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## Spatial Metaphor in the Pauline Epistles

### Summary

The paper analyses spatial metaphor in the Pauline epistles, using the Cognitive Metaphor Theory of Lakoff and Johnson, which models metaphor as accessing a more complex target domain by mapping the structure of a simpler source domain onto it. Paul's metaphors are innovative, but their key feature is *alienation*, which offers a fresh perspective on familiar phenomena. For metaphor, this means foregrounding their limitations. But if metaphors make a complex domain more accessible, alienation seems inappropriate for didactic and exhortative epistles. Also, Paul's topics are novel, and need no alienation to overcome familiarity. I put down Paul's motivation for alienated metaphors to the novelty of his thoughts. To express these, he had to use metaphors, which are not fully precise. Thus, he alienated them to show their limitations, and to warn against taking them too far. I.e., alienation cannot only be used for de-familiarization.

Keywords: Spatial metaphor; poetic metaphor; alienation; cognitive metaphor theory.

Dieser Beitrag analysiert räumliche Metaphern in den Paulusbriefen im Rahmen der kognitiven Metapherntheorie Lakoffs und Johnsons. Diese Theorie modelliert Metaphern als Zugriff auf einen komplexeren Sinnbereich („Zieldomäne“), indem man die Struktur eines einfacheren Sinnbereichs („Quelldomäne“) auf die Zieldomäne abbildet. Paulus' Metaphern sind innovativ, doch ihr Hauptmerkmal ist *Verfremdung*, die eine neue Perspektive auf vertraute Phänomene eröffnet. Für Metaphern bedeutet dies, dass ihre Grenzen hervorgehoben werden. Aber wenn Metaphern ein komplexes Konzept zugänglicher machen, erscheint Verfremdung für die didaktischen und ermahnenden Briefe unpassend. Zudem sind die Themen des Paulus neuartig und bedürfen keiner Verfremdung, um Vertrautheit zu überwinden. Ich führe Paulus' Motivation für die Verwendung verfremdender Metaphern auf die Neuartigkeit seiner Gedanken zurück. Um diese ausdrücken zu können, musste er Metaphern verwenden, die nicht vollkommen präzise sind. Daher verfremdete er diese, um ihre Beschränkungen aufzuzeigen und davor zu warnen, sie zu weit zu treiben. Folglich kann Verfremdung nicht nur zur Aufhebung von Vertrautheit eingesetzt werden.

Keywords: Raummetapher; poetische Metapher; Verfremdung; kognitive Metapherntheorie.

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## 1 Introduction

Paul's epistles are well known for their rich imagery, which draws on all aspects of life, from everyday objects and activities to philosophical and theological debates and topics. Many of these images are cast in the form of metaphor, e.g., in the epistle to the Ephesians alone, there are metaphors based on light and darkness, kinship, body, buildings, citizenship, wealth, weapons, garments, and dice.<sup>1</sup> Such metaphors are the topic of this paper. In line with the other papers in the present volume (and because one cannot analyse all of Paul's metaphors in a single paper), the analysis will focus on spatial metaphors.

The paper is structured as follows. First I will discuss the concept of metaphor in general and introduce the Pauline epistles, then I will focus on one of the key spatial metaphors, viz., container-based metaphor, and show the creative and innovative way in which Paul uses this metaphor. In a second step, I will advocate alienation as the key feature in the innovative Pauline metaphors and discuss the function of this feature in the context of the epistles.

## 2 Background

This section will introduce the background of the analysis, the theory of metaphor that is assumed for the present study, its application to poetic discourse, and an attempt to characterise epistles as a genre and a corpus.

### 2.1 Conceptual metaphor theory

In the Aristotelian tradition, metaphor is based on similarity between the literal and the intended interpretation, i.e., they share a (salient) property. The property need not be

1 Gerber 2013.

specified explicitly, according to interactional theories of metaphor,<sup>2</sup> it is identified during the processing of the metaphor by trying to relate the literal and the intended interpretation. For instance, in (1), the connection between the two interpretations ‘flower’ and ‘woman’ is the property of being beautiful:

(1) *There is a rose in Spanish Harlem.*

However, Searle points out (among other problems) that this assumption cannot work for metaphors like (2):<sup>3</sup>

(2) *Sally is a block of ice.*

The problem is that an attempt to identify coldness as the property that establishes the similarity between Sally and the block of ice will only explain one metaphor in terms of another, because ‘coldness’ in the case of Sally is used in a metaphorical sense, too. Consequently, the notion of similarity must be modelled in a different fashion.

Cognitive metaphor theory (CMT)<sup>4</sup> avoids this problem by reformulating the notion of similarity between literal and metaphorical interpretation in terms of a structural mapping across domains. The structure of a cognitively more accessible domain (‘source domain’) is mapped onto a less accessible domain (‘target domain’)<sup>5</sup>. Two well-worked examples are the mapping from the domain of JOURNEY to the one of LIFE, and the one from WAR to LOVE, which show up in numerous metaphorical expressions.<sup>6</sup>

(3) (a) *to be at a crossroads after school*

(b) *moving on after the loss of one’s parents*

(4) (a) *to resist someone’s advances*

(b) *to conquer someone*

In many cases, entities of the SD are merely mapped onto TD entities, e.g., the metaphor ‘LIFE as JOURNEY’ maps a traveller onto someone leading a specific kind of life. In CMT theory, this is called ‘filling of slots.’ Sometimes, however, metaphor introduces specific aspects or entities from the source domain into the target domain. E.g., *crossroads* is used as a means to refer to a potentially far-reaching and difficult choice point in the course

2 Black 1962.

3 Searle 1979.

4 Lakoff and Johnson 1981, Lakoff and Turner 1989, Lakoff 1993.

5 Following Schklowski 1971, these ideas surface already in the thoughts of Potebnja 1905, when he says that ‘the image must be better known than what is to be explained in terms of the image.’

