

THE ROLE OF METAPHOR IN THE STYLISTIC RENDITION OF GOGOL'S *DEAD SOULS*

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Abstract

Metaphor is probably the most useful linguistic tool in creative and imaginative literature. This is especially so with Gogol's Dead Souls. From micro images depicted in the submerged metaphor, compound metaphor, implicit metaphor and allusions, metaphorical images in the novel extend to straddle entire supra phrasal units. This paper argues that a deeper understanding of the metaphor is necessary for a better appreciation of Dead Souls which is one extended metaphor of the road. Gogol himself describes it as a поэма (poem) because of its complex and elevated thoughts encapsulated mostly in the use of the metaphor.

1. Introduction

Gogol's epic novel *Dead Souls* has been universally exalted as a magnificent literary edifice and variously described as grotesque and absurd. The language of the story is humorously eccentric and flows in stylistic tandem with the lurid absurdity of the wide variety of characters strewn along the entire narration. As one episode flows into another, the author manages to arrest and keep the attention of the reader through a fresh and unique manipulation of language resources. This linguistic uniqueness manifests itself in the often unexpected imagery, the creative and imaginative use of tropes, all of which are embedded in a facetious account of events and the description of the characters behind them. The stylistic richness of *Dead Souls* is especially expressed in the abundant use of such tropes as irony, metaphor, simile, hyperbole and antonomasia. This paper singles out metaphor for special analysis because of all the tropes it is probably the most useful linguistic tool in imaginative or creative literature, and in *Dead Souls* it is one of the most potent mediums through which the reader comes into direct contact with the distinctive power of imagination of Russia's most enigmatic author.

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2. Background perspective on tropes

When a reader encounters an unfamiliar word, or a word which has been used in an unfamiliar context, the first point of call to ascertain the meaning of the encountered word is the dictionary. This is because the dictionary is the place where he can find the semantic structure of the word or the totality of its meaning in its diversity. The meaning that is registered in the dictionary is usually referred to as the logical or primary meaning. However in some peculiar instances a word may be used in a particular context which makes the said word to assume a type of meaning not recorded in the dictionary as part of the semantic structure of the word. In this instance, the dictionary will be of little use. In linguistics, this is referred to as contextual meaning, and though not fixed in the dictionary, it is nevertheless not independent of the dictionary meaning. This is illustrated in the use of the word *sat* in the following sentences.

1. He was offered a chair, and as he sat down, he noticed something awkward about the gentleman on the other side of the table.
2. He sat for his constituency for two years during the Second republic.

In sentence 1, the verb *sat* simply means seating oneself with the help of the pair of protuberances on the lower section at the rear of the body. In this particular example *sat* has been used in its dictionary meaning. The same verb in sentence 2 is used to mean a parliamentarian. This latter meaning is entirely dependent on the context and cannot exist without it. This is why it is referred to as contextual meaning. Here the context is provided by the words *republic* and to a lesser degree by the word *constituency*.

A close observation of both sentences will reveal that there is an inherent association between the usage of the word *sat* in both instances. Being a parliamentarian means among other things, literally sitting through parliamentary sessions. It is a confirmation of the fact that the contextual meaning will always be in a dependent relationship with the dictionary meaning even though it may always be in a detached juxtaposition. The degree to which the contextual

meaning is detached from the dictionary meaning is of a considerably wide variation. When the latitude of the variation between the two meanings is of such degree that the reader notices a deviation from the generally accepted logical meaning, then we register a trope, or what in Russian linguistics is referred to as *стилистическое средство* or stylistic device.

The resultant trope is determined by the level of interaction between the primary dictionary meaning and the contextual meaning of the said word. When the name of one object is used as a substitute for another object on the basis of the logical correspondence between the said objects, we register a metonymy. For example *stool* and *skin* are symbols representing the chieftaincy institution in Ghana. On the other hand when an author uses a word or words whose intended meaning is directly contradictory of the usual sense associated with the word or set of words, then what we perceive is *irony*. In the following example the word *present* is used in an ironic sense in which its primary meaning is inconsistent with the general sense of the utterance.

'You are a scoundrel!' cried Chichikov, throwing up his hands, and he went up so close to him that Selifan stepped back a little, afraid of getting a present from his master.

A present is something which should elicit gratitude and not fear. Its use here is contradictory of what the reader would anticipate.

Thirdly when an author succeeds in establishing a semantic congruence in terms of properties, function or quality between two objectively dissimilar objects or phenomena, then it is a case of metaphor. In the following sentence the words *clouds*, *key*, *riddle*, are all used in their metaphorical meanings.

