Chapter 10
Goodman's Metaphorical Exemplification

Abstract Is the painting sad in the same way it is grey? No, Goodman explains that the extension of the class of grey things includes that painting, but the extension of the class of sad things does not, literally, include that painting. Metaphor is analyzed functionally and is not dependent on a realm of inner mental or emotional states: the object both literally possesses some properties and it metaphorically exemplifies other properties. But Goodmanian metaphor must also include the concomitant feature of exemplification, for expression cannot be explained as converse denotation without the notion of exemplification, as it is exemplification that presupposes symbolization, and hence, it is that that provides the basis of Goodman's expression. Exemplification is possession plus reference. Thus through metaphorical exemplification, the picture refers to sadness. The picture is an instance of representation and denotation, and it is also an instance of exemplification and expression. This instantiation is not an ontological relation, but a semantic or conventional one; unlike a metaphysical realist's account, the individual object is not instantiating a universal. This is Goodman's swatch: a relation between two particulars, and not a relation between two separate ontological kinds.

10.1 Possession and Exemplification

Is the painting sad in the same way it is grey? No, for as Goodman points out: "A picture literally possesses a grey color, really belongs to the class of grey things; but only metaphorically does it possess sadness or belong to the class of things that feel sad."[1] The extension of the class of grey things includes that painting, but the extension of the class of sad things does not, literally, include that painting. It might include the viewer as the viewer looks at that painting and feels sad, but it does not include the painting, which cannot feel sad. By possessing the color grey it partakes of two relationships: (1) it literally belongs to the class of grey things, and (2) it metaphorically belongs to the class of sad things.

[1] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* 2nd ed. (Hackett, 1976), 50–51.

D. Shottenkirk, *Nominalism and Its Aftermath,* Synthese Library 343,
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4020-9931-1_10,

Literal possession is fairly easy to understand. An object possesses a property if the object is a member of the property's class. The grey painting literally possesses the color grey and is therefore a member of the class of grey things. Goodman defines literal possession in straightforward extensionalist terms: look at the extension of the term "grey objects" and see whether or not the grey painting is a member of that set. And any given object will literally possess a wide range of properties, including its size, shape, color, etc.

Metaphorical possession is more difficult and it is Goodman's analysis of metaphorical possession that is central to his account of metaphor and *that* is central to his account of expression. Given that Goodman's view of expression makes no reference to inner mental states, the explanation of metaphor is likewise not dependent on a realm of inner mental or emotional states. Instead, metaphor is analyzed functionally: the object both literally possesses some properties and it metaphorically exemplifies other properties. It is thus by explicating the operations of possession and exemplification that metaphor is explained.

The original and literal definition of the term "sad" as applied to an individual who might feel that emotion has now been extended to a broader category incorporating things such as the painting, which cannot be literally sad but can be said to be metaphorically sad. In other words, more entities have been added to the class; metaphor is accomplished by a new and novel change in the extension of the term. Of course, they are more novel when they are initially introduced, as Goodman notes, "Metaphors, like new styles of representation, become more literal as their novelty wanes."[2] He is pointing out that we notice more the initial expansion in the extensional definition of the term, which then quickly becomes absorbed into the general usage of the term.

But Goodmanian metaphor can not be explained only in terms of possession or only with the notion of an increase in the extensional definition of the term; one must include the concomitant feature of exemplification, for expression cannot be explained as converse denotation without the notion of exemplification, as it is exemplification that presupposes symbolization, and hence, it is that that provides the basis of Goodman's expression. This is essential in Goodman's theory. To exemplify is to be an instance of something; it automatically refers to that of which it is an instance. As Goodman states the point, "Exemplification is possession plus reference. To have without symbolizing is merely to possess, while to symbolize without having is to refer in some other way than by exemplifying. The swatch exemplifies only those properties that it both has and refers to."[3] For not all of the object's qualities are examples of metaphorical exemplification; not all of them symbolize. As Goodman states, "A square swatch does not exemplify squareness, and a picture that rapidly increases in market value does not express the property of being a gold mine."[4] Each object, including works of art, has many different predicates,

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[2] Ibid., 68.

[3] Ibid., 53.

[4] Ibid., 86.

but not all of them are part of their definition; only some predicates are thought to be pertinent. This is true of all objects and it is even truer of artworks. We are taught to notice certain predicates of the paintings and interpret them symbolically e.g., the colors, the texture, and the subject-matter. Whether or not the canvas is taut is not particularly relevant, nor is the fact that it was painted by an artist who stood while painting, or sat.

