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Selected Papers from the 2006 and 2007 Stockholm Metaphor Festivals

Edited by

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Stockholm University

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Typographical conventions

<i>metaphor</i>	indicates a linguistic form cited in running text, or a highlighted form in a linguistic example
metaphor	indicates a salient term
<u>metaphor</u>	indicates emphasis
‘metaphor’	indicates the sense of an expression, terms taken from another author or the approximate use of an expression
“metaphor”	indicates that the enclosed passage is an exact quotation
LOVE IS WAR	indicates a conceptual metaphor
[...]	indicates the omission of text from a quoted passage
[T]/[t]	indicates the modification of a letter to upper/lower case in a quoted passage
[metaphor]	indicates an insertion into a quoted passage
{ }	indicates members of a group of variants

Preface

The Stockholm Metaphor Festival arose from quite humble beginnings: in December 2004, two members of the staff at the Department of English, University of Stockholm (Christina Alm-Arvius and Nils-Lennart Johannesson) presented separate papers at a graduate seminar devoted to metaphor under the title “The 2004 Metaphor Festival”. When we repeated the process a year later, the list of speakers had grown to six, including several literary scholars from our department.

By 2006 the Festival had attracted participants from several Swedish universities as well as a participant from Norway. And in 2007, the Festival, now a two-day event organised by Alm-Arvius, Johannesson and Marlene Johansson-Falck, had a truly international character, with participants from Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, and Spain, as well as Australia and South America. This is a format we hope to be able to maintain in coming Festivals.

From the outset, the Metaphor Festival has welcomed contributions discussing metaphor as well as other types of figurative language within different theoretical frameworks and with literary as well as linguistic approaches.

The papers included in this collection reflect some of the breadth of the presentations at the 2006 and 2007 Festivals. In the papers from 2006, Alm-Arvius explores differences and similarities between metaphor and metonymy, Johannesson seeks to disentangle metaphor from superficially similar exegetical statements in medieval homiletic writing, Wikberg discusses the role of corpus investigation in the study of metaphor, and Wrethed, through an examination of the conceptual metaphors underlying a Carol Anne Duffy poem, searches for the experiential-cognitive roots of metaphors in general.

For the 2007 Metaphor Festival we were fortunate enough to have Zoltán Kövecses accept our invitation to act as keynote speaker. His keynote speech introduces the contributions from 2007; it outlines a modified theory of cognitive metaphor study, integrating a framework of universal conceptual metaphors with a recognition of how culture-bound variation and limitations affect the actual realisation of potential conceptual metaphors. The other papers from 2007 again show a breadth of approach within the study of metaphor: Crerar-Bromelow considers how the awareness of conceptual metaphor can assist the practising translator in her/his work, Johannesson digs for the Latin roots of a Middle English metaphor, Krennmayr takes us to the methodological nuts-and-bolts level of metaphor identification in cor-

pus texts, Minugh presents insights into the changing use of idioms in *Time* magazine over an eighty-year period, Redzimska discusses the relationship between linguistic iconicity and metaphor, and Rohult explores the use of different metaphors to conceptualise the universe in different language versions of Stephen Hawking's account of the Big Bang and after. Sandbach-Dahlström, in the second literary paper in this collection, traces the development of recurring metaphors for life and death in the writings of Virginia Woolf.

It only remains for us to thank those who have contributed to making the Metaphor Festivals a success so far: the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation for their generous economic support of the 2007 Festival, the Department of English for sponsoring the publication itself, and the Department administrative staff for unstinting help all along the way. Our thanks to the editors of *Stockholm Studies in English* for including this volume in their series, and to Mr Nick Greatorex-Davies for allowing his Red Underwing picture to grace the cover. Our particular thanks go to all the participants from various countries who have already helped make this such an interesting and creative Festival.

Stockholm, November 2008

Nils-Lennart Johannesson

David C. Minugh

Editors

2006

Metaphor and Metonymy

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Abstract. In this paper metonymy and metaphor are described in relation to the notion of poetic meaning, the definitional feature shared by all types of figurative uses. Even if both these types of tropes will draw on encyclopaedic experiences, or pre- or extra-linguistic cognitive complexes, they are also formed in relation to established structures in a language system. In other words, their occurrence shows how intertwined linguistic knowledge and experientially based cognition will be. Moreover, it is arguable that at least ‘fully alive’ metaphors will have a more noticeable poetic and figurative character than metonymic uses. The reason for this is that a metaphor brings together domains that are felt to be similar in some respect, although they are also clearly different. In this imaginative coalescence many features in the source are suppressed, and a kind of ‘fake’ superordinate category is created: the generalised target meaning. It spans both the ordinarily concrete source and some other phenomenon, often something more abstract. The poetic or figurative character of metonymies is by comparison more inconspicuous, presumably because they constitute descriptive or referential shortcuts in relation to just one meronymically structured domain or chain of contiguous domains.

Keywords: metaphor, metonymy, poetic function, cognitive domain, polysemy, expansion test.

1 Figurative language: tropes and schemes

The definitional feature of figurative language is that such uses have a **poetic function** in the sense of Jakobson (1996: 15f): they “focus on the message for its own sake”, and increase “the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects”. Accordingly, language that is poetic does not just represent things in the world, nor does it merely express some kind of affective or interpersonal meaning (cf. Halliday 1996; Jakobson 1996; Bühler 1982). Instead it makes use of qualities within the language system itself, its semantic or formal structures, in a way that affects the meaning of a message. Poetic or figurative types of meaning are created when exploiting the semantic, pho-

nological or grammatical resources of the linguistic medium, its patterns and relations, in ways that tend to be communicatively effective, sometimes even rhetorically striking, and often also aesthetically attractive.

The category of figurative language encompasses both non-literal meaning extensions and various rhythmic or echoic repetitions of forms. Tropes, a term from rhetoric, can be used as a cover term for the former, while the latter have been called schemes or figures (see e.g. Alm-Arvius 2003: 9–11, 49–52). Neither of these two broad categories of figurative language has clear categorial boundaries, and the same is true of the more specific types of tropes and schemes that are generally recognised and have established terminological labels. In other words, these qualitative categories constitute fuzzy sets (Bennett 2004: 174), as there is a gradient of membership among the elements we associate with them, from ‘good’, prototypical instantiations to merely marginal members. Our notion of a category, including those that are labelled by technical terms, will be built around prototypical exemplars that exhibit its central, most obvious definitional qualities, while peripheral members lack some of them, in addition to being similar to other related, but antonymous, categories (cf. Taylor 1995: 15, 38ff; Rosch 1978, 1977, 1975; Rosch & Mervis 1975).

The interpretative focus tends to be on the idealised conceptualisations — and characterisations — of qualitative categories, based on prototypical instances, since the latter will serve as cognitive reference points for what elements can be considered members of a category. Analysts will however experience difficulties when trying to establish the categorial adherence of some uses in authentic language production which do not obviously meet the definitional criteria for just one specific category. If we are working within this field of linguistics, we can give clear and good examples of generally recognised figurative categories. Such examples can, for instance, illustrate the definitional characteristics of metaphor and metonymy, respectively, including how these tropes differ from each other. Other examples can illustrate the nature of schemes, say alliteration, also called initial consonant rhyme, as in in *flit, flutter, fly* in example (1) — or assonance, the repeated use of the same vowel or vowels, as in *teeny wee little bit*.¹ These are also examples of potentially sound symbolic schematic repetition, as the initial consonant cluster /fl-/ can be associated with quick movement, while the vowels /i:/ and /ɪ/ may suggest smallness (Alm-Arvius 2003: 179).

(1) *Flit, Flutter, Fly! Poems about Bugs and Other Crawly Creatures*.²

¹ Assonance seems for the most part to occur with consonance, especially in end rhymes, as in *eeny teeny weeny*.

² This is the title of Hopkins 1992.

Real language production is however very varied and flexible, and some uses with poetic qualities meet the definitional criteria for more than one category of figures of speech. More specifically, language constructions can exhibit properties of more than one figurative category in two different ways.

In the first, ‘uncomplicated’ type of double or multiple category membership, the definitional characteristics just occur together and are clearly distinct, even if they are combined in particular instances of language use. The coordinated passive predications in (2), *overgrown by weeds and overrun by rats*, exemplify both parallelism, the rhythmic repetition of the same kind of syntactic and/or morphological structure, and assonance, the recurrent use of the same vowel phoneme, in this case the diphthong /əʊ/, represented by the letter *o* in *over-* and *-grown*.

(2) The house was overgrown by weeds and overrun by rats.

Using the terminology of set theory, we can say that such constructions exemplify the potential union of instantiations of these two distinct categories of figurative language. In this kind of category combination, the examples can be quite prototypical of each distinct type of figurative language, in this case distinct subcategories of schemes (cf. Bennett 2004: 153).

(3) We live, love and learn.

In (3) there is another example of the combination of schemes. There is rhythmic repetition of the initial consonant /l/ in *live, love and learn*, so this is an example of alliteration. In addition, this triad of consecutive present tense forms, sharing the subject *we*, appears to constitute a kind of parallelism.