If anything was capable of bringing Gogol down from the clouds in which he seemed to have lost

himself in the search for the key of what he considered to be 'the riddle of his existence', it was his encounter with the censors from whom he had to obtain permission for the publication of the first part of his novel.'

Googol in his lifetime had set himself the most arduous of tasks in which he saw himself as the liberator of Russia, a country he believed was looking up to him for salvation. This mindset divorced him from reality sending him into the *clouds*. The reference made to the *key* has to do with the solution to Gogol's complex and yet unanswered challenge, alternatively referred to here as a *riddle*.

When an author uses a trope, he intends it to compel the reader to take notice of its presence and to engage him or her to co-experience the events and episodes as they unfold. Quite apart from this he also intends that the trope would arouse in a unique way the reader's aesthetic imagination. And as Leech (1981:28) observes, this type of imagination 'takes the form of surprising a reader into a fresh awareness of, and sensitivity to, the linguistic medium which is normally taken for granted as an "automatized" background of communication'.

3. A theoretical insight into metaphor

This paper is premised on the understanding that metaphor is basically a linguistic phenomenon. We are making this clarification because of a recent paradigm shift towards the cognitive dimensions of metaphor attributable mainly to Lakoff (1980). His landmark work relates to what has come to be known as the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. This theory postulates that metaphor is directly associated with the thought process, the matrix from which idealized cognitive models are formed and that verbal metaphors subsequently emerge to express the results of the thought process. In other words metaphor is primarily a conceptual category and only secondarily a matter of language. This conceptual view of the metaphor is also the opinion of Black (1979:39) who had earlier argued that metaphors 'could be "cognitive instruments", indispensable for perceiving connections that, once perceived, are then truly present". On his part Crisp (2003:105) takes

note of this cognitive predisposition towards metaphor but stresses the 'need to pay more attention to the details of its expression, linguistic or otherwise' especially in the language of literature. This is also the opinion of Charteris-Black (2006) who, while acknowledging the conceptual dimension of metaphor, focuses his attention on its rhetorical properties.

Essentially one of metaphor's fundamental communicative functions is to provide an alternative linguistic mechanism for expressing ideas. Metaphor does this by making associations between two entities the *tenor* and the *vehicle* which, from an objective point of view, are conceptually far removed from each other. The *tenor* is the subject of discussion to which attributes are ascribed while the *vehicle* is the source of the borrowed attributes (Leech, 1969). Lakoff (1980) substitutes the notion *tenor* and *vehicle* with the terms *target* and *source*. It follows from this that there must necessarily exist, even if at the level of perception, some identical reference points between the *tenor* and the *vehicle*. In other words even though these two entities have nothing in common, the writer uses his imagination to establish a certain type of logical identity between them and refers the reader's imaginative mind to the overt characteristics of the phenomenon whose features constitute the core of the metaphorical meaning. Lakoff (1987b:384) calls these transferred characteristics 'metaphorical entailments.'

In the sentence – *mining companies are profit hyenas* - the tenor is represented by *mining companies* while *hyena* is the vehicle. Our detailed knowledge of the vehicle enables us to transfer its characteristics to the tenor. But this process of transfer requires a connecting factor that would serve as the ground of comparison, a sort of conduit for the 'metaphoric transference' (Leech 1969: 151). The ground of comparison provides the logical link between the shared characteristics of the tenor and the vehicle. In the example above the ground of comparison is the image associated with the ferocity and seeming insatiability of the hyena. Even though the tenor and vehicle are unrelated, the implicit and explicit attributes of the hyena are being superimposed on multinational corporations, and this combination secures a concise as well as an emotionally and aesthetically precise description of the tenor.

According to Lodge (1977) the semantic strength of the metaphor is determined by the existential, conceptual or affective distance between the *tenor* and the *vehicle* of the metaphor. The greater the degree of incongruity between the two entities, the more powerful will be the semantic effect. This is illustrated in the following example.

He will fight tooth, nail and claw to keep his post.

In the sentence above the distance between the tenor, which is the fight being put up by the subject in question, and the vehicle, which is spread among the words *tooth, nail, claw*, is not great. It is still within the semantic breadth of vision of the reader and is easily discernible. The parts of the body mentioned here are legitimate natural weaponry to be deployed in any violent encounter between animals. It can also be justified with respect to combat involving humans depending on the circumstances. The idea of struggle associated with the subject's endeavour to keep his post has an existential as well as a conceptual affinity with the ferocious demeanour associated with any of such animals as the lion, tiger, leopard and others.