To exemplify is to possess the attribute in question by the social decree that we take that attribute into account when we characterize the object. It may not be the intent of the particular speaker or artist that is of importance, for the speaker/artist may be cognizant of what the symbol is instantiating or may not be so cognizant. But the symbol, whether linguistic or non-verbal, must have as part of its definition that particular symbolic meaning that is revealed through the instantiation. In other words, the symbol, by being part of the language, thus functions as symbolizing a particular thing. The "intent" then is found not necessarily in the mind of the user, but in the structure of the language. Therefore, the mere intent of the artist is neither necessary nor sufficient – the meaning embedded in the symbol must be successfully communicated to others, which, of course, presupposes social agreement on the projection of predicates. The latter is the mechanism by which we socially agree on what to expect and, hence, what we have antecedently valued.

Thus through metaphorical exemplification, the picture refers to sadness. So the picture is an instance of representation and denotation, and it is also an instance of exemplification and expression. Representation and description (whether pictorial or literary) are both denotative of terms, whereas exemplification and expression are denoted by terms. Expression is found in the relation of metaphorical exemplification, and it is metaphorical exemplification that relates the predicate to that that it describes by converse denotation; or more precisely, the relation is a "subrelation of converse denotation", for the referencing must be traveling in both directions. For example, the painting exemplifies sadness and the predicate "sadness" denotes the painting. As Goodman states it, "The constraint upon exemplification as compared with denotation derives from the status of exemplification as a subrelation of the converse of denotation, from the fact that denotation implies reference between two elements in one direction while exemplification implies reference between the two in both directions."[5]

But if Goodman's notion of expression does not contain any reference to inner mental states and instead relies solely upon a referential account of semantics wherein to exemplify is to possess the attribute in question by social decree, and furthermore if that referential account is the result of social conditioning in the form of being taught to notice certain predicates and interpret them symbolically, how exactly does the "novel" use arise and how is it distinguished from mere mistake? If all of our inputs are learned and if symbol usage is an exercise in proper symbol recognition then it becomes somewhat baffling how change actually comes into being.

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[5] Ibid., 59.

When Goodman asks the question, "But what is the logical character of the relationship the picture bears to what it is said to express?"[6] his answer is thus: since the accomplishment of metaphorical exemplification is a consequence of the viewer cognitively grasping the symbol meaning in question, the metaphorical exemplification is found *in the symbol*. But the mechanics of this still need to be further revealed.

10.2 Instantiation as Part of a Constructed System

Goodman insists that the referencing relationship between "sadness" and its symbolization by, among other things in the painting, the color grey is not natural and instead argues that it is a consequence of social construction. He does this by arguing firstly against the view that the symbol and what it symbolizes are two different kinds of entities, particularly as the ontology that posits non-individuals (e.g., platonism) often posits those universals as non-constructed, and, secondly, he argues that the symbols we use are chosen by us. I will explain both of those arguments in that order.

We use the color grey in a painting that symbolizes sadness because grey is one of the devices that can signal that particular expression, which makes instantiation an essential part of what distinguishes aesthetic objects from non-aesthetic objects. It is for that reason that Goodman lists exemplification as, what he calls, the fourth symptom of the aesthetic:

> A fourth and final symptom of the aesthetic is the feature that distinguishes exemplificational from denotational systems and that combines with density to distinguish showing from saying. An experience is exemplified insofar as concerned with properties exemplified or expressed – i.e. properties possessed and shown forth – by a symbol, not merely things the symbol denotes. . ..But exemplification, like denotation, relates a symbol to a referent. . .[7]

The painting *shows* itself as an instance of a sad painting; the symbols are instantiations of sadness. And a symbol is said to exemplify something when it can be said that the particular instance of the symbol instantiates that thing it is also said to refer to. At this juncture, the question must be put: exactly what is the symbol exemplifying? It might seem as though the relationship is between the particular instance of the symbolizing – in this instance a particular sad painting – and the general category of sadness; or, in other words, a relationship between a particular and a universal, where the latter is construed as a non-extensionalist property. While there are clearly non-aesthetic instances of particular symbols being used in ways that are not indicative of a relationship of instantiation in idealist terms e.g., the relationship between the silhouette icon for "men" on the bathroom door and the men for whom the bathroom itself exists, the way in which symbolic grey is an

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[6] Ibid., 50.