In other cases it is more difficult to distinguish the criteria connecting an example with more than one figurative category. Instead the categories seem then to fuse in an intricate way. In (4) the sequential combination of *win the war* and *lose the peace* is an obvious example of parallelism, as the same syntactic structure is used twice in the coordinated predicates *won the war* and *lost the peace*:

(4) They won the war but lost the peace.

Moreover, this is an instance of antithesis, the syntagmatic co-occurrence of expressions with opposite or antonymous meanings. More specifically, antithesis seems to be a subcategory of parallelism, as antithesis always occurs in parallelistic constructions, while there are also examples of parallelism that are not antithetical (cf. Wales 1989: 29).

Furthermore, we may ask whether *lost* has metaphorical qualities in this construction, and this reflection is triggered by the collocation of this verb and the noun *peace*, the head of its direct object. Clearly, this combination is modelled on the preceding predication, *won the war*, which contains antonyms of both *lost* and *peace*, but while the collocation of a form of *win* and the noun *war* is a natural and regular one, this can hardly be said about the second parallel one, *lost the peace*, since *peace* is not ordinarily understood to involve fighting, competition and winning or losing. Instead this collocation is exceptional and interpretatively dependent on the first element in this example of parallelism — hence its poetic qualities.³

So this instance of parallelism does not merely exemplify formal repetition, but also an at least not strictly literal use of the verb *lost*, or the whole predication *lost the peace*. Like many other examples of parallelism it involves semantic extension, not just the echoic repetition of form. The repetition of a general type of syntactic structure is here intricately combined with specific antonymous contrasts involving an extended use of especially the predicator verb in the second parallelistic element, *lost the peace*, which is in an imaginative and poetic way modelled on the first one, *win the war*.

This instance of parallelism appears thus to belong within the intersection of the categories of schemes and tropes, because it exhibits and fuses qualities of them both. It seems merely a peripheral member of either of these two superordinate categories of figures of speech, compared to prototypical members of each of them, which are clearly distinct (cf. Bennett 2004: 139, 152, 174–176; McCawley 1981: 139–145; Allwood, Andersson & Dahl 1977: 3–9).

In a union of instantiations from different categories of figures of speech, we can clearly distinguish the definitional features of two — or more — figurative sub-categories. The distinct parts of such a **combination** of categories can be prototypical members of each of them. By comparison, an example falling within the intersection of prototypically distinct categories has some qualities that we associate with one of them, but also qualities that we associate with another, antonymous category. An example of such a **fusion** of categories is merely a peripheral member of each of them (cf. Alm-Arvius 1993: 356–359).

- (5) He received an avalanche of letters.
- (6) The dogs, two Labrador-Shepard mixes, were brothers.

Example (5) above contains an obvious metaphor, *an avalanche of*, but again it is not so easy to say whether *mixes* in (6) has a literal sense or is metaphor-like. Also this particular instance of *brothers* seems to reflect another cogni-

³ All the same, a Google search indicates that this kind of parallelistic construction where *peace* is the direct object of *lose* or *win* can be found in various texts on the Internet.

tive domain, that of human beings, even if this plural noun is here used about dogs. Accordingly, these examples appear analytically to belong in the somewhat indeterminate intersection between literal uses and metaphors, as they are, at the most, peripheral members of either — or both — of these fuzzy categories. An alternative way of describing their status in relation to these two non-discrete or partly fusing categories is to say that they have to be located somewhat indeterminately in the mid-region of the continuum stretching from the metaphorical pole to the pole of undeniably literal uses. I have termed such instances approximations (Alm-Arvius 2003: 58, 104; cf. Goatly 1997: 18).

In this paper I am going to focus on the character of two important types of tropes: metaphor and metonymy, comparing and contrasting their definitional features and denotative ranges, and also comment on and exemplify how certain instances appear to relate to both these categories of tropes. *The bench* in example (7) below is a straightforward example of metonymy, as it means ‘the people/those sitting on the bench’. *High heels* in the next string can more specifically be characterised as synecdoche, a specific kind of metonymy.

- (7) The bench jumped up and fled.
- (8) She was wearing very high heels.

Other generally recognised types of tropes are, for instance, simile, hyperbole, understatement, irony and oxymoron. Instantiations of such categories do not have literal meanings, but the distance between the source contents and the figurative reading varies. All types of tropes are semantically bi-dimensional, because they express their intended message via a more basic source, or source complex. The figuratively used parts of them have been reinterpreted and given another intended import. This is the general superordinate feature that all types of tropes have in common.

- (9) Love is *like a deep magic well*. (simile)
- (10) We have had to sit through many *endless* meetings. (hyperbole)
- (11) It’s *nothing*, just a scratch. (understatement)
- (12) She wept with *sad joy* at hearing these words, so full of *happy pain*. (oxymoron)
- (13) “That’s *good*,” he said, obviously meaning the opposite. (irony)

Tropes thus extend or transform some literal source contents in an imaginative but still calculable way. They are semantically complex, with two-layered target readings resulting from the simultaneous overlap with and contrast to the source. This polysemous bi-dimensionality invests tropes with poetic qualities in the Jakobsonian sense outlined at the beginning of this introductory section. Actually, the meaning extension in tropes appears to

work with recurrent principles of cognitive organisation reflecting the proximity, continuation, similarity or polarity of experienced phenomena (cf. e.g. Ungerer & Schmid 1996: 33). Proximity and continuation of things in the world form the basis for metonymic shortcuts and synecdoche, as in (7) and (8) above, while perceived similarity between matters that are also different triggers the formation of similes and metaphorical extensions. Polarity, which presupposes a shared, more general semantic dimension, constitutes the basis for the rhetorical force of the lexical contrast in oxymoron, the co-occurrence of contrasting syntagms in antithesis, as well as the ironic use of antonymous value reversal, as in (13).

The poetic function of language expressions is a result of their highlighting or developing particular qualities in the language system itself, in the case of tropes the way perceptual information and cognitive complexes are semantically structured and formally packaged in a given language system. Significantly enough, the exploited, backgrounded source and the target meaning of a trope share the expression sides of lexemes occurring in syntagmatic strings or textual chunks. So even if figurative meaning extensions make use of encyclopaedic experiences or cognitive complexes, such polysemous shifts are always expressed by language-specific forms. This dependence on specific structurally organised elements in a language system is what invests tropes as well as schemes with poetic qualities or a special poetic force (cf. Alm-Arvius 2007a & 2007b).

2 Metonymy

The interest in metaphor has been considerable for almost thirty years now, and this is connected with the development of cognitive linguistics, a central part of the interdisciplinary field of cognitive science. An important source of inspiration was Lakoff and Johnson's now classic book *Metaphors We Live By*, published in 1980. By comparison, metonymy has received more attention only recently, and the reason for this is presumably that it seems typically more inconspicuous, or not as obviously figurative and poetic as especially novel metaphors. (See e.g. a number of the articles in Dirven & Pörings 2003.)

Metonymy is a kind of **descriptive shortcut**, and such compacted representations are made possible by the presupposed shared knowledge of encoders and decoders on different occasions of language use. Many types of **regular polysemy** are metonymic, and a few examples of such predictable polysemous shifts are given below (for a longer, more comprehensive list of regular metonymies, see Alm-Arvius 2003: 162f). Quite generally speaking, regular or predictable metonymic shortcuts are used when describing scenarios with generally recognised relations between two entities, such as that

between a place and certain people, or between some contents and a kind of container.

- (14) *England* wanted more colonies. (place for people)
- (15) *My corner* made me fight five more rounds. (place for people)
- (16) *The nineteenth century* believed in reason. (time for people)
- (17) I had to swallow *a whole tablespoon*. (container for contents)
- (18) He had bought *a Picasso* and *a Matisse* at the auction. (producer for product)
- (19) He *breathed* sweet nothings into her ear. (activity₁ for activity₂)

However, there are also seemingly incidental or more unpredictable metonymic shortcuts. They are constructed when interlocutors can be expected to share information about circumstances in a unique universe of discourse.

- (20) I know what sex *January* is.

January, the name of the first month of the year, was used like this in an informal conversation, and it meant roughly ‘the (expected) baby (we have talked about) that is going to be born in January’. Metonymy has been explained as a strategy for changing the referential capacity of lexical items or expressions, but it is rather an abbreviated way of mentioning something when speakers or writers know that their addressees also have the required background knowledge.

We can test whether a phrase is a metonymic shortcut by applying what I have called the **expansion test** (Alm-Arvius 2003: 155f). It means that the presupposed line of thought behind a metonymic use is spelt out more in detail. If we try to do this, we can see why metonymies are so common, as such a more detailed formulation tends to be long-winded, clumsy and hardly as communicatively efficient as the quick and compact metonymic representation. Indeed it is not always obvious what information such a more explicit description should contain. This suggests that the cognitive complex that a metonymic shortcut relates to basically has an encyclopaedic rather than a linguistically encoded character.

- (21) *The kitchen* can prepare a variety of dishes at short notice. (Metonymic shortcut)
- (22) ?The people working with producing food in the kitchen can prepare a variety of dishes at short notice. (Attempt at applying the expansion test)

Metonymies are thus interpreted against far more detailed knowledge of the situations they describe than what is mentioned by the words used in them. In fact, this quality of a metonymic use makes it strictly speaking or literally

untrue. This difference from a literal reading is what arguably makes also a metonymic shortcut figurative, even if its referential orientation to a specific phenomenon out in the world usually prevents us from experiencing it as a poetic device exploiting language in a rhetorically contrived way.