6 The two domains are written in small capitals, following the convention in the field.

of one's life, even though life is not necessarily a goal-oriented process. This notion of orientation or directedness is only introduced through the metaphor 'LIFE as JOURNEY' as the result of mapping the journey's path into the TD, in this way, 'metaphor creates structure'.<sup>7</sup>

Many researchers have pointed out that metaphors seem to violate two of Searle's conversation maxims.<sup>8</sup> The first is the maxim of quality, because metaphors usually are false in a literal interpretation. Assuming cooperativity of the interlocutors, this will trigger an appropriate reinterpretation process on the part of the hearer, but this raises the question of why metaphors do not violate the maxim of manner. Therefore, there must be an additional motivation for them. According to CMT, the motivation lies in the fact that metaphors make domains that are difficult to grasp more accessible.

CMT regards metaphors not just as a rhetorical device to adorn speech, rather, they are a fundamental way of conceptualising the world around us, or of making sense of our environment. Thus, metaphor is deeply embedded into our conceptual system; linguistic metaphor is just a way in which this conceptualisation surfaces.

Since metaphors try to account for less accessible domains in terms of more accessible ones, domains accessible by immediate sensory experience are very good source domains. Space figures prominently among these domains, as it is directly (non-metaphorically) accessible by sense of gravity and stereoscopic vision.

It is thus to be expected that there should be spatial metaphors in the Pauline epistles, too, among them very conventional ones (e.g., TIME is SPACE and LIFE is LOCOMOTION):

- (5) ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως ἔρχεται  
'the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night' (1 Thess. 5:2)<sup>9</sup>
- (6) καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν  
'we too walk in the newness of life' (Rom. 6:4)

All theories of metaphor must take into account the observation that the similarity between the literal and the intended interpretation of a metaphorical expression is only partial. CMT resolves potential tensions between source domain and target domain by the so-called 'invariance principle'. This principle limits the mapping of the SD structure onto the TD to those parts that are compatible with the TD. For instance, in spatial

7 Lakoff and Turner 1989.

8 Searle 1969.

9 The quoted text follows the *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Nestlé/Aland, 28th edition) as published on the website of the Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft

(German Bible Society; <https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de>). Much of the English translation follows the English Standard Version, which is quoted from the same source.

metaphors of time the multi-dimensionality of space cannot be mapped onto the domain of time, which has one single dimension only.

It is also possible to cast different perspectives onto one single target domain, e.g., there are many different metaphors for love, among them LOVE is a FINANCIAL TRANSACTION and LOVE IS MADNESS:

(7) *steal someone's boyfriend*

(8) *crazy for you*

Political discourse uses this phenomenon for its own ends, as in the well-known quote from the Dutch politician Geert Wilders, which implicitly transfers properties of the SD like being catastrophic and irresistible onto the TD:

(9) *a tsunami of islamisation*

The incomplete match between the SD and TD structure and the influence of the SD onto the way the TD is perceived allows for a quite considerable tension between SD and TD, which will play an important role in the analysis of Pauline metaphors in the next sections.

The deep roots of metaphor in our conceptual system raises questions about the role of metaphors in natural language production and processing. In particular, is the use of a linguistic metaphor inextricably linked to a corresponding cognitive process that brings together the two domains involved? Here, following Steen et al., I do not want to rush to conclusions regarding the actual processing of metaphors.<sup>10</sup> This is in line with the observations of Lakoff and Turner, who point out that the conventionalisation of much of (non-poetic) metaphor leads to its automatic and unconscious use.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, it seems advisable to introduce the way in which similes are addressed in the present paper, since they are very similar to metaphors, but differ in that they explicate the comparison, e.g., in terms of *like*. Steen et al. argue for a separation of the two phenomena, as they introduce the mapping between domains in different ways, however, for the purpose of this paper, the distinction is not important and is therefore neglected. I.e., the metaphorical mappings that are discussed in the following may be introduced either in the form of a metaphor or a simile.

10 Steen et al. 2010.

11 Lakoff and Turner 1989.

## 2.2 Poetic metaphor

CMT has considerably advanced research and theorising on metaphor by focusing on everyday language and thought instead of poetical language. But much of Paul's epistles<sup>12</sup> is highly poetical in character, consider for instance the encomium of Christian love (*agápē*) in 1 Cor 13, of which only verses 1–3 are quoted here:

(10) Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, γέγονα χαλκὸς ἤχων ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον. καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω προφητεῖαν καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐθέν εἰμι. κἄν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυχῆσωμαι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι.

‘If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.’

This poetical style of writing is accompanied by a high amount and rich variety of metaphors, consequently, these metaphors fall outside the the main focus of CMT on everyday language and thought. Nevertheless, there is much work that links non-poetic and poetic metaphor. Lakoff and Turner offer an account of poetic metaphor in the CMT framework,<sup>13</sup> while Steen shows that practical work on the detection (and annotation) of metaphors in non-poetic discourse extends straightforwardly to poetic discourse as well.<sup>14</sup>

In the following, Lakoff and Turner's classification of poetic metaphors will be taken as a guide for a first analysis of Pauline metaphors.<sup>15</sup> They try to define aspects of ‘poeticity’ of metaphor in terms of CMT, by analysing the differences between poetic and non-poetic metaphor. ‘What makes poetic metaphor noticeable and memorable’ they say, is ‘the special, nonautomatic use to which ordinary, automatic modes of thought are put.’<sup>16</sup> Due to the poetic character of much in the Pauline epistles, it is advisable to subject our corpus to these analytic tools.