[7] Ibid., 253.

instantiation of sadness might seem like the traditional problem of the relationship between a particular and a universal similar to the relationship between a particular just act and the platonic universal "justice". But Goodman (and by extension, Elgin) is quick to point out that it is important to remember that this instantiation is not an ontological relation, but a semantic or conventional one. Unlike a metaphysical realist's account, the individual object is not instantiating a universal. How does Goodman argue this?

The frequently cited example of exemplification by Goodman is the swatch. The swatch of cloth, used by the merchant, exemplifies the color and texture of the fabric it is meant to symbolize. It does not, though, exemplify a tiny square, since that is not for what it is intended; it refers to what the tailored suit will be like. As he states, "Exemplification is possession plus reference. To have without symbolizing is merely to possess, while to symbolize without having is to refer in some other way than by exemplifying. The swatch exemplifies only those properties that it both has and refers to."[8]

In Goodman's terms, something symbolizes when it has been said to refer, and this must be understood in terms of a functioning linguistic (and nonverbal) practice whereby the symbolic usage has been agreed upon by both artist and viewers. It is a kind of ostension: I (as an artist) am pointing to something; I am using certain symbols (instead of my finger), and you (the viewer) understand the referential-finger-pointing embedded in my symbol. It has successfully referred because it has exemplified what it is expressing through the use of socially agreed-upon symbols. And what is being expressed is understood in terms of our labels for the experience; the term "sadness" is the label to which the painting is referring through the instance of reference as seen in exemplification.

This is why Goodman wants to use the example of a label and a swatch; this is a relation between two particulars, and not a relation between two separate ontological kinds. The swatch exemplifies certain labels, such as "brown", "tweed", etc. But it does not exemplify entities of a "different domain" (to use Goodman's phrase); it does not exemplify any universals. Elgin addressed the problem in the following way:

> A term denotes whatever it applies to. This information is helpful only if we have a way to identify terms and their ranges of application. Neither is straightforward.
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> To recognize an expression as a term is to recognize that it functions referentially. But there are serious disagreements as to which expressions do so. The dispute between nominalists and Platonists concerning the status of abstract singular nouns is a case in point. A singular term is, or is replaceable by, a quantifiable variable. A general term is true or false of the objects denoted by such a variable. Since nominalists admit nothing but individuals into their ontologies, a problem arises regarding the interpretation of abstract singular nouns. Some follow Goodman in taking such terms to denote scattered individuals. Others construe them nonreferentially, holding them to be syncategorematic, or to belong to an unperspicuous shorthand. . ..Platonists admit classes as well as individuals into their ontology. Thus, they hold abstract singular nouns to be genuine terms, immediately replaceable

[8] Ibid., 53.

> by quantifiable variables. Some nominalists then disagree with Platonists over the sorts of expressions that can legitimately be supplanted by variables.[9]

If the painting expresses sadness, its "sadness" is not a term that can be quantified over; we cannot replace that term with a variable and treat it as a name, hence, admitting existence claims. The only variable that may have a value is an individual. Though Goodman never characterizes the general term "sad" as an instance of a scattered individual, as his explanation for the aesthetic use of the term is never an ontological explanation though he could have, consistent with his nominalism, made that argument. His account of aesthetic instantiation – always given in referential and semantic terms – does though commit him to entities of only one kind i.e., individuals. It is important to explicate exactly how he does this.

Goodman is aware of the difficulty in explaining instantiation in terms that do not indicate a relationship between a particular circumscribed object and a non-extensionalist – or mental – category, as is shown in his repeated attempts to correct for misinterpretations of the words "property" or "types", (noted especially in the footnotes in *Languages of Art*), and in the organizational titles of his topics for the second part of the book (II The Sound of Pictures), which begin with the title "A Difference in Domain", which ontological position is then denied within the text i.e., there is no difference in ontological domain. The position that argues for a different domain is also denied by the title of the next topic: "A Difference in Direction", which places the difference between what is represented and what is expressed or instantiated firmly within a referential account. But it is Elgin, particularly in the chapter entitled "Exemplification" in her book on Goodman entitled *With Reference to Reference,* who speaks most directly to the platonist problem:

> An objection might, and probably should, be raised at this point. I have been speaking of labels as the objects of exemplification. But in the previous paragraphs it was sadness, terror, bliss, and so on, that were said to be expressed. If expression is a mode of exemplification, then either so-called universals must be exemplified, or labels, expressed. Although I prefer the latter promulgation, as it carries no suggestion of Platonism, the two actually come to much the same thing. Recall of Plato's formulation of the problem of universals: What is that which all just acts have in common by virtue of which they can be called 'just'? His answer: Justice. But we have found that all that the instances of a label need have in common in order to be called by that label is that the label actually apply to them. Accordingly, an action is an instance of justice if and only if the predicate 'just' applies to it. And a picture expresses sadness if and only if it expresses the predicate 'sad'.[10]

When she says, "they come to much the same thing" she is referring to the move, as it were, that takes talk of universals and converts it into talk about words. In the medieval nominalists' explanation of the phenomenon, universals were just words, or "flatus vocis", and we make up the words that refer to the general categories as we experience the similar examples, thereby denying the realist's position that the entities referred to by general terms are mind independent and hence metaphysically

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[9] Catherine Z. Elgin, *With Reference to Reference* (Hackett, 1983), 23.

[10] Ibid., 82.

prior to and independent of our existence. The crucial point in understanding Goodman's scheme is found in the answer to the question whether the same is true of non-verbal symbols. The answer is yes; the symbols exist as category markers for the general term that stands for its repeating instances. The instantiation relation thus is seen as one between labels and swatches, for a label can certainly change and be amended. Goodman stresses this point when he amends an earlier statement:

> Earlier I said that what is exemplified is abstract. Now I have interpreted exemplification as obtaining between the sample and a label – for instance, between the sample and each concrete inscription of a predicate. . ..The 'difference in domain' discussed earlier thus reduces to this: while anything may be denoted, only labels may be exemplified.[11]

In other words, there are no differences in domain; there are just individuals. And the example of the swatch serves perfectly for this notion of instantiation, because that is exactly our notion of a label – one "assigns" a label. The label is put on the package before it is sold, the label is typed up and attached to the wall next to the painting hanging in a gallery; the label is that which we assign to groups of objects or people in order to easily refer to them. This is clearly differentiated from the Platonic notion of "justice".

It is now possible to address Goodman's argument regarding the constructed nature of those symbols. Goodman embraces Gombrich's point that we ought to abandon the obsolete idea that viewing is a merely passive process, and instead emphasize that the aesthetic experience is a kind of comprehension albeit a visual comprehension. It is easy for Goodman to argue from the point that art is symbol interpretation to the claim that the symbols themselves are constructed. The cognitive activity involved in visual art is a cognitive activity of interpreting the use of the symbols that we have devised. If the eye is not passive – if there is no "virgin eye" – then we must *learn* to see what it is that we see, making it a kind of epistemological experience. Furthermore, we change the symbols when they no longer suit our purposes, making it a constructed symbolism e.g., knowledge acquisition of a constructionalist world. Whether the explanation for changing symbols could be "when they no longer suit our purposes", or whether we need a deeper analysis of both the motive for wanting a change and the motive for accepting other's initiating changes as accurate, did not seem to occur to him. For Goodman, the only pertinent point is that the symbols could have been different, and understanding how metaphor is a thing constructed by us through a change in the usage of a term is to understand how symbols are constructed by us. In lieu of this Goodmanian goal, it is necessary to explicate the role of extension in metaphor within his system.

10.3 A Different Extension

What needs to be considered at this point is both how symbols function as a projection of predicates and how it is that symbols can be constructed anew, because wherein the latter is accomplished through the change in the usage (extension) of

[11] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* 2nd ed. (Hackett, 1976), 56–7.

a term, *that* can only be understood as part of the former phenomenon of the projection of predicates.[12] In addition, an explanation of the extensional expansion of a term involves an explanation of Goodman's notion of range and realm. Therefore, in this section, I will explicate the role of the projection of predicates within aesthetics, the notion of range and realm within metaphor, the extensional expansion of terms in the construction of metaphor, and lastly, the distinction between metaphor and ambiguity as elucidated through Goodman's theory of notation.