(23) (The water in) the kettle is boiling.

The presupposed cognitive complex underlying a metonymic use can either represent just a single situation, as in the standard example of metonymy given in (23), or a whole series of different but experientially connected **domains**, illustrated by the following set of metonymic uses of the noun *tea* (cf. Dirven 2003: 80–82).

(24) They were growing *tea* on the hillside.

(25) You should store your *tea* in a metal tin, not in plastic or glass.

(26) The *tea* has gone cold, and is not very tasty.

(27) We used to have corned beef for *tea*.

When we apply the expansion test, the resulting formulation is no longer figurative. What remains is a longer literal string without collocational clashes between the lexical items used in it. Such collocational violations from the point of view of the primary senses of lexemes tend to occur in metonymic shortcuts, and they are a key factor for categorising metonymy as a kind of trope. All the same, the figurative character of metonymies is generally less noticeable than for instance that of metaphors, and the reason for this is no doubt that metonymies highlight some part of just one experiential scenario or a series of factually connected scenarios, or cognitive domains. Metonymies do not typically tamper with our practical and factual experiences of reality like more obviously figurative tropes. They merely highlight a part of a situation by describing it in an abbreviated way, mentioning only some focal property, or active zone in Langacker's terminology (2000: 62–67, 330–337). This is why metonymies do not seem as clearly figurative as for instance outright metaphors, which in an imaginative way unite cognitive domains that are literally speaking quite different.

In metonymy meaning is added to an element, and such a descriptive shortcut is ordinarily given within just one syntactic phrase. In other words, a metonymic use incorporates meaning features that are not separately or directly represented in a string.

(28) I ate *the whole plate*. (i.e. 'all the food on the plate')

(29) The half-back played *a long ball* to the centre-forward. (i.e. 'played the ball a long way')

(30) We stop for *red* and go for *green*. (i.e. 'stop for a red light and go for a green light')

Metonymy thus tends to be a local descriptively abbreviating device, and it does not extend over a longer stretch of text (cf. expanded metaphors). Ordinarily a metonymic shortcut constitutes just a syntactic phrase.

- (31) Few people read *Sir Walter Scott* today. (i.e. ‘literary works written by Sir Walter Scott’)

The fact that features are added to a metonymic phrase explains why it shares the collocational potentials of the incorporated meanings. This kind of **feature inheritance** from the merely understood senses can involve a change of grammatical class. Consequently, the kind of word formation termed conversion or zero derivation is a type of metonymy. In this way a metonymic shortcut can move an item from one word class to another, say from the class of nouns to that of verbs, or from one subcategory of a word class to another.

- (32) We *bottled* the fruit. (i.e. ‘put the fruit in bottles’)
(33) *Glass* is a material that *a glass* or *glasses* are made of. (uncountable and countable nouns)

This explains why anaphoric reference can connect to different parts of a metonymic meaning.

- (34) I would like to listen to *some Mozart*.
a) *It* is really great music.
b) *He* was a great composer.
(35) You should wear *this Dior*.
a) *It* would look smashing on you.
b) *Their* design is the best.

So metonymy indicates that there is a flexible interface between cognitive complexes and qualities and systematic linguistic senses and forms. This interface between cognition and linguistic structures appears basically to have a meronymic character, as it concerns semantic constructs that are wholes and their parts, or various kinds of inclusion and exclusion relations of objects or experiential scenarios.

Moreover, it should be pointed out that even if metonymic shortcuts appear to preserve a direct connection to factual experiences or what we think of as ‘the real world’, they can also comparatively easily be severed from a more basic and strictly literal sense. The reason for this is simply that the added features completely take over, excluding the primary and literal sense.

- (36) This is the first time he has been to *see* us since he went blind.
(Cf. the primary sense of *see*, which denotes the reception of visual impressions)

In the following examples the functional qualities of a more basic metonymic use of respectively *marble(s)* and *glass* are retained, but the actual inclusion relation to the material sense of each of these nouns, which made these polysemous shifts possible, is no longer there.

- (37) These *marbles* are made of glass. (Cf. the material sense of *marble*.)
(38) She handed me *a plastic glass*. (Cf. the material sense of *glass*.)

In such cases, the established uses of a lexeme may form a **polysemy chain** where the senses at the opposite end points are in fact no longer related. This has happened in quite a few cases, for instance in the range of applications of *iron* and *tea*.

- (39) Electric *irons* today are made of a light metal.
(40) He helped her to *iron* her dress.

The tool represented by the countable *iron* above and the activity denoted by the verb formed by conversion need no longer involve the specific metal denoted by what is arguably the primary sense of this lexeme. Similarly, *herbal teas* do not come from the leaves of tea bushes. *Red tea*, for instance, is instead from the South African plant rooibos. All the same, the functional qualities of the *iron(ing)* domain have been kept, and the experience of *drinking tea* also remains largely the same, which explains why these semantic changes are so inconspicuous.

The domains and senses of the two uses of *cabinet* in (41)–(42) are even more obviously disconnected in present-day English, as they evoke quite different experiential scenarios. As a result, these senses of *cabinet* appear closer to being homonyms within the synchronic language system than different but related senses of the same polyseme.

- (41) She put the plate in the *cabinet* in the kitchen.
(42) Some members of the *cabinet* did not agree with this decision.

Finally, we can note that in some cases the original primary sense of a lexeme has stopped being used, and an originally secondary metonymic use has taken over. An example of this is *bead*, which once meant ‘prayer’. The metonymic shift to the present primary sense occurred because the parts of a rosary were connected with prayers (see e.g. Alm-Arvius 2003: 46).

3 Metaphor

A metaphor extends over and relates phenomena in two distinct experiential domains, because they are perceived to be similar in certain respects. This partial identification of the denotata of a source with the additional, figurative referent(s) is imaginative rather than based on verifiable factual features. It results in a metaphorical category, where the extended, target reading is in focus, although it also spans and reflects the more specific source meaning, or our experience of or assumptions about certain qualities of the kind of thing represented by the source. The target reading draws on just certain source associations, usually a quite reduced number, since many source qualities, especially more directly perceptible or concrete ones, will have to be rejected to accommodate the more extensive range of the metaphor.

(43) Women are *tigers*.

(44) She is a *sweet* lady, but he has gone *bitter* and *sour*.

So a metaphor uses only selected parts of our conception of the source, as features in the source are dropped or reinterpreted in a generalising way. Very often an abstract experience is described by means of a concrete source image. The features used are those that appear relevant in the metaphor, and they can be more peripheral in the source, or, significantly enough, affective and subjective rather than factually descriptive. However, Lakoff's invariance hypothesis suggests that a metaphor retains the image-schematic structure of the source (1990). It will for instance include the container schema, which is cognitively basic, as it outlines the recurring spatial qualities of objects and their surroundings. Similarly, the path schema sketches the quite general characteristics of any movement or directed process.

(45) These politicians are *leading the country down a dangerous path*.

In the example above experiential qualities connected with literally following someone down a path that is not safe are used to describe a more abstract political orientation. Even if the possible hazards of a real excursion are reflected in our understanding of this predication, it is clear that its meaning is far less specific than the kind of physical experience that is described by its source. Roughly speaking, the metaphor, the target reading, can simply be taken to say that certain politicians are advocating activities or ways of thinking about a nation's future that will be harmful to its people, and perhaps also, say, to nature or the environment.

A metaphorical meaning is thus more general compared to its source. This is why the relation between a metaphor and its source is analogous to

that between a more general superordinate sense and a more specific hyponym (Alm-Arvius 2003: 103, 191).⁴

Usually a metaphorical extension is described as a mapping of features from a source to a target understanding (see e.g. Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 541; Fauconnier 1997: 9, 168). But the triggering factor behind a metaphorical extension is that the source and the additional phenomena that are also included in or described by the target are seen to share certain qualities⁵; that is, they appear to intersect. As has been pointed out, this basic qualitative intersection will be imaginative and subjective rather than factually verifiable. The metaphorical extension that builds on it is rather a generalisation of the source category, involving feature reduction, so that it also comes to include the target. As a result, the relation between a metaphorical target reading and its source seems comparable to that between a superordinate and a more specific hyponym. Only certain source aspects are used in the target: those that are also felt to be applicable to the metaphorical contents. They are in many cases, for instance in the three examples given above, centred on the kind(s) of emotions that are connected with our experiences of the source.

Source qualities that are not part of the basic, shared intersection between the source category and the focal subject matter of the metaphor may be said to be mapped on to the target reading. However, as the understanding of a new and ‘fully alive’ metaphor will vary somewhat, especially between different individuals, and perhaps even in the interpretations of the same language user, it is important to realise that the used source features do not constitute a closed or fixed set. Instead this set is partly variable in a dynamic and creative way. This is not surprising, since the understanding of lexical categories in general can vary in different language contexts or on different occasions of use.

So the mapping concept and terminology can hardly be said to be quite felicitous. It seems to obscure the insight that the starting-point for a metaphorical extension is a perceived similarity between the thing that is in focus in the target reading — the tenor in Richards’s terminology (1965: 118f) — and the source meaning. Nor does it easily accommodate the observation that a metaphorical generalisation can also affect our conception of the source (cf. Black 1962: 43f).