This conscious identification and processing of poetic metaphors can be effected in a number of ways, first by *elaboration*, by which Lakoff and Turner refer to unusual

12 See e.g. Lehnert 2013.

13 Lakoff and Turner 1989.

14 Steen 2009.

15 This is not meant to rule out the possibility that there could be poetic metaphors not covered by this account, as argued for e.g. by Semino and Steen 2008.

16 Lakoff and Turner 1989.

variation in the mapping of SD elements onto corresponding elements in the TD ('filling in slots'). As an example, consider the metaphorical mapping CAUSATION IS COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION in (11):

- (11) τὰ γὰρ ὀψώνια τῆς ἁμαρτίας θάνατος  
 'the wages of sin is death indeed' (Rom 6:23)

The unusual mapping is encoded in the word ὀψώνια 'wages': Death is not only the consequence of sinning, Sin is represented (and personified) as employer who contracts sinners.

In a similar way, the highly familiar metaphor 'SPACE IS TIME' is elaborated in example (5): The day of the Lord is not just presented as an object that is coming closer, its approach is unexpected and surprising (and perhaps even unwelcome), like the break-in of a burglar.

The second property that can identify poetic metaphors is *questioning*, i.e., putting into doubt the usefulness of metaphors for understanding target domains.

The metaphor can be explicitly challenged, or in an indirect way, by highlighting its boundaries. These boundaries are set by the Invariance Principle and referring to them explicitly considerably highlights the differences between SD and TD. As an example for an indirect challenge, consider Paul's questioning of the metaphor that maps a race onto the strive for a Christian life:

- (12) Οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι οἱ ἐν σταδίῳ τρέχοντες πάντες μὲν τρέχουσιν, εἷς δὲ λαμβάνει τὸ βραβεῖον; οὕτως τρέχετε ἵνα καταλάβητε.  
 'Don't you know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? So run that you may get it.' (1 Cor. 9:24)

This metaphor draws attention to the SD phenomenon that there can only be one winner, even though this observation cannot be mapped onto the TD. Rather, the TD should comprise a multitude of people who eventually are rewarded for a truly Christian life (which corresponds to the race in the SD). The effect in this case is that Christians are admonished to strive for a Christian life as if they were competing for a single place in heaven.

Third, metaphors can be *composed* in that several metaphors can be combined in one single expression. As a Pauline example of this technique, consider (13):

- (13) ἔπινον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός.  
 ‘and indeed they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock  
 was Christ’ (Rom 2:29)

The first clause comprises no less than three metaphorical expressions, starting with πέτρα ‘rock’ for Christ, whose metaphorical character is first highlighted by the modifying adjective πνευματικός ‘spiritual’ (and then expounded in the second clause). The verbs ἀκολουθέω ‘follow’ and πίνω ‘drink’ are metaphorical, too (for ‘watch over’ and ‘profit’), too.

These metaphors are furthermore closely tied together by the deliberately contradictory properties of the respective source domains of the metaphors πέτρα vs. πίνω (arid - wet) and πέτρα vs. ἀκολουθέω (mobile - immobile).<sup>17</sup>

This technique of composition is a cover term for a number of processes, which exhibit different degrees of integration during composition: The metaphors can merely be juxtaposed, or linked together like in (13), or be truly blended in that there is identity or a sense relation between the source and target domains involved.

Such a blended composition emerges in Sassoon’s poem *The next war*, in the form of a twofold metaphor for battle noises as singing:

- (14) *He’s spat at us with bullets and he’s coughed*  
*Shrapnel. We chorussed when he sang aloft*

Noises of projectiles are first presented metaphorically as human noises and sounds (spitting, coughing, and eventually to singing; emitted by the personification of death). These noises are then accompanied by the soldiers’ screams, which are also likened to singing. The second metaphor then depicts the battle noises (in the form of the soldiers’ reaction to projectiles) as singing, too, but this time as the interaction between preceptor and chorus.

Finally, *extension* refers to the technique of deliberately introducing entities into the TD that do not really fit there. This deliberately goes against the grain of the Invariance Principle and is more than just an addition of material (introducing ‘additional slots’) to the TD like in the case of the directedness of life in (3).

17 The image of the rock yielding water to drink alludes to the events in Num 20, but there both reference to the rock and to the drinking are used in a non-metaphorical way. This allusion instantiates what Di Biase-Dyson 2015 calls the “metaphorical

‘charging’ of the citations” in her analyses of intertextuality in Ancient Egyptian wisdom texts. Example (46) below works in a similar way but explicates the metaphor in the citation.



