth there is in the language a peculiar compression, pregnancy, energy, even violence, the harmonious grace and even flow, often conspicuous in Hamlet, have almost disappeared”. (277-78)

### Works Cited

- 1- Adelman, Janet, *Suffocating Mothers : Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, 'Hamlet' to 'The Tempest'*, 1992.
- 2- Abrams M.H. – *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 3r(ed), Macmillan, 1995, Madras.
- 3- Bradley, A.C. – *Shakespearean Tragedy*, Macmillan 1904.
- 4- Braunmuller, A.R. (ed.) – *Macbeth*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1997.
- 5- Bhatia Praveen, *Macbeth*, UBS Publisher's Distributors Pvt. Ltd. 2011
- 6- Bloom Harold (ed.) – *The Tempest*, Viva Books Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2007.
- 7- Black Max, - *'Metaphor*, Wiley Blackwell, 1954.
- 8- Barthes, Roland, *The old Rhetoric : An Aide-Memoire The Semiotic Challenge* : New York, Hill and Wang, 1988, 11-93.
- 9- Garber Marjorie, *Dream in Shakespeare, From Metaphor 'to Metamorphosis*, Yale University Press, London, 2013.
- 10- Knight, G. Wilson, *The Wheel of Fire*, Routledge, London, 1989.
- 11- Macey David, *Dictionary of Critical Theory*, Penguin Books Ltd. London, 2000.
- 12- Tredell Nicolas, *Shakespeare Macbeth*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2006.
- 13- Ricoeur Paul, *The Rule of Metaphor*, Routledge, London Transl. Robert Crezny with Kathleen, 1977.
- 14- Richards I.A., *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Oxford University Press, London, 1936.