But a metaphorical extension is of course mainly asymmetric in that it is the target that is understood in terms of the source. All the same, **metaphor reversal** occurs in punning. It means that both the source and the target con-

⁴ Langacker also connects metaphorical extension with what he speaks of as schematicity and specialisation. Schematicity is the existence or creation of a more general and superordinate category, while an elaboration of such a semantic unit is or results in a more specific conceptual category (2002: 118–120, 355, 1987: 379).

⁵ These qualities are the ground in Richards’s terminology: the characteristics that are shared by the tenor, the thing described by a metaphor, and the literal meaning of the metaphorically used expression, the vehicle (1965: 117–123).

tents are activated, since a pun works through contrasting them in a usually humorous way. Actually, the notion of mapping may be so widely used because it is pedagogically convenient. It seems to offer a comparatively easily understood description of the metaphorical process.

(46) During a debate, Stephen A. Douglas accused Abraham Lincoln of being two-faced.

“I leave it to you, my friends,” Lincoln retorted, turning towards his audience. “If I had two faces, would I be wearing this one?” (Ayres 1992: 186)

Through metaphorical extension we understand more abstract matters or new phenomena by identifying them in some respects with parts of another, usually concrete, source domain. As has been pointed out, metaphorisation involves using just certain, more general, source features, while rejecting other, especially more specific, source characteristics. Concrete metaphors like *mouse*, representing a computer gadget, or *beehive*, describing a hairstyle, also exhibit these metaphor qualities. In addition, they show that when a metaphorical use has become established, it will be less dependent on the source. The target and the source understandings will then have drifted apart, even if they tend to remain at least potentially related in a polysemous way as long as they are both part of the language used, including certain encyclopaedic experiences of its users. As a result, it seems comparatively difficult to suppress or sever the relation between a metaphor and its source, and the reason is probably that they regularly share certain semantic features. A metonymic meaning, on the other hand, focuses on semantic qualities that are not part of the source.

The figurative — or poetic — character of a ‘living’ metaphor is usually obvious, presumably because the source contents and the metaphorical reading are clearly different, as they do not belong to the same experiential domain or contiguously connected domain chain (cf. Alm-Arvius 2006). No real woman is a *tiger*, for instance, and it is easy to see that a *dangerous political path* is only a figure of speech, not a concrete description of a real route that people or animals can travel along.

The figurative character of a metaphor is typically signalled by a violation of the collocational restrictions of the literal sense of a word or expression in the language string in which it occurs. This changed collocational potential of a metaphorical use is the result of feature omission, in connection with the extension of the source domain.

(47) I say to my little boy, “Girls are flowers, and boys are trees”. And so I say, if you’re a flower, you don’t have to be a white rose. You know, you can be a tulip, or a cal lily (ph), or a great big sunflower. (CNN.com/TRANSCRIPTS)

I have called such uses **internal metaphors**. However, there are also **external metaphors** that can in principle be given a literal reading, although the wider language context or the situation described makes it clear that the string has a metaphorical meaning.

(48) The company has a steep uphill climb ahead of them.

The extended collocational potential of a metaphorical use, compared to that of the source meaning, is similar to the wider applicational range of a superordinate, compared to that of a hyponym. The reason for this is that both a metaphorical understanding and a superordinate sense are more general, with fewer specifying semantic qualities, than their respective source reading and hyponym(s).

Moreover, different parts of a sentence or a stretch of text sometimes draw on the same source, producing an expanded metaphor. Below are three extracts containing such more global metaphorical themes. They can be contrasted with the local character of metonymic shortcuts.

(49) The few letters from him to her that survive [...] show glimpses of affection [...] these are mere spoonfuls compared to the ladles of romance doled out by many of Lincoln's colleagues to their wives. (Schenk 2005: 101)

(50) "Our republican robe is soiled, and trailed in the dust," he [Lincoln] said. "Let us repurify it. Let us turn and wash it white, in the spirit, if not the blood, of the Revolution [...]" (Schenk 2005: 147)

(51) 1954. The nation was in the deep freeze of the Cold War. The chill of McCarthyism was sweeping across the country. (Newman 2001)

However, metaphors with different source domains are also used together without any apparent semantic clashes or infelicities. No doubt such mixed metaphors work as long as their extended meanings appear to be compatible, since they share image schemas and other generalised semantic features, even if their source meanings could not be brought together in the same way.

(52) [...] has anyone taken a strong, hard look at the numbers of couples who have thrown in the towel and jumped ship of their marriage for every little pity issue? (*Christian Standard* 2005)

The concrete source domains of the idioms *throw in the towel* and *jump ship* are different. The first one is a boxing scenario, where throwing in the towel appears to be a conventional signal from a boxer's corner that he will give up. The second source meaning, that of *jump ship*, is according to *ALD* (2005: 837) 'to leave the ship on which you are serving, without permission'. All the same, these basically metaphorical meanings function together

here, as they are both about trying to get out of a situation that has become difficult, unpleasant, or even dangerous.

The quotation below illustrates the use of metaphor in scientific reasoning and explanations (cf. Boyd 1993: 485f). The literal senses or source domains of *road* and *groove* are different, but they share some general semantic features, notably the path schema. Moreover, they both share the even more basic container schema with *garment*.

(53) But what if language is not so much a garment as a prepared road or groove? (Sapir 1921: 15)

But sometimes when two source meanings depict incompatible concrete situations, the mixing of metaphors can result in a ridiculous clash of images. The source scenarios in (54) will both be evoked when we read or hear the sentence, and it is impossible to reconcile them. If someone is leading a group of people so that they fall down a precipice, he cannot at the same time have his head in the sand.

(54) “The Rt. Hon. Gentleman is leading the people over the precipice with his head in the sand.” (‘Mixed metaphor’ 2000)

4 Conclusion

Metonymy and metaphor are two types of figurative language use. More specifically, they are different categories of tropes, as they have non-literal or secondary meanings that are related to and partly build on more basic source senses in a language system and the cognitive domains they structure and reflect. The fact that tropes include features of a source means that they are semantically bi-dimensional.

Metonymies and metaphors tend however to differ as regards the extent to which they can be said to exhibit poetic qualities in the Jakobsonian sense; that is, the extent to which they draw attention to language itself, to the particular language constructions that are used to express them. The figurative character of a new or ‘fully alive’ metaphor is usually obvious, presumably because it spans two different semantic contents: the more specific but backgrounded source as well as the foregrounded and generalised target. The target uses only part of the source, but as long as its metaphorical character is obvious, it will draw on the source in a dynamic and creative way, leaving room for incidental and personal variation in the understanding of the metaphor.

A metonymic shift, on the other hand, is a descriptive shortcut that is not so obviously figurative or poetic. It mentions some circumstance or event within one experiential scenario — or a chain of contiguous and factually

related domains — in an abbreviated way, as the addressee is expected to have the encyclopaedic and linguistic knowledge to understand such a message. This is why a metonymic meaning can be spelt out in a longer and more detailed formulation that is no longer figurative. I have called this ‘the expansion test’ for metonymies, and if we try to apply it we see why language users often prefer metonymic shortcuts, because such more explicit literal paraphrases tend to be long-winded, clumsy and hardly communicatively felicitous.

The ordinarily more obvious figurative character of a metaphor seems thus to be a result of it exploiting and extending a source meaning that is also clearly different from the target contents. It is this creative tension between the target and its source that makes a metaphor poetic. In addition, this quality is obviously connected with the creative capacity of metaphor: its potential to make us see things in a new way via a both rhetorically effective and cognitively inventive extension of some semantic contents.

Moreover, metonymy is regularly a local descriptive device, compressing information into one syntactic phrase by allowing it to inherit features from the understood meaning parts. By comparison, a metaphorical theme, which makes use of merely certain selected features of a source complex, can be expanded over several parts of an utterance or stretch of text.

But viewed together the occurrence of metonymy and metaphor — as well as that of other tropes — exemplifies how human cognition and language constantly interact in structuring our vast, dynamic pool of encyclopaedic experiences and reactions, and in allowing us to communicate about them.

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An Anatomy of Metaphors and Exegetical Statements in Medieval Homiletic Writing

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Abstract. This paper will address a central contrast in medieval exegetical writing, namely that between metaphors and metaphor-like expressions of exegetical interpretation. Using examples drawn from the Middle English homily collection *Ormulum* (Bodleian Library, MS Junius 1) as well as from Latin exegetical texts of a type that provided the homilist, Orm, with model expressions, the paper will explore syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic differences between the two types of expression.

Keywords: exegesis, metaphor, Middle English, homilies, *Ormulum*.

1 Introduction

Medieval exegesis aimed at providing a set of complementary interpretations of any given scriptural passage. The **historical**, or **literal**, sense was simply the story told, where the exegete could supply additional information about persons, places, or practices mentioned in the story. The **allegorical** interpretation sought to demonstrate correspondences chiefly between the Old Testament and the New. The **tropological**, or **moral**, interpretation extracted rules for proper living from scriptural passages. Finally, the **anagogical** interpretation sought for hints of the end of this world and the coming of the heavenly Jerusalem in scriptural passages. In this paper I will focus on allegorical interpretation and compare this with metaphors in order to work out differences and similarities between them. The illustrations will primarily be taken from the twelfth-century Middle English homily collection known as the *Ormulum*, written by the Augustinian canon Orm, working in southern Lincolnshire in the second half of the 12th century, but to some extent also from works within the vast Latin exegetical tradition that supplied the source material for Orm's interpretations.