Lakoff and Turner quote Hamlet's lines as an example, in which death is introduced metaphorically as sleep,<sup>18</sup> which brings the idea of dreaming into death, even though dreaming is not compatible with death:

- (15) *To sleep? Perchance to dream! Ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come?*

In the Pauline epistles we even find the reverse pattern, in which - in principle obligatory - TD material is deliberately removed, e.g., if life as a sinner is introduced metaphorically as death. Since death is just an inert state, this metaphor suggests that all activities of sinners are not for real, they are a mere sham:

- (16) Καὶ ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, ἐν αἷς ποτε περιεπατήσατε κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου  
'And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you once walked, following the course of this world...' (Eph 2:1-2)

CMT points out an additional way in which poetry introduces innovation in the domain of metaphors, viz., *image metaphors*, which are not part of the way in which we usually conceptualise the world.<sup>19</sup>

While image metaphors involve just another mapping from a SD into a TD, here the domains are conventional mental images. In Robert Herrick's *On Julia's clothes*, for instance, there is such a mapping from the visual impression of changing light reflections on silk that is moving to the light reflections on rushing water:

- (17) *Whenas in silks my Julia goes,  
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows  
That liquefaction of her clothes.*

Another well-known example is Rilke's description of the tumbling of falling leaves as a 'negating gesture' in the poem *Herbst* ('autumn'). This kind of poetic mapping will not play a role in the investigation of Pauline epistles pursued in this paper, however.

In the next section, these categories of poetic metaphors will be retraced in the domain of spatial metaphors in the Pauline epistles. I will argue that while these categories are valuable in analysing metaphor, they cannot be used as a kind of metric for poeticity or fully explain the poetic effect of many Pauline metaphors. Rather, the poeticity of

18 Lakoff and Turner 1989.

19 Lakoff and Turner 1989.

these metaphors emerges through *alienation* in the sense of Schklowski,<sup>20</sup> which does not facilitate the approach to a specific target domain but enforces a novel and perhaps even deliberately obfuscated perspective on otherwise familiar domains.

### 2.3 Epistles as a genre and as a corpus

Before embarking on the analysis of the metaphors, I want to finish off this section with some (philological) remarks on epistles, both from the viewpoint of genre, and from the perspective of using them as a corpus for metaphor research.

The corpus of the present analysis comprises the 13 epistles traditionally ascribed to Paul. This *Corpus Paulinum* thus excludes the epistle to the Hebrews. Paul's authorship of these 13 epistles has been the matter of a long debate in theology. In the meantime, there is agreement on his authorship for Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon, the so-called *homologoumena*, while his authorship is doubted for the other epistles.<sup>21</sup> However, for ease of presentation, I will keep talking of 'Pauline' epistles in the following.

These epistles have a characteristic structure, they exhibit features of letters like naming sender and addressee, salutation, personal messages, and greetings, often there is a section of thanksgiving, too.

However, from the viewpoint of content, the epistles are no prototypical letters. Their main parts develop and elaborate Christian theology, often in response to concrete issues in the respective Christian communities. (Paul is the founder of Christian theology.) The epistles are a mixed genre in that they also comprise exhortations and other persuasive elements. There are almost no narrative elements in the epistles, as opposed to e.g. the Gospels.

This characterisation of epistles as both didactic and persuasive suggests a high number of metaphors, because metaphors occur frequently in didactic as well as in persuasive genres. Previous work puts down the use of metaphor in didactic discourse to an attempt to bridge the gap between experts and non-experts (e.g., in medical discourse).<sup>22</sup> In persuasive discourse, metaphor is analysed as a device to support the cause of the text by presenting it under specific perspectives.<sup>23</sup>

However, the frequency of spatial and other metaphors in the Pauline epistles surpasses even high expectations: 577 sentences with spatial metaphors alone were found in the Pauline corpus. This is but a small subset of all the metaphors found in the corpus;

20 Schklowski 1971.

21 Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus; Niebuhr 2011.

22 Gwyn 1999.

23 Lakoff 1996.

it abounds with a plethora of metaphors.<sup>24</sup> Some kinds of metaphors are characteristic of specific epistles (e.g., legal metaphors in the epistle to the Romans).<sup>25</sup>

Previous work on Paul's metaphors typically focuses on specific metaphors. Examples are metaphors with the SDs family, body, competition, household, or plants.<sup>26</sup>

Primarily spatial metaphors have received less attention; the first study emerged within Topoi was Gerber, who investigated the horizontal vs. vertical dimension in the epistle to the Ephesians from a theological point of view. Linguists, to my knowledge, have not investigated Pauline metaphors intensively so far.<sup>27</sup>

### 3 Metaphors in Pauline epistles

In this section, metaphors in the Pauline epistles will be investigated according to the fourfold classification of poetic metaphors as expounded in section 2.2. This classification will mostly be applied to a specific kind of spatial metaphor, viz., container metaphors, i.e., metaphors that use the domain of containers as their source domain.

#### 3.1 Elaborating metaphors

Elaboration of metaphors refers to unusual ways of mapping SD elements onto already existing elements in the TD. This phenomenon is implemented in the realm of container metaphors in that there is a very wide range of variation of containers in the source domain, and of container and content equivalent in the target domain. In addition, the SD relation between container and content (and with it, the corresponding TD relation) varies considerably.

Note that not all of the metaphors quoted in this subsection are themselves poetic, in fact, there is a cline from quite conventional metaphors, e.g., (22) or (30), to elaborated ones. But the conventional metaphors are important, too, they serve as the backdrop against which the elaboration of other metaphors of the same kind sticks out even more.

First, the SD containers range from highly prototypical containers like vessels to less prototypical ones such as clothes or temples. (The latter introduce a special case of container metaphor, viz., BODY is HOUSE.)