Goodman explains how it is that the audience identifies symbols by sorting them from alternative symbols when he notes, "...what counts as red, for example, will vary somewhat depending upon whether objects are being classified as red or nonred, or as red or orange or yellow or green or blue or violet."[13] What he is arguing is that the decision to recognize – or project – some predicates instead of others depends often on the category that is being sorted for, and these category decisions are prior to the sorting of individuals. For example, the distinctions between crimson and cadmium will not be noticed if we are sorting for red from nonred; we will not project those predicates. Since we expect to differentiate red from nonred, what we recognize is appropriate to the parsing relative to the antecedent category decision. And we project the predicates we do because we select the ones more often used before. As Goodman describes it,

> To learn and use any language is to resolve problems of projection. On the basis of sample inscriptions of a character we must decide whether other marks, as they appear, belong to that character; and on the basis of sample compliants of a character, we must decide whether other objects comply. Notational and discursive languages are alike in this respect.[14]

While the role of the projection of predicates is evident in this process of language use, the additional role of range i.e., the extension of the term, and realm i.e., the "family" to which the term belongs, in the general choice of predicates still needs to be elucidated if we are to understand how new symbols may emerge according to Goodman. For what predicates are projected depends also upon what predicates have been projected in the past, and metaphor, in turn, depends on that, too. I will now turn to the explanation of metaphor.

A metaphor becomes such by a change in both range and realm. The range is the objects to which the term applies, whereas the realm is the general category or schema being employed. Goodman defines it thus:

> The aggregate of the ranges of extension of the labels in a schema may be called a *realm*. It consists of the objects sorted by the schema – that is, of the objects denoted by at least one of the alternative labels. Thus the range of 'red' comprises all red things while the realm in question may comprise all colored things. But since the realm depends upon the schema within which a label is functioning, and since a label may belong to any number of such schemata, even a label with a unique range seldom operates in a unique realm.[15] (italics his)

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[12] (The projection of predicates was fully discussed in Chapter 6.1.)

[13] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* 2nd ed. (Hackett, 1976), 71-2.

[14] Ibid., 201.

[15] Ibid., 72.

When we take a word or phrase out of its usual context and shift it into a new one, we thereby change the objects over which it ranges and we also extend the aggregate realms of that word/phrase. It's that shift which startles us and awakens in us a new perspective. Given that symbol use is a kind of language with which we are able to communicate to one another, we are able to communicate new things when we use symbols in a heretofore-unused way. In this instance the range i.e., the objects to which it applies, of that predicate "sadness" has been increased, as has the realm to which the predicate is usually assigned, such that we now think of art as possibly exemplifying sadness whereas we had not previously thought of sadness as being exemplified in non-human realms. Thus, there has been a change in both range and realm. Metaphor is a way of giving us new information, new interpretations, or, as Goodman expresses it, "Metaphor, it seems, is a matter of teaching an old word new tricks – of applying an old label in a new way."[16]

Goodman's interest in extensional definitions was not, of course, his alone, but he had shown an early interest in it long before he wrote *Languages of Art*, in articles such as "On Likeness of Meaning", published in 1949, where he examined the implications of extensional definition and extensional expansion, particularly how that affects issues of synonymy and analyticity:

> Now the important point here is this: Although two words have the same extension, certain predicates composed by making identical additions to these two words may have different extensions. It is then perhaps the case that for every two words that differ in meaning either their extensions or the extensions of some corresponding compounds of them has different extensions? If so, difference of meaning among extensionally identical predicates can be explained as difference in the extensions of certain other predications. Or, if we call the extension of a predicate by itself its *primary* extension, and the extension of any of its compounds a *secondary* extension, the thesis is formulated as follows: two terms have the same meaning if and only if they have the same primary and secondary extension.[17] (italics his)

The distinction between a primary extension and a secondary extension is seen again in Goodman's writings almost twenty years later in *Languages of Art*. A metaphor is an extension of a term, and it thus both depends on previous usage – it retains and uses the original definition – and it violates that previous usage because it has extended the primary extension. This is the surprise effect embedded within metaphor: the artist has pointed out that this object, heretofore never used as an instance of this quality "sadness", is now an exemplar of that quality. So our primary definition of "sadness" stays in tact, but it has been extended in its secondary usage that now includes this new aesthetic object.

It is now evident how his explication of the relationship between the symbol and its ability to communicate is wholly a constructed relationship, and as a constructed system there are discernable rules in place, which is explained in Goodman's theory of notation. Part of his analysis of aesthetics is based on the formal constraints centered on issues of relative frequency of shifts in meaning within a particular

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[16] Ibid., 69.

[17] Nelson Goodman, "On Likeness of Meaning", *Analysis* 10 (1949): 5.

range and whether there is a clear border between any two given instances. The latter is called finite differentiation, the former density. A notational scheme i.e., any symbol scheme that consists of characters – such as written music score – has characters that are finitely differentiated from one another (i.e., a "B" note is not a "C" note) and the characters are disjoint, such that any given mark can be determined to belong in some particular category; for all the inscriptions are conspicuously different from one another. Symbol systems such as music, the alphabetical system, and the numerical system all count as notational systems.