2 Expressions of allegorical interpretation

An expression of allegorical interpretation (EAI) takes as its starting point, its **source**, a concrete phenomenon (person, place, thing, event, name, etc.) described in Scripture, whether in the Old or in the New Testament, and presents an allegorical interpretation, i.e. describes what the source signifies, its **target**, in terms of some aspect of Christianity. Thus, the sound of the bells on the tunic of the ephod of the High Priest (Exodus 28:33–35) is said to signify a Christian priest’s preaching (1), the High Priest signifies Christ (2), the garments that the priest washed after sprinkling blood before the Tabernacle (Numbers 19:7) signify the servants of Christ (because Christ cleanses them of sins) (3), the High Priest’s censer signifies Christ’s body (4), etc.

- (1) a. **Þ**e belledræm bitacneþþ ȝuw:
 Þatt dræm þatt ȝuw birrþ herenn.
Whann se þe pre<o>st ȝuw telleþþ spell:
 Biforenn godess allterr. (H922–925) ‘The sound of the bells signifies to you the sound that you should hear when the priest preaches to you before God’s altar.’
- b. Tintinnabula, quae sonabant in veste pontificali, sonum significant praedicationis. (Anon. (Hugo De S. Victore?), *Allegoriae In Vetus Testamentum*. PL 175, col. 0665C) ‘The bells, which tinkled on the priestly garment, signify the sound of preaching.’
- (2) **Þ**o e laferrd crist himm sellf wass uss:
 Þurh þatt bisscopp bitacnedd.
Forr crist iss bisscopp þwerrt út god:
 To berrȝenn hise le<o>de.
 (H1728–1731) ‘The Lord Christ Himself was signified to us by that High Priest, for Christ is a High Priest extremely good at saving His people.’
- (3) **Þ** hise clæþess þatt he wessh:
 Tacnedenn cristess þe<o>wwess.
Þatt crist himm sellf her wassheþþ aȝȝ:
 Forr he forrȝifeþþ sinness.
 (H1732–1735) ‘And his garments that he washed signified Christ’s servants, whom Christ Himself here constantly washes, for He forgives sins.’
- (4) **Þ** tatt bisscopess reclefätt:
 Wass an full openn takenn.
Off cristess bodiȝ. þatt wass full.
 Off goddcunndnessess mahhtess:
Rihht all swa summ itt wære full.
 All – off glowennde gledess:
To bærnenn all þatt ifell iss.
 Aweȝȝ. inn hise þe<o>wwess.
 (H1736–1743) ‘And the High Priest’s censer was a quite open symbol of Christ’s body, which was full of divine virtues, just as if it was full of burning embers, to burn away all that is evil in His servants.’

In its explicit form an EAI in a Latin text typically contains a form of the verb *significare* ‘signify’, as in (1b) above. In the *Ormulum* we find the verbs *bitacnenn* (1a)–(2), *tacnenn* (3), or the noun *takenn* ‘token’, ‘symbol’ (4). Thus we can express an EAI as (5):

- (5) a. S significat T.
b. S bitacneþþ T.

The EAI may appear in a less explicit form, with Source and Target expressed as the arguments of the verbs *esse/ben* ‘to be’, as in (6), schematically represented as in (7).

- (6) a. Moyses Christus est. (Sicardus Cremo- ‘Moses is Christ.’
nensis, *Mitrale, Sive Summa De Officiis*
Ecclesiasticis, Cap. XV; PL 213, col.
0360A)
b. [...] moysæs iss iesu crist. (H14842) ‘Moses is Jesus Christ.’
- (7) a. S T est.
b. S iss T.

In this form, the EAI may be difficult to distinguish from a metaphor, since metaphors can also have the realisations of Source and Target domains presented as arguments of the verbs *esse/ben* ‘to be’, as in (8):

- (8) a. [...] Christus est lux vera qua totus ‘Christ is the true light by which
mundus illuminantur [...] (Bruno the whole world is illuminated.’
Astensis, *Expositio In Apocalypsim*, Liber
Tertius, Cap. IX; PL 165, col. 0651B)
- b. Forr crist sellf iss þatt sternelem: ‘For Christ Himself is that star-
Þatt all mannkinn birrþ foll^hgenn. light that all mankind should fol-
7 crist iss ec soþ sunnebæm: low, and Christ is also a true ray
Þatt all þiss werelld lihhteþþ. of sunlight that illuminates all this
(H7276–79) world.’

In what ways can we distinguish between EAIs and metaphors? Syntactically, there is a difference in which NP is made Subject, and which Subject Complement. An EAI always has the Source NP as Subject, whereas the metaphor with the same kind of overall structure has the Target NP as Subject, as shown in (9).

- (9) a. T S est.
b. T iss S.

- c. **ƿ** **ƿ** crist iss stan to ben grundwall: ‘And Christ is a rock which is
 Off all hiss hall^{ge} temmple. the foundation of all His holy
Forr all þe laferrd cristess hus: temple: for all the Lord Christ’s
 Iss timmbredd onn himm sellfenn. house is built on Himself.’
 (H13372–75)

The structure of the first line of (10a) can be accounted for as a case of Subject Complement fronting, after which the copula has to follow in the track of the Subject Complement; the fronting is due to the fact that the rock is textually given (as the interpretation of *Cefas/Peter* in the previous paragraph in the *Ormulum*). The parallel statements (with the subjects in the canonical position) in (10b–c) support this interpretation. Subject Complement fronting is not common in the *Ormulum*, but it does occur, as shown in (11).

- (11) **ƿ** **ƿ** miccle better iss þiss till uss. ‘And much better is this for us,
 To sen. 7 tunnderrstandenn. to see and understand of our
Off ure laferrd iesu crist. Lord Jesus Christ, and of his
 7 off hiss twinne kinde: double nature.’
 (H13902–05)

Example (10a) is, as far as I can tell, unique in the *Ormulum* with its fronted Subject Complement in a metaphorical expression. More common are clauses which look like EAI with the arguments in the wrong places. I will argue, however, that the syntax is quite correct, and the expressions are actually not EAI but metaphors.

Most of these examples occur in the famous passage on fol. 9 of the manuscript which begins “**ƿ** þiss boc iss nemmedd. ormulum: /Forr þi þatt orrm itt wrohhte.” (‘This book is called *Ormulum*, because Orm wrote it.’). The passage is marked for insertion after line 156 of Orm’s introduction; nevertheless, Holt (1878) printed it as a separate text unit which he labelled ‘Prologue’. In all the extant homilies, in particular in the gospel translations, it is obvious that Orm tried to make the text easy to process for the reader/hearer, typically by making explicit a number of causal, temporal and other relationships which in the Vulgate have to be inferred by the reader (cf. Johannesson 2004: 64–67). The ‘Prologue’, by contrast, places much greater demands on the reader/hearer.

In the ‘Prologue’, Orm introduces the metaphor of the gospel book as a quadriga with the four gospels as its four wheels, more particularly the quadriga of Aminadab (Song of Solomon 6:12; for a more detailed analysis of Orm’s quadriga passage, see Johannesson 2007). Orm never explains who Aminadab was, merely giving the interpretation of the name in Latin and English, namely ‘spontaneous’ and ‘the man who performs some action of his

own free will’, after which Orm can introduce an explicit EAI with *bitacnenn* in the passive (12a). After a paragraph in which Orm explains the meaning of the word *quadriga* as ‘a carriage with four wheels’ (12b), he returns to Jesus and Aminadab in the next paragraph (12c).

- (12) a. **Ʒ 7** forrþi þatt amminadab.
 O latin spæche iss nemmedd.
O latin boc. spontaneus.
7 onn ennglisshe spæche.
Þatt weppmann þatt summ dede doþ.
 Wiþþ all hiss fulle wille:
Forrþi maꝝꝝ crist full wel ben þurh.
 Amminadab bitacnedd.
Forr crist toc dæþ o rodetre:
 All wiþþ hiss fulle wille.
 (P11–20)
- ‘And because Aminadab in the Latin language is called in the Latin book *spontaneus*, and in English, the man who performs some action of his own free will, therefore Christ can well be signified by Aminadab, because Christ suffered death on the cross of his own free will.’
- b. **Ʒ** Þatt waꝝꝝn iss nemmedd quaþþrigan:
 Þatt hafeþþ fowwre wheless.
7 goddspell iss þatt waꝝꝝn forrþi:
 Þatt itt iss fowwre bokess.
7 goddspell iss iesusess waꝝꝝn:
 Þatt gaþ o fowwre wheless.
Forrþi þatt itt iss sett o boc:
 Þurh fowwre goddspellwrihhtess.
 (P21–28)
- ‘That carriage is called a quadriga that has four wheels. And the Gospel is that carriage because it is composed of four books. And the Gospel is Jesus’ carriage that goes on four wheels, because it was written by four evangelists.’
- c. **Ʒ 7** iesuss iss amminadab.
 Swa summ icc hafe shæwedd.
Forr þatt he swallt o rodetre:
 All wiþþ hiss fulle wille.
 (P29–32)
- ‘And Jesus is Aminadab, as I have shown, because He died on the cross of His own free will.’