(18) ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν  
 'but we have this treasure in vessels of clay' (2 Cor 4:7)

24 See Williams 1999 for a classification of these metaphors from a culture-studies point of view.

26 See Williams 1999 for references.

25 See Gemünden and Theißen 1999.

27 Gerber 2013.

- (19) ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν  
 ‘put on the Lord Jesus Christ’ (Rom 13:14)
- (20) τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστίν  
 ‘your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you’ (1 Cor 6:19)
- (21) ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος  
 ‘we are the temple of the living God’ (2 Cor. 6:16)

Abstract states show up in the role of containers, too. The content can be inside them, but also move in and out of these containers. Consequently, such metaphors can be subsumed under the global event structure metaphor, in particular, the subcases STATE IS LOCATION, CHANGE IS MOTION, and CAUSATION IS CONTROL OVER AN ENTITY RELATIVE TO A LOCATION, as illustrated in (22)–(24):

- (22) ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες  
 ‘living in malice and envy’ (Tit 3:3)
- (23) μέχρι καταντήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (Eph 4:13)  
 ‘until we all reach the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God’
- (24) πρὸς τὰ εἰδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε ἀπαγόμενοι  
 ‘you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led’ (1 Cor 12:2)

To these three subcases, we can add as a fourth one the metaphorical use of the *continuation* of a location, which is expressed in the adverb ἔτι ‘still’. The metaphor is then ‘PERSISTENCE OF LOCATION IS PERSISTENCE OF STATE.

- (25) οὔτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ  
 ‘How can we who died to sin still live in it?’ (Rom 6:2)

Next, the TD equivalent of containers is highly variable too, Man and God figure prominently here, but also the Cross and abstract entities.

- (26) ἵνα μὴ κενωθῇ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
 ‘lest the cross of Christ be emptied’ (1 Cor 1:17)
- (27) βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν ἣν παρέλαβες ἐν κυρίῳ, ἵνα αὐτὴν πληροῖς  
 ‘take heed to the ministry that you received in the Lord, that you might fill it’ (Col 4:17)

This variation reappears for the TD equivalent of the content of a container. Again, we find Man and God, but also actions or states, and even a ‘yes’.

- (28) χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ  
 ‘rejoice in the Lord’ (Phil 3:1)
- (29) ἀλλὰ ναὶ ἐν αὐτῷ γέγονεν  
 ‘but in him is always a yes’ (2 Cor 1:19)

Finally, the relation between container and content varies considerably, too. The content may be just inside, in a specific position, inert but fastened, animate, or active:

- (30) πεπληρωμένους πάση ἀδικίᾳ πονηρίᾳ πλεονεξίᾳ κακίᾳ, μεστοὺς φθόνου φόβου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας  
 ‘filled with all unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.’ (Rom 1:29)
- (31) ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ  
 ‘you are standing fast in the Lord’ (1 Thess 3:8)
- (32) ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ ἐποικοδομούμενοι ἐν αὐτῷ  
 ‘firmly rooted and built up in him’ (Col 2:7)
- (33) ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία  
 ‘the sin that dwells in me’ (Rom 7:20)
- (34) ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει  
 ‘he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion’ (Phil 1:6)

This unusual variation heightens the awareness of the metaphorical character of the expressions, which is in marked contrast to the non-poetical metaphors that are not specifically announced and often go unnoticed in conversation.

### 3.2 Questioning metaphors

Readers or hearers can also be made aware of the metaphorical character of an expression by challenging the aptness of a metaphor directly or in terms of showing the limits of the structural mapping from SD to TD.

This technique is employed in the Pauline corpus, too, a very ingenious example is the vessel metaphor of 2 Timothy 2. It starts off quite conventionally by distinguishing different kinds of vessels, according to their material and their function:

- (35) Ἐν μεγάλῃ δὲ οἰκίᾳ οὐκ ἔστιν μόνου σκεύη χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργυροῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ ξύλινα καὶ ὄστράκινα, καὶ ἃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴν ἃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν  
 ‘Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honourable use, some for dishonourable.’ (2 Tim 2:20)

But the function of vessels is closely tied to the content they are supposed to carry. This distinction is reflected in the material of the vessels, in that there is an interdependence between their value (or the value of their material) and the agreeableness of their content (mediated by the degree of honourableness of their function). This interdependence is stable, it is fixed for the vessel once and for all by language-external culture-based conventions and rules. The metaphorical interpretation of this description is based on the metaphor ‘PERSONS ARE CONTAINERS’, here, for ideas. Following the structure of the source domain, we can deduce for the target domain that there are more and less valuable human beings, and that their value depends on the ideas and beliefs that they carry. According to their function, these human beings (still addressed by the vessel metaphor) may then be the object of God’s wrath or of His glory:

- (36) εἰ δὲ θέλω ὁ θεὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατόν αὐτοῦ ἠνεγκεν ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ σκεύη ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν, καὶ ἵνα γνωρίσῃ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σκεύη ἐλέους ἃ προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν  
 ‘What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory?’ (Rom 9:22–23)

This SD-based reasoning on the TD, however, is then contested by the next verse. The challenge for the metaphor is the observation that Man is not inert like a vessel, he is capable of determining the ideas and beliefs that he holds. In this way, he can manipulate his function:

- (37) ἐὰν οὖν τις ἐκκαθάρῃ ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τούτων, ἔσται σκεῦος εἰς τιμὴν  
 ‘Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from this, he will be a vessel for honourable use’ (2 Tim 2:21)

In this way, the content turns out to be the decisive factor that overrules substance, by changing one’s ideas and beliefs one can also change one’s value.