The conceptual, existential or affective distance between the tenor and the vehicle can be so great that their point of convergence is not easily discernible. In such situations only a trained eye would, often after considerable effort, notice the semantic association. The following is a stanza from Soyinka's poem *Abiku*, a name used to refer to a mythical baby who sadistically takes delight in inflicting anguish on the mother by repeatedly and intentionally dying and being reborn to the same mother.

The ripest fruit was saddest;
Where I crept, warmth was cloying.
In the silence of webs, Abiku
moans,
Shaping mounds from the yolk.

The reader would require more than ordinary imagination to decipher the expression *ripest fruit* as a metaphorical reference to the final stages of pregnancy. The happiness which should normally accompany a successful delivery would soon turn to sadness. There

are two metaphors in the last line namely *mounds* and *yolk*, and the conceptual distance in the imagery associated with the tenor and the vehicle in these two metaphors is even greater. At burial grounds in traditional Africa fresh graves are distinguished by a heap of recently dug soil raised in the shape of a mound. The word *mound* is therefore a metaphorical rendition of a grave which the *Abiku* is already preparing for the baby who is yet to be born. The unborn baby is represented metaphorically by the word *yolk*, the yellow internal section of the egg responsible for nourishing the developing embryo.

Sometimes a metaphor can extend over an entire narrative in which the tenor and the vehicle converge at several different points. In Anton Chekhov's story titled *Chameleon*, police inspector Ochumelov appears on the scene at a marketplace 'wearing a new great coat' and stumbles upon a commotion. What appears to be a stray dog has just bitten the finger of Khryukin the goldsmith. Ochumelov vows that he would enforce the law against stray dogs and is determined to have the culprit dog exterminated and its owner punished accordingly. Someone in the crowd suggests that the dog belongs to a high profile General of the army. Ochumelov instantaneously changes his mind, assumes a different countenance and puts the blame on the dog's victim accusing the latter of inflicting the wound on himself in order to claim compensation. Also upon hearing the General's name Ochumelov's perspiration level rises and he removes his coat, revealing a different outfit. He changes his mind three more times as one piece of evidence or the other is presented to prove or disprove that the dog belongs to the General. At a certain point, his perspiration gives way to a sudden chilling cold, and he puts on his coat again and assuming his original appearance.

The metaphor of the chameleon, an animal which has the ability to change its colour according to its surroundings, extends to cover in a direct way the act associated with Ochumelov switching over from his coat to the undergarment, and at a more abstract level, the frequency with which he changes his mind on the matter at stake in a very unprincipled manner.

4. Background context of Gogol's *Dead Souls*

In the 1840s Russian literature set for itself an agenda which would transcend the traditional confines of entertainment and education and include stimulation for social, cultural, and political change. These literary contours defined a new direction in Russian literature called realism. All writers of this new tendency were united by the common desire to understand, feel and even guess the future of Russia and the fate of its people. The defining question that dominated intellectual discourse at the time was: "What is Russia?" It is this leitmotif that lies at the core of *Dead Souls* and has also led to the characterization of the novel as a national epic.

The novel is set in the period when the social organization in Russia was based on serfdom. This institution, although practiced extensively in Europe in the Middle Ages, persisted in Russia until the nineteenth century. Under this system peasants were required by law to reside and work for the landlord, cultivating his land in return for a small parcel of land from the landlord's holding which they, the peasants, could cultivate to support themselves and their families. They were also required to remit the landlord in produce from the parcel of land and money from profits from produce harvested from such leased parcels of land. Any transfer of land automatically meant the simultaneous transfer of the peasants residing and working on it.

The plot of *Dead Souls* derives from a situation in which landowners could access government loans using land and by extension the serfs on it as collateral. The main protagonist of the story, Chichikov, has no land, neither does he have serfs, but he schemes to access a government loan under this type of arrangement. He takes advantage of some obvious loopholes in the system of census enumeration in Russia at the time which was carried out once every ten years. The data captured in the census included the number of serfs on each landlord's estate. Landlords were required by law to pay taxes on each peasant residing on his estate. Obviously between one census year and the other, deaths would occur especially among the serf population where mortality rates were exceptionally high. The names of recently dead serfs would still appear in the census register, and would not be deleted until the next census. Chichikov crisscrosses the country taking possession of recently dead serfs

through sly financial negotiations with landlords. The arrangement looks suspiciously altruistic, but the symbiosis is also evident. The landlord is saved the extra financial burden of paying taxes on a nonexistent serf, and Chichikov hopes to gather enough of such dead souls to use as collateral for a government loan. With this loan he hopes to set himself up in legitimate business by acquiring land and live serfs.