My contention is that (12c) should be read not as an EAI, but as an expression of the metaphor type where the name “amminadab” is used not as a referring expression but to indicate certain properties which are ascribed to the referent of the Subject NP. Orm explained what those properties were some eight verses earlier, but just to make sure that his audience doesn’t forget, he repeats them. In other words, once a concept has been introduced by means of an EAI, it is available to be used as a source domain for a metaphor.

4 Conclusion

This paper has sought to demonstrate that true metaphors and expressions of allegorical interpretation, despite possible formal similarities (such as the “x is y” form), are different from one another in syntactic, semantic and pragmatic terms. A recognition of these differences is essential for a better understanding, not only of the *Ormulum*, but of medieval exegetical writing in general.

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The Role of Corpus Studies in Metaphor Research

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Abstract. This paper deals with the changes in metaphor research brought about by corpus-based investigations. It also touches on the relation between conceptual metaphor theory and corpus studies. The concept of metaphor is defined and examples of conventionalized metaphors, mainly taken from the British National Corpus, are discussed. The examples illustrate how the corpus data can provide evidence of figurative meaning, what connection there might be between metaphorical meaning and form, how lexico-grammatical units are co-selected, and how the combination of corpus-based research, critical discourse analysis and cognitive semantics can throw light on the use of metaphor in different genres. The problem of identifying metaphor, particularly innovative metaphor, is mentioned, as well as its implications for quantitative information.

Keywords: metaphor, figurative, corpus-based, conventionalized, innovative, conceptual metaphor theory, discourse.

1 Introduction

The corpus approach has been one of the main influences on metaphor research in recent years thanks to the way it offers access to natural language data and the possibilities it opens up for the study of lexico-grammatical patterns. Corpus studies have developed new ways of describing meaningful word combinations which can be applied to metaphor research as well. Sinclair's 'idiom principle' (Sinclair 1991), his notion of 'semantic preference' (Sinclair 1999) and Hunston & Francis' 'pattern grammar' (2000) are some examples. The main impetus, though, has been developments in cognitive linguistics, which have provided the theoretical basis not only for linguistic research on metaphor but, to some extent, also for literary approaches (Gavins & Steen 2003). For the study of metaphor in discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1995) has also proved important. In this paper I will illustrate different uses of corpus data for metaphor research with exam-

ples mostly taken from the British National Corpus (BNC). The final section on discourse will present a brief overview of recent tendencies and comment on the relation between theory and application.

1.1 Background

Anybody doing research on metaphor has to face the problem of deciding what a metaphor is. A corpus is obviously of little use unless you know what to look for. A working definition of a metaphor might run roughly like this:

A metaphor is a way of seeing something in terms of something else, a process which involves a linguistic expression referring in an unconventional way to people, animals, things, events or concepts on the basis of some similarity, correlation or analogy.

Judging by this definition it is by no means obvious that corpora and accompanying search tools can be very useful for metaphor research. Corpus linguists need some kind of given entity, a word, phrase or pattern, to start out from, and most corpus work is done by just reading the concordance lines generated by such a search. By contrast, for metaphor research which goes beyond the study of conventional lexical metaphors prior reading of the text is necessary, usually with conscious reflection on the wording and meaning of the text¹. Metaphors as expressions consist of anything from single words to phrases, idioms and longer stretches of text. Even a complete text can be the subject of metaphor processing, as in allegory. However, if by metaphor we mean figurative meanings of words as they are defined in dictionaries, there are lists of such word meanings. Thus Deignan (1995) is a mini-dictionary which draws on evidence from The Bank of English and is organized according to themes such as the human body, health and illness, animals, and direction and movement.

If we ignore innovative metaphors, which make up special problems from the point of view of detection and analysis, one way of getting started is to have a look at the figurative use of a word in some dictionaries and to find out how it matches up with corpus data. It may at least tell us to what extent lexicographers pay attention to figurative usage. A metaphor which is clearly marked as figurative in *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (CIDE) but not in *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (MED) or *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDOCE) is the verb *pop out*. The meaning intended is the intransitive verb of movement as in these examples from the BNC:

¹ The Pragglejazz Group (2007) has worked out a very useful “method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse”.

- (1) Their eyes nearly *popped out* when they realised we were together! (C8A)
- (2) I felt as though my eyes were *popping out*. (E9U)
- (3) The nun's eyes seemed to be *popping out* of her head as she again wielded the ruler (CK9)

It is rather rare for a metaphor to be signalled by a special marker but in this particular use of *pop out* an approximator (*nearly*), a hedging verb (*seem*), or the perception verb *felt* + the subordinator *as though* would be needed to convey the meaning of 'seeming to bulge' rather than representing the plain fact.

A look at the three monolingual dictionaries just referred to shows that CIDE marks the example *her eyes (nearly) popped out of her head* (= 'she showed extreme surprise') as *fig. infml.* MED, which otherwise focuses explicit attention on groups of words used metaphorically, presents this intransitive use of *pop* as a special sense without *out* ('if your eyes pop, they open very wide in surprise or excitement'). Finally, LDOCE lists *somebody's eyes popped (out of their head)* as *especially British English spoken*. What, then, is the contribution of the corpus in this instance? It shows that in most metaphorical uses the lexeme *pop out* with *eyes* as Subject is accompanied by a marker (12 out of 18 instances). If unmarked, it is assumed that the context will provide the key. Similarly, when the dictionary does not indicate figurative use, the user is expected to infer the nonliteral sense from its placement towards the end of an entry, from citations or through general metaphorical competence.

The most obvious markers are found in similes (*like, as ... as, as if*). But even similes have to be interpreted in terms of mappings between a source domain and a target domain (cf. *John [Target] is like a snail [Source]*). That's what makes similes figurative and what distinguishes them from ordinary comparisons (cf. *Auntie's laugh is like a man's laugh*, which is reversible). Thus each time we come across the string *is like a + noun* we have to decide if it can be interpreted figuratively (cf. Wikberg 2008).

After Lakoff & Johnson (1980) linguists have had to make a systematic distinction between metaphor as thought and metaphor as linguistic expressions. One might say that cognitive theory replaced what had previously been the philosophical approach. Suddenly, the focus in metaphor research shifted to conventional metaphor. At the same time the number of metaphors increased enormously, to such an extent that the present-day analyst is constantly faced with the problem of spotting metaphors where in the past it was not customary to search for them, i.e. among the everyday vocabulary.

Since figurative expressions are used in contexts and get their meaning from such contexts, it is important to put them into a broad perspective. A possible starting point is therefore to adopt Steen's (1999) division into conceptual, linguistic, and communicative analysis. To this should be added the

socio-cultural dimension, which has attracted increased attention in recent years (Cameron 1999; Kövecses 2006). This does not mean that any metaphorical analysis should pay attention to all of these aspects simultaneously but by including the communicative dimension one signals an interest in the rhetorical or thematic functions of metaphors. Literary scholars have of course always described complete texts and have never been interested in decontextualized sentences. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) has provided a systematic means of structuring conceptual domains by means of metaphor, which can be used profitably for the analysis of both literary and nonliterary discourse. However, the contribution of CMT to our understanding of metaphor use in extended discourse has so far not been particularly impressive. Instead, some researchers have drawn on Halliday and Hasan's Register Theory (Halliday & Hasan 1985). Finally, the role of computer-assisted analysis will be to trace the significant words, word combinations and collocates that represent the underlying metaphors and semantic networks.

After these preliminary remarks we shall demonstrate some of the most important uses of corpora for metaphor research.

2 What corpus data can show us

What a corpus or collection of electronic texts can tell us is dependent on a number of factors such as the composition of the corpus, its purpose, size, range of text types, use of text fragments or complete texts, and search tools. One of the great advantages of corpus data is that authentic examples, literal or nonliteral, can be studied in their context. Thus, the immediate context is crucial for deciding whether a word or phrase is used figuratively. For example, the verb *build*, often combined with *up*, is metaphorical if occurring with abstract objects like *a relationship*, *career*, *reputation*. The intransitive use of *build up* often occurs with a negative connotation as in *there's a great pile of work that builds up* or *an enormous queue builds up* (Collins Wordbanks-Online²). Corpus data can provide explicit information on such collocational tendencies. What we can also learn from corpus data is how figurative expressions differ in form from literal expressions. Important work on corpus-based studies of metaphor has been done by Deignan (1999; 2005).

2.1 Evidence of figurative meaning

We have just seen how a verb of movement (*pop*) patterns with a specific subject (*eyes*), representing a body part contained in another body part

² Collins WordbanksOnline English corpus is a 56-million subcorpus of the Bank of English available at <http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx>.

(*head*). Verbs prove useful for the study of metaphor in the way they fill a place in frames with other obligatory and optional elements. Another verb of movement is *float*, which refers to objects moving on the surface of liquids or in the air. In (4) the presence of the abstract target (*feeling of danger*) is described in concrete terms, as the source *fog*. *Like a fog* is a simile preceded by the verb *floated*.