The function of questioning the metaphor is an attempt to highlight one important difference between vessels and human beings: Man is more than just an inert vessel, he has a free will and can take fate into his own hands to improve his worthiness. So the questioning of the vessel metaphor serves as an exhortation to overcome one's inertia and become a better person by actively working on one's beliefs and ideas.

### 3.3 Combining metaphors

The combination of metaphors shows up in vessel metaphors in the Pauline corpus, too. As a first instance, consider metaphors that combine the global event structure metaphor with the GOOD IS UP metaphor, in particular, CHANGE IS MOTION. In such a combination, a container functions as the beginning or end of a downward trajectory. These combinations show an extremely high degree of integration in that the two metaphors are blended by unifying their source and target domains (spatial and abstract change), respectively. This is a much closer interaction than just juxtaposing them.

(38) τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε

'you have fallen from grace' (Gal 5:4)

(39) οἱ δὲ βουλόμενοι πλουτεῖν ἐμπίπτουσιν εἰς πειρασμὸν καὶ παγίδα καὶ ἐπιθυμίας πολλὰς ἀνοήτους καὶ βλαβεράς, αἵτινες βυθίζουσιν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰς ὄλεθρον καὶ ἀπώλειαν.

'But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.' (1 Tim 6:9)

Consequently, the direction of the movement and with it, the change of state w.r.t. location in the container is evaluated, it is a change to the worse. The container is evaluated, too, depending on its position in the path of the movement. If it situated at the beginning of the path, it is depicted as a positive state that is terminated, like grace in (38). However, if its place is at the end of the path, it is a negative state that comes to pass, such as a depraved state of mind in (39).

As a second example, consider Col 2:3, which contains another vessel metaphor. Vessels are in many cases not transparent, thus, they might hide their content from view. This observation is employed in the following metaphor, which combines the vessel metaphor with the metaphor IDEAS ARE PERCEPTIONS (the subcase UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING).

(40) ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοί

'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col 2:3)

In this metaphor, Christ is depicted as possessing the whole range of wisdom and knowledge, which is hidden to Man, until the time Christ shares his knowledge with him.

Finally, another combination blends the vessel metaphor and a subcase of the event structure metaphor, viz., OPPORTUNITIES ARE OPEN PATHS. In the following example, the metaphor is used to introduce a lack of opportunities in terms of confinement. The state of disobedience is thus simultaneously described as a vessel and as a prison:

- (41) συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπειθείαν  
 ‘for God has imprisoned all in disobedience’ (Rom. 11:32)

### 3.4 Extending metaphors

Extension of metaphors introduces additional structure from the SD into the TD, which does not really fit in easily with the TD. As an example, consider the metaphorical description of love as space in Ephesians 3. This is an instance of the metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS, but in this metaphor, the three dimensions of space are introduced into the target domain, as if it was possible to distinguish dimensions in love, too:

- (42) ἵνα ἐξισχύσητε καταλαβέσθαι σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις τί τὸ πλάτος καὶ μήκος καὶ ὕψος καὶ βάθος, γινῶναί τε τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
 ‘you may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge’ (Eph 3:18-19)

Other examples of extending spatial metaphors present faith as a kind of path. This gives it a sense of direction that does not really blend in intuitively with the concept of faith:

- (43) τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν τοῖς ἵχνεσιν τῆς πίστεως  
 ‘to those walking in the footsteps of the faith’ (Rom 4:12)  
 (44) περὶ τὴν πίστιν ἠστόχησαν  
 ‘they have swerved from the faith’ (1 Tim 6:21)

There are at least two ways in which this extension might be interpreted. Either faith is not stative but a development passing through several stages of completion, or it is a kind of guidance on how to lead one’s life. Note that either interpretation is compatible with the additional complication in the first example, which introduces the path in terms of



footsteps: This indicates that others have trod this path before, there are exemplars of faith.

In sum, the classification of poetical metaphor has proven to be applicable to the spatial metaphors in the Pauline epistles. There are numerous instances of elaborating, questioning, or combining metaphors, which were illustrated with vessel metaphors, and also instances of extending metaphors.

However, even though the classification proved fruitful for the analysis of Pauline metaphors, shedding much light on the nature of these metaphors, it cannot (nor is it intended to) answer the question of what the peculiarity or common denominator of these metaphors is, and why they are used in the epistles.

In the following section, I will propose that much of these metaphors follows a very general principle, viz., the deliberate *alienation* of metaphors that does not focus on the similarities between SD and TD but rather emphasises their differences.

## 4 Metaphor and alienation

CMT suggests that metaphors in non-poetic discourse have a clear function, viz., to facilitate the understanding of and reasoning with conceptual domains by structuring parts of them in terms of structures borrowed from another. This borrowing takes the form of a structural mapping between domains. In this way, metaphors constitute a very fundamental process of conceptualisation, they function so effortlessly and unconsciously as to be highly conventionalised in many cases. I.e., metaphor itself is a very unobtrusive phenomenon that goes unnoticed in most cases.

There is an obvious causal link between the straightforward mechanics and the inconspicuity of the metaphorical mapping. There is no complicated interaction between two domains, just a transfer in one direction. Any potential mismatch between the structures of source and target domain is resolved in favour of the latter by the Invariance Principle.

The ensuing unobtrusiveness of metaphors makes them a very efficient tool for understanding and reasoning with complex domains in non-poetical language.

### 4.1 The foundation of poetic metaphors in the Pauline epistles

But even for non-poetic discourse, this account of metaphor is an idealisation. Modelling it in terms of a structural mapping between domains suggests a mathematically strict and complete transfer of entities and the relations between them, which is in dan-

ger of obfuscating the fact that the mapping between SD and TD need not be perfect at all.