Chichikov's business is absurd and immoral, but it is conceivable in the context of the inequities and unjust social order of Russia of that period. And as the story unfolds and Chichikov hops from one estate to another, the moral fabric of the Russian empire lights up like a Christmas tree revealing a cancerously corrupt society in its degenerate diversity and represented by characters distinguishable by their shocking weirdness. Gogol himself describes them as *strange heroes*, and he acquaints the reader with these heroes through diverse episodes foregrounded principally on laughter. But beneath the surface of this laughter is a tears-evoking reality. It is this trichotomous symbiosis of strangeness, laughter and tears which determines the stylistic rendition of *Dead Souls*. Deploying the elements of his literary genius, Gogol endeavours, as (Lavrin 1985:8) notes, 'to show life in its mean, ungainly aspects, and to exaggerate these to the point of grotesque caricature, at which he could laugh with all the bitterness inherent in his loud and infectious laughter.' Though Lavrin makes these comments in the introduction to Gogol's other landmark work *The Government Inspector*; here he alludes to *Dead Souls* as a masterpiece of a hauntingly symbolic verdict against life.

5. A General overview of the categories of metaphor in *Dead Souls*

Gogol describes *Dead Souls* as a poem. Indeed in many instances the language of the novel steps over the threshold of the ordinary reader's ability to grasp the elevated thoughts it contains. The main linguistic vehicle Gogol uses to stir the reader's imagination and emotion is the metaphor, and the simplest type of metaphor that one encounters in *Dead Souls* is the submerged metaphor. This is the type of metaphor which occurs when an implied comparison is made in a word or two.

After being bedridden for a while, Chichikov is feeling better and is carrying out his toilet in preparation for an outing.

Without any further delay he at once began to get ready, opened his box, poured some hot water into a glass, took out his shaving brush and his soap and proceeded to shave, which, incidentally, he should have done long ago, for feeling his chin with his hand and looking into the glass he exclaimed, 'Dear me, what a jungle!' And, indeed, though it was not a jungle, there was quite a thick growth all over his cheeks and his chin.

There is plenty of mileage in the use of the word *jungle* and in the expression *thick growth*. Of course the reference here is to a beard but the use of *jungle* and *thick growth* calls up images of an uncultivated land overgrown with under wood, long grass, or tangled vegetation. The association between the disorderly nature of the hair on his chin and the image of the jungle is clear.

Another example of a submerged metaphor is the use of the word *food* in implied comparisons as is the case in the following description of Plyushkin.

His solitary life provided ample food for his avarice which, as we all know, has a wolfish appetite, and the more it feeds on the more insatiable it becomes.

Food consists of the substances living things take into the body in order to sustain life and to ensure growth. Plyushkin's self-imposed condition where he reneges on his fatherly responsibility of taking care of his dependents presents very fertile grounds that nourish his avarice. This metaphor receives further emphasis by yet another powerful association created by the image of the wolf, an animal notorious for its insatiable and ferocious appetite.

A closely related metaphor is the compound metaphor. The peculiarity of this metaphor is in the fact that it establishes several areas of similarity between the concepts involved. Chichikov whispers to himself in admiration of Konstanjonglo's ingenuity in making money: *What a paw for raking in money.*

Konstanjonglo's business skills are likened to a paw which in turn has

characteristics akin to those of a rake. The paw is a working tool of the animal just as the rake is to man. Visually both have some similarities. The rake is an implement consisting of a toothed bar or a blade fixed across the end of a long handle. The toothed one is used for drawing together hay or grass while the one with a blade is used to gather money or chips staked at a gaming-table. Despite its succinctness, the phrase succeeds in conjuring up several areas of similarity and images associated with work, drive, success and reward.

Based on the degree of unpredictability metaphors can be grouped into genuine and trite metaphors. A metaphor is said to be trite or dead when it has gained so much familiarity through frequent usage that the image it seeks to transfer is completely lost. Those that are unexpected are referred to as genuine metaphors.

Let us take for example the following sentence. *The carriage thundered out of the gates of the inn and into the street.* Here we can still recognize and feel remnants of the primary meaning of the word *thunder* associated with the meteorological phenomenon where a loud crash or prolonged rumbling accompanies a flash of lightening. Trite metaphors can sometimes be reinvigorated and their metaphorical and aesthetic essence reestablished through the addition of more words that have a semantic bearing on the principal word or words that conjure up the metaphor. When this happens, then it is a case of a sustained metaphor.