Furthermore, in a notational system the relationship between one aural version of the system and a written version, for example, the relationship between a musical performance and the score is a referential relationship; the performance is denoted by the score. Again, the difference in the two versions is not a difference in domain, but a difference in direction. To "have a compliant" is used, by Goodman, interchangeably with "denotes", and "compliance-class" is interchangeable with "extension", so that "whatever is denoted by a symbol complies with it".[18] Hence a performance of a piece of music complies with – or is denoted by – the written score, or more generally, a "symbol system consists of a symbol scheme correlated with a field of reference."[19] If the compliance relationship is invariant, then there is no ambiguity, which is of course what is required of a notational system but not of a non-notational one such as natural languages or visual art. A notational system therefore has the syntactic requirements of character-indifference among the instances of each character i.e., all "A's" are the same as all other "A's"; disjointness; and finite differentiation; and the semantic requirements of unambiguity; finite semantic differentiation; and disjointness of compliance-classes. The latter is important to Goodman for the following reason, "For if two different compliance-classes intersect, some inscription will have two compliants such that one belongs to a compliance-class that the other does not; and a chain from compliant to inscription to compliant will thus lead from a member of one compliance-class to something outside that class."[20]

A painting, on the other hand, does not exhibit a clear border between two instances of characters; grey is not clearly distinct from green-grey; thus, the system is dense. If a system is dense, then there are infinitely many characters where between any two there can be a third. The latter of course implies lack of differentiation. Thus non-notational systems – such as painting, sculpture, or natural languages – are syntactically and semantically dense. As Goodman explains it, "Neither the pictorial characters nor the exemplified properties are differentiated; and exemplified predicates come from a discursive and unlimited natural language. Comparison with the case of an ungraduated thermometer is pertinent here. . ."[21]

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[18] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* 2nd ed. (Hackett, 1976), 144.

[19] Ibid., 143.

[20] Ibid., 150. Also, cf. Goodman's discussion of Carnap's "imperfect community" problem in Chapter 5.1. *Adequacy Criterion*.

[21] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* 2nd ed. (Hackett, 1976), 234.

In this kind of system, there is no finite differentiation because one mark cannot necessarily be said to belong to one category of characters rather than to another. Ambiguity is therefore a part of this system, as Goodman states, "A mark that is unequivocally an inscription of a single character is nevertheless ambiguous if it has different compliants at different times or in different contexts, whether its several ranges result from different literal or from literal and metaphorical uses."[22] Since density implies a lack of finite differentiation, the disjointness requirement of notational systems is violated because a mark can belong to two different characters, whether at the same time or at different times. Clearly, this makes ambiguity quite distinct from metaphor, which is dependent on previous usage of the term.

While Goodman spends much time on distinguishing between notational and non-notational systems, as well as between pictorial and linguistic, discursive languages from non-discursive languages, allographic art (i.e., where legitimate copies are made that are indistinguishable from one another), from autographic art (i.e., where even the most exact copy does not count as genuine) – the central point to these distinctions is summarized by the following statement: "The significant difference lies in the relation of a symbol to others in a denotative system."[23] For example, Goodman argues that the difference between a diagram of Mt. Fujiyama and a drawing of it is not in what is symbolized, but, he states,

> The difference is syntactic: the constitutive aspects of the diagrammatic as compared with the pictorial character are expressly and narrowly restricted. The only relevant features of the diagram are the ordinate and abscissa of each of the points the center of the line passes through. The thickness of the line, its color and intensity, the absolute size of the diagram, etc., do not matter.. . .For the sketch, this is not true. Any thickening or thinning of the line, its color, its contrast with the background, its size, even the qualities of the paper – none of these is ruled out, none can be ignored.[24]

The symbols in the drawing are relatively replete and dense, which is a different kind of symbol usage than in the illustration. The main point Goodman is trying to make is that symbol systems function differently from one another because they have different referential relations from one another, as seen in their differing syntactical and semantical relations. In other words, the "internal structure" of the symbol is irrelevant; what is relevant is that they symbolize differently by functioning in different referential ways within the schema. This is the crucial point. What counts is their function within the schema: for example, whether or not the character is clearly disjoint from other characters is what is important, not whatever the symbol might be symbolizing; it is not the "internal" character of the symbol. In other words, it is refer that counts, no meaning.

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[22] Ibid., 147.

[23] Ibid., 228.

[24] Ibid., 229.