- (4) The feeling of danger that he had left behind him *floated round* her like a fog, already *darkening* her life ahead. (HWE)

The effect of the fog is “darkening her life”. There is a story in the Bible that describes a fog as darkness which may be felt and which lay over Egypt for three days.³ The image in (4) could have a similar effect. Owing to its visual potential the verb *float* easily becomes the focus of image metaphors, attracting unusual target-source combinations:

- (5) (a) she *floated like* a butterfly and stung like a bee (CH7)
 (b) A square of grey fish *floated like* a hostile iceberg, all but submerged. (CJT)
 (c) into his twilight existence her face *floated like* a mirage. (A7J)
 (d) all the sweet promises they had made were empty words that *floated like* echoes in a great grey void. (CEH)

(5a) and (5b) both contain concrete source domains (*a butterfly, a hostile iceberg*) whereas in (5c) and (5d) they are abstract and inaccessible (*mirage, echoes*).

2.1.1 Syntagmatic pattern with the noun *fog*

An interesting fact about the metaphorical uses of the noun *fog* is that most of them occur in specific syntagmatic patterns. One such pattern stands out, i.e. when *fog* is followed by *of*:

- (6) fog of dust ‘fog-like air’
 fog of the coffee bar ‘smoke’
 fog of words/grumble and contempt ‘unclear thought and language’
 fog of ideology/mysticism/political weakness and drunken anarchy/
 concealment/received wisdom ‘set of beliefs, opinions, states’

All these instances occur in written language, about half of them in imaginative prose. The first noun (*fog*) characterizes an aspect of the second noun or noun phrase (cf. Sinclair 1991: 88–89). *Of*-constructions that are used to

³ Exodus 10:21: Then the Lord said to Moses, “Lift your hand toward heaven, and the land of Egypt will be covered with a darkness so thick you can feel it.”

express figurative meaning are well known (cf. Brooke-Rose 1958). Although Lakoff & Johnson said nothing about this particular construction, they were certainly aware of the connection between linguistic form and metaphor: “Syntax is not independent of meaning, especially metaphorical aspects of meaning” (1980: 138).

In this and many other cases corpus studies help to lay bare recurrent collocates and lexico-grammatical configurations. Deignan (2005), using corpus data, gives a number of examples of metaphorical expressions which are more fixed than literary uses.

2.1.2 Morphology

The presence of morphologically related forms such as derivations or conversions and their interplay with metaphor is worth looking into. For example, there are 30 instances of the verb *fog* and 14 of these are metaphorical (47 per cent). It turns out that a much higher proportion of the verbal uses of *fog* (examples (7)–(8)) are metaphorical than the corresponding noun. Out of 882 hits for the noun *fog*, 76 were interpreted as metaphorical (8.6 per cent). Goatly argues that word-formation “especially of the denominal kind [as in *fog*] involves or prepares the way for metaphorical extensions and transfers of meaning, **while at the same time weakening those metaphors it makes possible.**” (1997: 106; bold mine. KW) I think this might be true of the verb *fog*. Even so, Goatly’s claim should be tested on more data.

- (7) [...] their minds are still *fogged* from the drugs during the first week or two (G3D)
- (8) the government has been *fogging* the issue (J2T)

2.2 Idioms and their co-occurrence with other chunks

Idiom research has benefited from both CMT and corpus-based research. Cognitive linguists do not make a sharp distinction between metaphors and idioms; both are products of our conceptual system. Thus, there is evidence from cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistics against the idea that all idioms are dead metaphors (Gibbs 1994). The role of corpus-based research in this area has been to provide data on formal variation and the discursive functions of idioms (Moon 1998; McCarthy 1998).

I will illustrate both idioms and chunks starting out with an example from Lakoff & Johnson:

- (9) He fell into a depression. (SAD IS DOWN)

Apart from its literal use as a verb of movement, the verb *fall into* is used in a number of fixed expressions (*place, step, line*), often with a metaphorical meaning. However, it turned out that there were only two instances of *fall*

into a depression in the BNC, which is not much if one is interested in collocational behaviour:

- (10) He was a gentle man by nature, but he would suddenly *fall into a depression* and lose all confidence in himself. (FS0)
- (11) We must neither deny what is going to happen to us, nor *fall into a depression* without hope. (GOT)

The New Oxford Dictionary of English describes the figurative meaning of *fall (into)* as ‘occur, arrive, or become apparent as if by dropping suddenly’, but *fall into a depression* is not listed as an idiom in any of the dictionaries I have looked at. By contrast, a search in WebCorp.org gave 169 instances. Most of these refer to human subjects but the sense of ‘economic depression’ also occurs. This shows the need for very large corpora for lexical and phraseological study. Examination of the much larger WebCorp confirmed that the example given by Lakoff & Johnson (1980) was not so bad after all.

Since my original search only gave two occurrences (sentences (10) and (11)) and since *fall into* is an idiom-prone verb, I looked at another idiom with *fall into*, i.e. *fall into ... trap/traps*, which proved to be more profitable. There were 85 instances of this string, and all occurrences in the BNC were metaphorical. Sentences (12)–(14) illustrate some syntagmatic variation:

- (12) Finally, delegation ensures that you do not *fall into* the fatal *trap* of trying to become or seem indispensable. (AYJ)
- (13) Few Jamaican women *fall into* the wife-mother *trap* of isolation and financial dependence. (HH3)
- (14) We will also show you how to win at dieting by exposing some of the easiest *traps* to *fall into*. (ED3)

An interesting fact about this metaphorical idiom is that it co-occurs with several other linguistic features, which together result in what Stubbs (2001: 65) calls ‘discourse prosody’, i.e. “a feature which extends over more than one unit in a linear string”. Here the feature seems to be a negative attitude, expressed as negation, the evaluative expression *it is (all too) easy*, and/or modal expressions:

- with negation (*do not fall into, I don’t want to fall into, ...*) 45/85 (53%)
- *it is (all too) easy* or variation or synonym 17/85 (20%)
- modal expressions (*I may fall, I will not fall, she wasn’t about to fall, she would never fall, they shouldn’t fall, ...*); 27 modals, 18 of these negative

Falling into a trap obviously results in a bad situation and is something to be avoided. This explains the occurrence of explicit or implicit warnings in the

concordance lines, and the speaker's evaluation of the situation reflected in the choice of negation, modals and evaluative chunks. I think the example *fall into a trap* shows some of the power of corpus techniques. It illuminates co-selection of lexico-grammatical units, which would have been hard to discover otherwise, and it puts the idiom into a contextual frame which explains its pragmatic function.

2.3 Repetition, placement in the text

Detecting repetition of an item is one of the simplest things a search tool can do, whether this is within a text fragment, a complete text or a genre. Quantitative information on occurrences would be valuable when deciding on whether an entity is innovative or conventional or if the distribution differs in different genres. The repetition of a conventionalized⁴ lexical metaphor would obviously attract much less attention than a repeated innovative metaphor, but if a figurative expression is repeated, it is most likely to appear in a different context, co-occurring with different collocates. If it is innovative, it has obviously already lost some of its freshness when repeated. As Goatly (1997: 257–259) has pointed out, the repeated vehicle can refer to different topics and therefore evoke different images.

Examples (15) and (16) each represent different kinds of repetition. There are several interesting things worth noting about these examples. One has to do with placement in the text, the other is collocations. (15), which is not from a corpus but from *The Independent*, is an instance in which the metaphor occurs in the heading and in the first sentence, a common text strategy used by journalists. A loaded word or phrase, here *meltdown*, is often used to catch attention. Here the issue is (*political*) *meltdown*. Note the negatively loaded collocates *devastating opinion poll* and *the worst defeat*.

- (15) Heading for *meltdown*? Tories fear election rout [heading]
17 January 2005

The Conservatives could be heading for a *meltdown* after the next election, senior Tory MPs warned Michael Howard last night after the defection of a former minister to Labour and a devastating opinion poll predicting the worst defeat for a century. [1st sentence] (*The Independent*)

- (16) In a period when, as recent events in Los Angeles and elsewhere have shown, the ethnic *melting pot* has dissolved into a racial *meltdown*, the clemency of clear understanding is as sought-after as ever. (CAL)

⁴ Deignan (2005: 40–47) describes the difference between a 'conventionalized' and a 'dead' metaphor.

Example (16), from the BNC, is taken from an article in a periodical dealing with world affairs. It occurs in the final paragraph of the text. In this example it must have been the repetition of the morpheme *melt* that prompted the combination (*melting pot* > *meltdown*). Semantically, there is the idea of a quickly deteriorating situation since both *meltdown* and *dissolve*, in some of their senses, indicate uncontrollable situations.

It is not unusual for metaphors to occur in text-strategic positions and in that respect their behaviour is similar to that of idioms. McCarthy points out about idioms:

Idioms do seem to occur at important junctures in everyday stories, not just randomly. They often occur in segments where the teller and listeners step back and 'evaluate' the events of the narrative, rather than in the reports of the events themselves. (1998: 134)

With regard to texts in the BNC the problem is that you cannot be sure that a text is complete, which makes it difficult to consider such aspects as the beginning or the end of a text. In this respect literary scholars using complete electronic texts are at an advantage. They will have read the text and know what to look for. A program like WordSmith would help them to plot clusters of figurative uses throughout the text.