Chichikov sat spellbound; his thoughts whirling round in a golden world of daydreams and castles in the air. He gave full rein to his imagination which was embroidering golden patterns on the golden carpet of his future profits.

The principal metaphor *castles in the air* is a dead metaphor, and its aesthetic value can hardly be felt, but a new lease of life is breathed into it by such contributory metaphorical images as *embroidering golden patterns, golden carpet*. In another example the mask which Chichikov had meticulously carved to conceal his real self is beginning to disintegrate in an unexpected direction as the garrulous Nozdryov blurts out the following unsolicited comments.

Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you. Everyone in town has turned against you. They think you forge counterfeit notes. They've been pestering me about you, but, my dear fellow, I stood up for you like a rock, told them that I'd gone to school with you and knew your father. Well, I don't want to boast, but I did spin them a beauty of a yarn.

To spin a yarn is the familiar usage of this metaphor which of course has now become trite, but a new breath has been injected into it with the addition of the word beauty.

Sometimes without the context provided by the text, the reader will not feel the metaphor. This is especially so with the implicit metaphor. We shall deal with two examples of this. In Gogol's description of the style of dressing affected by the ladies of the town of N we read:

They had thought out and foreseen everything with most extraordinary care: necks and shoulders were bared just as much as was necessary and not an inch more; each one of them bared her possessions only as far as she thought them capable of ruining a man; the rest was all hidden away with extraordinary taste.

The implied metaphor in this extract is in how the ladies of the town of N are garbed. It is a mode of dressing on the edge of nudity. Some essential parts of the women's bodily frames are purposefully exposed to excite the sensual instincts of the male targets as expressed in the implied metaphor *ruin a man*. The context subsequently assists the reader to understand the expression *the rest* as an implied metaphor referring to the more intimate details of the female anatomy which are wrapped up under the garment. In other words, as the metaphor indicates, they were *hidden away*.

The second example is taken from Gogol's description of the shop signboards in the town of N. '*... showing a billiard table with two players in frock-coats, such as are worn on the stage by extras who make their appearance in the last act. The billiard players were depicted taking aim with their cues, their arms slightly twisted and drawn back and their legs askew, as if they had just been executing an entrechat in the air*'.

Of course the word *entrechat* relates to a specific movement effected during ballet dancing, but if we stretch our imagination a little, it will be possible to discern what is referred to as a 'verbal *trompe l'oeil*' (Leech 1981: 242). The position assumed by the billiard players is probably indicative of the moments before rectal belching, an image strongly suggested by the use of the word *air*. This may not be the case in this instance, but considering Gogol's penchant for linguistic playfulness, it is possible to make such metaphorical connections even if they border on the indecorous.

6. The extended metaphor and characterization of *Dead Souls* as a national epic

Like all epics, *Dead Souls* does not merely evoke a great measure of entertainment, but more crucially, it represents a concentrated rendition of the character of the Russian nation at a significant moment in its history. But this is the extent to which *Dead Souls* bears the characteristics of a national epic. Unlike in a traditional epic, the main character of *Dead Souls* is not engaged in heroic deeds such as would serve as a symbol of national pride. Gogol exposes him as the ultimate embodiment of all that is wrong with the Russian empire and the Russian national character.

One fundamental trait of *Dead Souls* which makes it share the characteristics of an epic is the fact that the metaphor of the Russian troika is classified as an epic or Homeric simile or an extended metaphor. In its very strict sense an extended metaphor is one which establishes several levels of comparison over a number of sentences and even supra phrasal units.

Waxing lyrical about the wretched life of the septuagenarian Plyushkin, Gogol writes:

So as you pass from the tender years of youth into harsh and embittered manhood, make sure you take with you on your journey all the human emotions! Don't leave them on the road, for you will not pick them up afterwards!

The metaphor here finds expression in what is seen as common features between a journey from one destination to another and the stages in a person's life. The road journey arouses in the mind the necessity of packing and carrying the essential things one would need on the way. The journey is materialized into the image of life. In this particular example, those who are set to embark on the journey of life are cautioned to be guided by the wretched example of Plyushkin whose miserliness has sunk him to such tragic depths of misery. The use of such extended metaphor can also be found in Gogol's description of Sobakevich.

There are of course, many faces in the world over the finish of which nature has taken no great pains, has used no fine tools, such as files, gimlets, and the like, having simply gone about it in a rough and ready way: one stroke of the axe and there is a nose, another and there are the lips, the eyes gouged out with a great drill, and without smoothing it, nature thrusts it into the world saying: 'It will do!' Just such a rugged and quite marvelously rough-hewn countenance was that of Sobakevich.