While this is neglected – or, at least, backgrounded – in non-poetic discourse (though sometimes exploited in politics), in order not to hamper understanding, it lies at the heart of metaphorical innovation in poetic discourse: The tension between SD and TD, which arises from the limitations of the structural mapping between them, is foregrounded by unusual mappings, by the introduction of potentially alien elements into the TD through the mapping, or by explicitly pointing out the limits of the mapping (a.k.a. questioning the metaphor). Combining metaphors, too, can emphasise the tension between SD and TD, because it highlights the fact that a specific metaphor can only capture a part of a specific target domain, thus, several SDs are needed in combination to yield a reasonably comprehensive account of the TD.

Metaphorical innovation thus enforces a fresh and unconventional perspective on the TD, which is in line with the general process of poetic *alienation*.<sup>28</sup> Alienation is a process that deliberately lengthens and aggravates the process of perceiving an in principle familiar object because its aims at providing the reader with a sensation of the object that is based on very conscious and intensive perception instead of just recognising the object without focussing on it.

I.e., alienation presents familiar objects deliberately in an unexpected and novel way in order to force the reader not just to take things for granted but to have a really close look at them that reveals their essence.

For metaphorical expressions, alienation works by going against the grain by emphasising the *dissimilitude* of source and target domain rather than their similitude. This emphasis is exactly the overarching foundation of the techniques of poetic metaphor as discussed so far. They all hamper the well-oiled machinery of understanding through metaphor by exposing its limits and the way it functions.

The impact of this dissimilitude on the source domain often is one that can be described in terms of the notions of *schema refreshment* or *schema disruption*.<sup>29</sup> Schemas encode culturally entrenched practices and are typically triggered by reference to their central participants. Such a reference creates the expectation that the schema is executed faithfully and completely. For instance, words like *regulars*, *draft*, or *pub* invoke a schema for visiting pubs that includes getting one's beer at the bar, paying for it immediately, etc. (at least in the UK).

Refreshed schemas are executed in a deviant or novel way, but when they are not executed fully, we talk about schema disruption. One possible way of achieving these effects is by metaphor, by invoking schemas in the source domain, because due to the

28 As described in Schklowski 1971 and introduced into and made fruitful for biblical hermeneutics by researchers like Ricœur 1975 and Harnisch 1990.

29 Stockwell 2002.

Invariance Principle any discrepancies between source and target domain are resolved in favour of the latter.

For instance, the vessel metaphor in 2 Tim as expounded in section 3.2 involves a schema disruption in that the expectations triggered by the vessel schema are thwarted: The interrelation between the value or material of a vessel and its function and content is first explicitly introduced only to be denied later when the possibility of overcoming this interrelation is introduced. Another example is the runner metaphor of (12) from 1 Cor. 9:24, where metaphoricity disrupts expectations introduced by previous knowledge of the source domain.

In the following, I will show that there are additional techniques of alienation that figure prominently in the metaphors of the Pauline corpus. The focus will be on two techniques, first, juxtaposing literal and metaphorical readings of expressions, which introduces a zeugmatic effect, and second, the deliberate construction of apparent contradictions through metaphorical mappings.

#### 4.2 Kinds of alienation

The juxtaposition of literal and metaphorical readings of expressions shows up in the domain of spatial metaphor in many cases. Often the readings pertain to the same expression, but it is also possible to find them for expressions linked by a sense relation like antonymy (ἄπειμι ‘I am absent’ vs. σὺν ὑμῖν εἶμι ‘I am with you’):

- (45) εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῇ σαρκὶ ἄπειμι, ἀλλὰ τῷ πνεύματι σὺν ὑμῖν εἶμι  
 ‘though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit’ (Col. 2:5)

The zeugmatic effect shows up especially for more extended metaphors like the veil metaphor in the second epistle to the Corinthians. It starts off with a literal use of the word κάλυμμα ‘veil’, referring to an event after Moses’ return from Mount Sinai with the tablets of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:33):

- (46) ...Μωϋσῆς ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου.  
 ‘...Moses would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the end of what was fading away.’<sup>30</sup> (2 Cor. 3:13)

30 The relative clause *what was fading away* refers to the shine on Moses’ face brought about by being in God’s presence on Mount Sinai.

But then the veil emerges as a metaphor for ignorance, which once again instantiates the metaphor IDEAS ARE PERCEPTIONS (the subcase UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING). This metaphor is carried on through a number of verses, of which only the first one is quoted here:

(47) ἀλλ' ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν. ἄχρι γὰρ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῆ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει, μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται.

'But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away.' (2 Cor. 3:14)

This zeugmatic effect shows up for other kinds of metaphors, too, e.g., in 2 Cor 3:3, where the audience is called a letter of Christ, written not with ink (as in a real letter), but with the spirit of the living God.

