

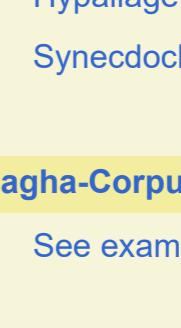
B-4: Allegory

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From The Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

Definition

Allegory is taking a word which has one meaning, and using it in a different but closely related way.^{[1][2][3][4]}



اللاغة

B4: Allegory

Category Figurative Speech (ilm al-bayān)

Synonyms Hypallage Synecdoche

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Types of allegory

There are two types of allegory:

1) Cognitive allegory (*al-majāz al-'aqīl*)

The subject of a verb is not the literal subject of that verb and the addressee is required to think about who the literal subject is. The allegorical subject and the real subject share a relationship which may take one of several forms:

(a) Causality (*al-'alāqa al-sababiyya*) relationship

أعلنت الحكومة قواعد جديدة.

The government has announced new laws.

The government is not an entity that can literally announce new laws. Rather, the communicator is using the word "government" in a figurative way to refer to government officials who have caused the announcement to come about.

(b) Time (*al-'alāqa al-zamāniyya*) relationship

مشى الأميركيون على سطح القمر عام 1969.

The Americans walked on the moon in 1969.

The communicator mentions "Americans" in general, but in reality, only two astronauts actually walked on the moon in 1969. The communicator is referring to the American science, technology, culture, economy and industry - the American nation as a whole - which was behind the moon landings of 1969, when saying that "the Americans" have walked on the moon.

(c) Place relationship (*al-'alāqa al-maḥaliyya*)

تلهّم المدينة الإبداع.

The city inspires creativity.

The city itself is not able to inspire creativity. The communicator is alluding to factors located with the city that inspire creativity.

2) Linguistic allegory (hypallage, *al-majāz al-mursal*)

There are contextual clues to the relationship between the allegorical and the real meanings. This relationship can take one of several forms:

(a) Synecdoche

The whole is allegorically mentioned but only the part is intended literally, or vice-versa. There can be a whole-to-part relationship (*al-'alāqa al-kulliyya*) or a part-to-whole relationship (*al-'alāqa al-juz'iyā*) between the allegorical and the literal:

رأيت لندن في عطلة.

I saw London in my holiday.

The communicator does not mean to say that the whole of London was seen in the holiday. However, by mentioning "London", it is understood that only certain specific areas of London were actually seen. Although the whole is mentioned, only a part is intended. This may convey the sense that the major parts of London, or the most significant parts of London were seen, although not literally every part.

تعال إلى بيتي لتناول الشاي الساعة 4 مساءً.

Come to my house for tea at 4pm.

Explanation

The communicator invites the addressee for tea. However, it is understood that this is an invitation for a visit which incorporates tea, chat, discussion or socialising, and not literally just the tea. By referring to the part, the communicator is referring to the whole. The ultimate objective of the visit is not specified, which leads to a sense of ambiguity, which is the rhetorical aim.

(b) Place relationship (*al-'alāqa al-maḥaliyya*)

The communicator mentions a place, but something related to the place is intended, or vice-versa.

يمكن أن تكون المحاكم في الهند فاسدة.

The courts in India can be corrupt.

The communicator refers to "the courts in India." However, the intention is not to talk about Indian courts in particular. The communicator is referring to the entire legal system in India, or the justice system of the country in general.

زرت عائلة صديقي.

I visited my friend's family

The communicator mentions the friend's family, but the intention is to refer to the city, town, village or neighbourhood where the friend's family lives. This is achieved without mentioning details such as the name of the locality visited.

(c) Causality relationship (*al-'alāqa al-sababiyya*)

The communicator mentions the cause, but the effect is intended.

صديقي فتح عيني على الفساد في المجتمع.

My friend opened my eyes to the corruption in society.

The communicator mentions the eyes that were opened. This caused the communicator to become aware of corruption in society.

(d) Effect relationship (*al-'alāqa al-musababiyya*)

The communicator mentions the result, but the cause is intended.

العمل الجيد يضع الطعام على الطاولة.

A good job puts food on the table.

The communicator intends to say that a good job leads to a good and stable income. The effect of that is that food can be put on the table.

(e) Past relationship (*i'tibār mā kāna*)

The communicator mentions something from the past, but in the present.

ترك طفله المنزل للالتحاق بالجامعة.

My child left home to attend university.

The one who left home is an adult, but the communicator refers to the child that the adult was.

(f) Future relationship (*i'tibār mā sayakūnu*)

The communicator mentions something from the future, but in the present

أزرع شجرة نفاح.

I am planting an apple tree.

The communicator is planting an apple seed or sapling, but refers to what it will be in the future: an apple tree.

(g) Opposite relationship (*al-'alāqa dīddiyā*)

The communicator intends the opposite of what is said.

أتمنى أن تستمتع بحريات الجديدة بعد استقالتك.

I hope you enjoy your new freedoms, now that you have resigned.

(h) Generalisation relationship (*al-'alāqa al-'umūm*)

The communicator make a generalisation.

الهنود فقراء.

Indians are poor.

The communicator mentions a general thing, but the intention the specific components of a diet such as vitamins and minerals which can prevent disease.

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