Here nature is likened to an artisan fashioning out an object. The image of the work of an artisan is confirmed here by such words as *files, gimlets, and axe*. But nature is being rebuked here for undertaking its work in a very clumsy manner. The wrong tool is being used for the most delicate type of job. In molding something like the features of a human face one would need a finer tool than an axe. Such perfunctory attention given to the creation of the face has produced a correspondingly ugly result. The name that Gogol puts to that face, *Sobakevich*, is a logical climax. The name is derived from the Russian word for a dog *собака*. When the Russian name formation suffix *-evich* is added to it the resultant name comes close to the English equivalent *son of a bitch*.

7. The extended metaphor of the road

In the case of *Dead Souls*, the extended metaphor permeates the entire spectrum of the novel. The most important extended metaphor in this regard is the metaphor of the road and the idea of travel. It is through the extensive travels of Chichikov that we are introduced to his infernal

business dealings which he carries out with such organized effort and apparently urged on by Lucifer himself. Chichikov's road is a dubious alley leading towards a dead end, and the characters that are dotted on this crooked road are generally eccentric and often stupid as illustrated in the following episode.

All the important personalities of the town have assembled at the home of the chief of police in a panic meeting to find out the real identity of Chichikov. In attendance are the president, the chief of the health department, the public prosecutor and the postmaster. Commonsense is what is conspicuously absent. All sorts of nonsensical theories bob up climaxing in the most stupendous tale of captain Kopeikin and the ludicrous suggestion that Chichikov might be Napoleon Bonaparte. Even though these officials know Nozdryov to be a consummate liar, they nevertheless invite him to seek his opinion. His conjectures are monstrously absurd. Despite the irrationality of the theories about Chichikov's identity, they nevertheless weigh heavily on the public prosecutor, exacting a fatal toll on him. And in case the reader would shrug off the egregious conduct of the officials as improbabilities, Gogol uses the extended metaphor of the road to demonstrate the general irrationality of human behaviour.

Many errors have been made in the world which today, it seems, even a child would not have made. How many crooked, out-of-the-way, narrow, impassable, and devious paths has humanity chosen in the attempt to attain eternal truth, while before it the straight road lay open, like the road leading to a magnificent building destined to become a royal palace. It is wider and more resplendent than all the other paths, lying as it does in the full glare of the sun and lit up by many lights at night, but men have streamed past it in blind darkness. And how many times even when guided by understanding that has descended upon them from heaven, have they still managed to swerve away from it and go astray, have managed in the broad light of day to get into the impassable out-of-the-way places again, have managed again to throw a blinding mist over each other's eyes and, running after will-o'-the-wisps, have managed to reach the brink of the precipice only to ask themselves

afterwards with horror: "Where is the way out? Where is the road?"

The central idea of this extended metaphor is the absurdity of human conduct in general and the incorrigible habit of turning success into failure even when the former is handed over on a silver platter. Having rebelled against success men then turn around and look surprised and wondering about the source of their predicament.

In fact the road and the troika, the traveling contraption constantly plying it, can also be classified as compound or loose metaphors, because they point to many areas of similarity. The road for example serves as a physical web as well as a metaphorical artery linking the various towns and provinces at the centre of activities in the novel, and Chichikov is the cancerous infection spreading its noxious cells around. The metaphor of the road is a matrix of yet another important metaphor linked to the *troika*. It creates the image of a thread linking an intricate mosaic of diverse individuals in different social, cultural and economic settings. It may also be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the Russian character, soul and destiny. The word *troika* is a variant of the Russian word for the figure three (три). It is also used to denote a Russian vehicle drawn by three horses abreast, or to represent the team of three horses pulling the vehicle. It can also mean a group of three people working together, and in *Dead Souls* the trio of Chichikov, Selifan and Petrushka represent the *troika* in Chichikov's traveling party. This trinity, symbolic of the Russian soul and spirit, permeates the entire narration, and apart from being the physical vehicle with which Chichikov embarks on his shadowy adventure, it is also the vehicle that Gogol uses to transport the reader into the mindless and egregious stupidity of his principal characters. The following is an example.

After successfully talking Manilov into parting with his *Dead Souls*, Chichikov heads for the estate of Sabakevich, but gets lost in a rainstorm. Selifan, his driver, misses the correct turn and passes several others subsequently. Tracing one's footsteps in a situation like this would have been the most rational thing to do, but Selifan turns right at the next opportunity whether that junction will lead to their destination or not, is immaterial to him. The most important thing is that he turned right.