The second technique is to bring together at least potentially contradictory traits through metaphor. This can be effected within a single metaphor, here the SD and TD give rise to this potential contradiction. As an example, consider Paul's depiction of the process of bringing people to the faith as giving birth to children, even though he is a man, and the children have already fully grown up:

(48) τέκνα μου, οὓς πάλιν ὠδίνω μέχρις οὗ μορφωθῆ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν

'My children, with whom I am again in labour until Christ is formed in you' (Gal. 4:19)

This deliberate combination of contradictory traits can also emerge through the formulation of several metaphors. For instance, in the epistle to the Romans we find Man dwelling in sin as well as sin dwelling in Man:

(49) οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ

'How can we who died to sin still live in it?' (Rom 6:2)

(50) [= (33)] ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία

'the sin that dwells in me' (Rom 7:20)

From a mathematical point of view, this does not make sense at all: if *A* (properly) contains *B*, then the reverse relation cannot hold (the relation of containment is 'asymmetric' in this respect). But even for the less mathematically inclined these two metaphors are strange from the viewpoint of the source domain, because everyday experience tells

us that there is a sharp contrast between prototypical containers and prototypical content, and that these roles cannot be switched easily.

The deliberate composition of this apparent contradiction could be explained and resolved in that we could interpret the relation of containment as improper containment, which includes spatial coextension as a boundary case. This makes the relation ‘antisymmetric’ in that simultaneous improper containment of *A* in *B* and vice versa entails spatial coextension of *A* and *B*, i.e., the suggestion seems to that Man and sin permeate each other completely.<sup>31</sup>

In sum, the innovation in Pauline metaphor lies in alienation. Rather than emphasising the common ground between source and target domain, and in this way making the target domain more accessible, the limitations of the metaphorical mapping are foregrounded, which is an obstacle for the easy processing of the metaphor.

## 5 The purpose of poetic metaphors in the Pauline epistles

In the last section I have presented alienation as the overarching feature of Pauline metaphors on the example of spatial metaphors. In this respect, Gerber diagnosis that Pauline epistles are brimful of ‘extravagant metaphors,’ is borne out for spatial metaphors too.<sup>32</sup>

But while this analysis might account for the highly poetic character of many passages in the Pauline corpus, it saddles us with an even more pressing question: If alienation and subversion of conventions of conceptualising our environment through metaphors are the hallmark of (at least some) poetry, and if poetry serves no purpose but itself,<sup>33</sup> then why use them in a genre that clearly has a purpose outside itself? Recall that epistles serve a didactic and persuasive purpose. In Stockwell’s terms, Paul should have used ‘explanatory’ instead of ‘expressive’ metaphors, which are distinguished by the range of interpretation possibilities that they allow.<sup>34</sup>

31 At a first glance it looks as if one could make the same point for the notions ‘Man in God’ and ‘God in Man’ too. Examples are numerous, e.g.:

(i) Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ‘Christ in you’ (Col. 1:27)

(ii) ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ‘you are in Jesus Christ’ (1 Cor. 1:30)

However, the notion of ‘Man filled with God’ (as expressed in the word ‘enthusiastic’) has a long-standing history in antiquity, which would allow a literal interpretation Schlesier 2006. Considering Paul’s exposure to Greek literature and philosophy, it is thus a matter of further debate whether he in-

roduced this notion in a literal, or a metaphorical way.

For the converse notion of ‘Man in God’ it has been claimed, too, that it had existed in antiquity, too, as part of the myths on which the beliefs and rites of ‘Orphic’ circles were based Graf and Johnston 2007. However, the dating of these myths is controversial Edmonds 2013, so it is not probable that for Paul this notion was a non-metaphorical one.

I thank Renate Schlesier for in-depth discussion of the the notions ‘Man in God’ and ‘God in Man’.

32 Gerber 2005.

33 the poetic function of Jakobson 1960.

34 Stockwell 2002.

What is more, alienation is defined as a technique to enforce a fresh perspective on phenomena that are only too familiar. But the topics of Paul's epistles are entirely novel, so no familiarity or conventionalisation of perspective can be assumed for them.

As a reaction to this question, I can only offer a first tentative hypothesis, which is based on the fact that Paul was the founder of Christian theology, and the basis of much theological reasoning up to the present day. For instance, the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith and grace alone is based mostly on the epistle to the Romans, consider e.g. the references in the joint declaration on the doctrine of justification by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church in the year 1999.<sup>35</sup>

When Paul tried to express his ideas, he was continuously breaking new ground, hence, it is not surprising that he used metaphors to express thoughts and concepts hitherto unheard of (or even formerly ineffable). In Crossan's words, "metaphor can also articulate a referent so new or so alien to consciousness that this referent can only be grasped within the metaphor itself".<sup>36</sup>

However, he shows a very high awareness of the fact that metaphors are an insufficient tool to express very precise thoughts. In CMT terms, he was painfully aware of the potential mismatch between the SD and TD structures as expressed in the Invariance Principle.

My hypothesis is thus that Paul used the alienation of metaphors in order to be more precise. By pointing out the differences between SD and TD to his audience, he warned his readers against taking his metaphors too far. In this way, one could still stick to the claim that Paul's spatial metaphors show a high degree of alienation, what would have to be modified, though, is the claim that alienation solely is used for purposes of de-familiarisation (and, perhaps also the tacit implication that it only occurs in poetic discourse).

In sum, the present paper offered a detailed analysis of spatial metaphors in the Pauline epistles, but also paved the way to addressing a more fundamental question, viz., the question of the purpose of alienating metaphors in non-poetic discourse. Future work is called for to check the validity of the hypothesis advocated at this point, viz., that Paul used the alienation of metaphors to heighten the precision of the metaphorical description of his novel concepts and ideas. If this hypothesis is on the right track, it should prove of explanatory value for other kinds of metaphors, too, and also for other Pauline strategies of introducing and outlining his theology.

35 Downloadable from [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_31101999\\_-](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_-)

[cath-luth-joint-declaration\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_-cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html) (visited on 08.06.2016).  
36 Crossan 1992.

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