But a Russian is never at a loss what to do at a critical moment, he turned without wasting any time on any further reflections to the right at the first crossroads and, shouting at the horses: 'Away with you, honest friends!', he set off at a gallop, without thinking where the road he had taken would lead him

Selifan's abysmal navigational prowess is compounded by his somnolence as *Selifan had for a long time been driving with closed eyes*. Reason and rational judgment don't seem to dictate the behaviour of the driver of the troika who seems to have more confidence in his instincts and over-relies on fate.

The Russian driver has an excellent scent that serves him better than his eyes; that is how it sometimes happens that, speeding along with his eyes shut, he always gets somewhere in the end.

The troika serendipitously stumbles upon Korobochka's estate. In other words the driver simply threw the dice and landed a six. With the trio of Chichikov, Selifan and Petrushka in the driving seat of the Russian troika, the Russian empire will only be hazarding in the dark and looking up to providence for deliverance. Moreover, the trajectory of their journey towards Russia's destiny holds little prospect for the future of Russia. Using the metaphor of the troika still further, Gogol visualizes a resurgent Russia speeding into the future with an incredible and frightening momentum.

And the road is like a cloud of smoke under you, the bridges thunder, and everything falls back and is left behind. The spectator stops dead, struck dumb by the divine miracle: is it not a flash of lightning thrown down by heaven? What is the meaning of this terrifying motion? And what mysterious force is hidden in these horses the like of which the world has never seen? Oh horses, horses – what horses! Are whirlwinds hidden in your manes?

Words such as *smoke, thunder, dead, struck dumb, lightning, terrifying,*

whirlwind – all point to images of tumultuous confusion created by the momentum of the speeding troika which is as uncontrollable and unpredictable as a natural disaster. A more subtle metaphor can be found in the word *manes* (грива). Whereas the word may refer to the growth of long hair on the back of the neck of a horse, in Russian *зрива* has a meteorological meaning referring to the arrangement of clouds in the form of extended ridges. The metaphor of the troika and the fantastic speed associated with it call up the images of the violent or destructive energy of a whirlwind.

The metaphor of the troika is also conjured by Kostanjoglo when he pronounces a damning indictment of the Russian nobility. According to him *one fool sits on top of another fool and uses a third fool as a whip*. It is possible to interpret this metaphor as the stratification of the Russian society into three layers where the monarchy is served by the nobility and then relies on the armed apparatus of the empire as a coercive instrument to whip the monarch's subjects into line.

Another category of extended metaphor which resonates in *Dead Souls* is allegory. From the linguistic point of view an allegory is an extended metaphor in which a story is told to illustrate an important attribute of the subject. In other words it is a fictional narrative with a symbolic reference to the subject being described with which it has instances of correspondence.

In *Dead Souls* Plyushkin is the personification of miserliness, and this trait is responsible for the cynical asymmetry between the abundant and wasting wealth of his estate and the wretched misery which permeates it. His miserliness has ostracized the remainder of his family and causes what is left of his surviving friends to abandon him. He then reminisces over the good old days of his youth. What follows is an allegorical rendition of Plyushkin's pitiable fate. It is an extended metaphor of hope which ends up in tragedy. The allegory relates the desperate struggles of a drowning man who finally succumbs to death.

All of a sudden a sort of ray of warm light passed across that wooden face, there was an expression not so much of feeling as a sort of pale reflection of a feeling, something like the unexpected appearance of a

drowning man on the surface of the water, giving rise to a shout of joy in the crowd on the bank. But in vain do his rejoicing brothers and sisters throw him a rope from the bank and wait for another glimpse of the back or arms exhausted with struggling – that appearance was the last. Everything is still and the quiet surface of the mute element becomes all the more terrible and more desolate than before. So Plyushkin's empty face, after the feeling that passed over it for a moment, looked more callous and more banal than ever.

8. Allusion as a source of metaphorization in *Dead Souls*

Allusion derives its metaphorization essence from its very nature. As a rhetorical tool, it makes an indirect reference by word or phrase to events or characters from an outside source, usually literary, historical, mythological or religious. The author who uses an allusion assumes that the reader knows the fact or event alluded to. The device acts as a sort of rhetorical condensation offering the possibility of squeezing some additional meaning into the word or phrase by prompting the mind to make the relevant associations.

Multinational corporations are Trojan horses and are largely responsible for the spate of coups that have characterized the recent history of Africa.

It requires familiarity with *The Iliad* to be able to decipher the image associated with the Trojan horse. Likewise an expression like *pound of flesh* derives from classical literature and specifically from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. When an author uses an expression such as *the rainforest is a Mecca for eco-tourists*, the assumption is that the reader is familiar with the annual pilgrimage to the Islamic holy lands involving millions of Muslims. In *Dead Souls* the main source of allusions Gogol resorts to is religious teachings.

An example of this is the description of the governor's daughter who had charmed Chichikov with her enchanting attractiveness:

It was not the governor's wife alone who stood before him: on her arm was a young, sixteen-year-old girl, a sweet looking, fair-haired girl, with delicate and graceful features, a pointed chin, an enchantingly

*rounded oval face, such as a painter might have taken
as a model for his Madonna...*

Familiarity with religious iconography should make the reader understand that Madonna refers to Mary the mother of Jesus and more specifically here, a painting or statue of her.

In another example, Chichikov is returning from Plyushkin's estate where he has struck a gold mine far beyond his dreams. He has succeeded in acquiring more than two hundred souls and not only dead ones, but runaway ones as well. He is elated and *wonderful visions are passing through his head! He is in the seventh heaven...*

The concept of the seventh heaven derives from Islamic teachings where the firmament is stratified into seven hierarchies with the highest being the seventh where God the Most High resides. It is also the epitome of glory and pleasure that is unrestricted and infinite. The metaphor therefore establishes that Chichikov was engaged in the wildest daydream possible.

In another instance Chichikov makes a shrewd attempt at starting a conversation with an initially taciturn host, Sabakevich. He begins on a note he hopes will make Sabakevich warm up to him. He tries showering accolades first on the President of the Court of Justice, then on the governor, and lastly on the chief of police. Sabakevich is unimpressed. To him the President of the Court of Justice and the governor are *Gog and Magog*. And together with the chief of police *they're all Judases*. These allusions are taken from Biblical accounts according to which Gog and Magog are great hostile powers under the dominion of Satan, which will appear just before the end of the world. Judas on the other hand is the covetous and dishonest apostle who betrayed Jesus.

Apart from the scriptures, Greek and Roman mythology is a source of a wide variety of allusions, and there is a classic example of this in *Dead Souls*. Chichikov's amorous overtures to the governor's daughter are now an open secret which has attracted the attention of many including the important personalties of the town of N.

*Of course, the postmaster and the president and even
the chief of police himself, as is the custom, bantered
our hero, asking whether he was in love, adding that
they knew perfectly well that Chichikov's heart had*

*been smitten and that they knew who it was who had
shot the arrow;...*

The example above is that of a submerged metaphor encapsulated in an allusion. In other words the word representing the metaphor is implied by a reference to only one aspect of the vehicle which in this example is the word *arrow*, and the reader is supposed to provide the image of Cupid which is an allusion referring to the Roman god of love pictorially represented as a winged boy with a bow and a quiver of arrows with which he causes people to fall deeply in love.

If we stretch this allusion a little further, we would discern a subtle metaphorical nuance associated with the mischief-making side of the Roman god in question. While he has the mythical capacity to link up hearts with his arrow, he also has the notoriety of intentionally provoking trouble by toying with the heart which has fallen in love. This mischief-making characteristic of Cupid, in our opinion, is the aspect which resonates more prominently especially with regard to subsequent developments concerning Chichikov's advances to the governor's daughter. These advances are not only unrequited, more importantly he seems to be making a fool of himself to the mischievous pleasure of Cupid and the curious observers in the town of N.

9. Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper we made reference to Gogol as an enigmatic writer. One of the reasons for such characterization is the very complex message he habitually buries in his outwardly simple writing. Gogol does this through a very delicate literary style and a careful selection of language resources which he so successfully manipulates to serve the underlying message of his novel. Of all the language data that Gogol marshals to elicit a commensurate effect on the reader of *Dead Souls*, metaphor stands out conspicuously. From micro images depicted in simple metaphors comprising single words and word combinations, the metaphor in *Dead Souls* spans to cover entire supra phrasal units. In fact the entire novel can be described as a single extended metaphor of the road. In reading *Dead Souls* therefore, it is critically important to look beyond the surface of the linguistic foregrounding of the story and delve into its stylistic details and especially the images embedded in the use of the metaphor. In so doing, the reader would better appreciate Gogol's highly distilled qualities of imagination which are anchored firmly in his elaborate use of the metaphor in a variety of forms.

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