2.4 Discourse studies and genre-specific uses of metaphor

The examples cited so far represent conventionalized metaphors with a fairly low degree of metaphoricality. Thus all the examples from the BNC were found in ordinary concordance lines. If active metaphors appeared in those lines, it was just by chance. This bottom-up approach is inadequate when we get to the study of metaphor in discourse. Discourse is anchored in contexts and the interaction between text and context means that the researcher must also adopt a top-down functional approach. In contrast to the examples discussed in sections 2.1–2.3, the starting point is now semantic domains or conceptual metaphors on the one hand and evaluative expressions on the other. A considerable proportion of linguistic metaphors are used to convey interpersonal meaning. Thus Moon (1998: 225) points out that in her database of FEIs (fixed expressions, including idioms) “89% of all database FEIs with any metaphorical or simile content have some evaluative function”.

Deignan (2005) contains a useful survey of ‘Discourse approaches to metaphor research’. This is work based on electronic texts or transcripts of spoken discourse. These investigations draw on CMT and examine how language is used for meaning-making in different genres, spoken and written. An early instance of such research was George Lakoff’s work on the Gulf War discourse (Lakoff 1992). Since then metaphor text studies have appeared on a number of issues or domains such as ideology (Goatly 2006),

politics, race, economics (Skorczynska & Deignan 2006), electricity (Johansson Falck 2005), advertising (Lundmark 2005) and educational contexts (cf. Cameron 2003). As regards the dynamism of spoken discourse, contrary to the impression one gets of work purely based on cognitive theory, Cameron's study shows "how metaphor repertoires are developed through participation in social action and interaction" (Cameron 2003: 21).

Charteris-Black (2004) is a publication in this area which combines corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis (cf. Fairclough 1995) and cognitive semantics. The author examines metaphor in political discourse, press reporting, and religious discourse and within each of these registers he looks at two or more subcategories. For example, within press reporting he studies sports reporting and financial reporting. In sports, football accounts for over 50 per cent of his data but other sports are also described in terms of the general CM SPORT IS A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL, of which there are more specific variants typical of British culture (e.g. CRICKET IS WAR, RUGBY IS WAR). A good linguistic realization of this metaphor taken from Charteris-Black (2004: 131) is:

- (17) They had the advantage before kick-off over Bradford City, but there was no surprise, no shock at Wimbledon's *surrender*. This had been a relegation waiting to happen, even before the *heart attack* that incapacitated Joe Kinnear [former manager] last spring. The confidence had been *haemorrhaging* for at least two years.

Like any serious study of metaphor, this corpus approach presupposes a close reading of the texts for identification, interpretation and explanation of the metaphors. Charteris-Black is particularly interested in source domains, their representation and frequencies in each register, and the values conveyed. An example is his detailed analysis of the semantic field of conflict and the way it is used in sports reports as compared with in the language as a whole. He argues that, unlike his own method, cognitive semantics conceals the fact that "metaphor selection in particular types of discourse is governed by the rhetorical aim of persuasion" (2004: 247). In terms of Steen's three categories referred to above, rhetorical purpose as reflected in specific uses of metaphor would be part of the communicative dimension.

3 Concluding remarks

Before 1980 or thereabouts examples of metaphors discussed in the theoretical literature were either literary or invented. The literary examples were at least authentic and representative of a particular genre known to be rich in figures of speech and other devices of the poetic imagination. However, the invented examples typically consisted of stereotypes like *Richard is a fox / a*

gorilla and *Sally is a block of ice*. It is surprising that so much could be said about a few isolated sentences but less surprising that there was a great deal of information about ordinary usage that was unavailable.

By studying natural language data using corpus techniques we can learn more about metaphorical meaning in context, how it is expressed in authentic sentences or utterances, when metaphorical expressions tend to occur, and what functions they may have. It is also possible to study the collocational profile of metaphorical expressions and — more generally — the interdependence of items sharing a co-text. This kind of corpus-based research has in several respects resulted in a re-evaluation of research traditions. In the past, metaphors were on the one hand studied by scholars interested in novel metaphors as used in literary texts, on the other hand by philosophers, critics and cognitive psychologists interested in the literal-figurative dichotomy mostly illustrated by the analysis of isolated decontextualized sentences. The cognitive approach meant a shift to conventional metaphor and language in the mind. By combining conceptual metaphor theory and cognitive semantics with corpus studies we can now explore how metaphors are used in specific domains and how the underlying conceptual metaphors are represented in different genres and subgenres. Alternatively, the researcher is free to just adopt Sinclair's principle 'trust the text' (Sinclair & Carter 2004) and do the best he or she can with the data found. All of these things would be impossible without access to electronic corpora or texts and suitable tools for analysis.

Finally I would like to emphasize once more that corpus-based study of metaphor is different from traditional metaphor research in the sense that it can be both qualitative and quantitative. But the qualitative aspect still demands close reading of passages of text, sometimes complete texts, and without proper identification of the metaphorical expressions frequencies remain just figures.

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The Experiential Motivation of Metaphors: On a Poem by Carol Anne Duffy, Phenomenology, and Cognitive Linguistics

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Abstract. The backbone of this paper is a close reading of Carol Anne Duffy's poem 'The Grammar of Light' with focus on its metaphorical dimension. The poem is analysed mainly through concepts used in cognitive linguistics. Consequently, the paper highlights the ontology implied by the discipline of cognitive linguistics. In addition, the investigation examines the aforementioned implications by means of a phenomenological meta-analysis. After having determined the poem's central conceptual metaphors that are combined and their experiential motivation, the paper attempts to investigate the experiential-cognitive roots of metaphors generally and more closely. What are the conditions of possibility for the *understanding-A-through-B* structure on this ontological plane? It is argued that experience involves an immediate access to *eidetic intuition*. The direct experience of a candle necessarily at every instant involves experiential 'candleness.' For Husserl, as well as for the cognitive linguist, *perception is conception*. The immediately accessible creative imagination is of crucial importance to metaphoricity. The paper also takes into consideration aspects of the literal dimension of the engagement with literature. Against the Nietzschean-Derridean line of thinking, it is argued that cognitive embodiment and certain general aspects of experience save the literary text from a complete loss of truth and straightforwardness.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, phenomenology, poetry, blending theory, Husserl, Carol Anne Duffy, 'The Grammar of Light'.

Friedrich Nietzsche once stated that figurative language in general, and metaphoricity in particular, has a prominent role to play in mankind's epistemological tragedy. In his opinion, the instability and impermanence of truth is directly due to a diachronic aspect of language:

What therefore is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short a sum of human relations which became poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned, and after long usage seem to a nation fixed, canonic and binding: truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions; worn-out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses; coins which have their obverse effaced and now are no longer of account as coins but merely as metal. (Nietzsche 1911: 180, as quoted in Soskice 1987: 78)

What is of supreme importance here is the obvious fact that Nietzsche uses a metaphor when warning the reader of its deceptiveness. This observation takes us to the performative core of the philosopher's own writing. As has been pointed out by Paul Cantor, Nietzsche in a great deal of his text production "deliberately blurs the distinction between the literal and figurative meaning" and thereby he allows "his language to hover between the literal and the figurative", which keeps his readers "off-balance", preventing them from "ever settling in to any dogmatic interpretation of his thought" (Cantor 1982: 81). Highlighted here is an anti-dogmatic philosophy that seeks to incorporate the objective of the intellectual process into the procedure itself, thereby somehow avoiding both *archē* and *telos*, both of which might serve as anchorage points to the systematic building of epistemological edifices. But of even greater importance here is to make note of the fact that Nietzsche in his writing practice does not actually contribute to the death of the metaphor. As a matter of fact, he rather supplies nourishment for the notion that metaphoricity deals with dormancy, not death. The piece of metal may suddenly regain currency, and be circulated again. The prevalence of the metaphorical never excludes the literal, and the reverse also holds true.¹

Metaphoricity possesses a regenerative potential that repeatedly comes to the fore, and very poignantly so in poetry. The importance of this poetic dimension of human experience is emphasised within the field of cognitive linguistics. The poetic openness to parable, analogy, and metaphor is not an elaborate *ad hoc* capacity that moves thought and experience away from the literal. On the contrary, it is rather a primordial force that preserves the literal in the perpetual rebirth of Being. As has been stated by Lakoff and Johnson, "[W]hen a romantic like Nietzsche or a postmodernist like Derrida analyzes someone's metaphors, he sees the use of metaphor in forming a position as invalidating any absolute truth claims that the author was making" (1999: 122). But the movement of metaphoricity does not necessarily indicate such a clear-cut move away from truthfulness in all of its possible forms.

Along with Lakoff and Johnson, I would like to place emphasis on the vitality of metaphoricity and its possible manifestation as embodied truth. My

¹ See Lakoff and Johnson: "The pervasiveness of primary conceptual metaphor in no way denies the existence of nonmetaphorical concepts [...] there is a vast system of literal concepts, for example, the basic-level concepts and the spatial-relations concepts. All basic sensorimotor concepts are literal" (1999: 58).

aim in the present paper is to close-read Carol Anne Duffy's poem 'The Grammar of Light', while focusing on its metaphorical depth and complexity. At the same time I shall explore similarities and differences between cognitive linguistics and phenomenology.² The poem reads as follows:

The Grammar of Light

Even barely enough light to find a mouth,
and bless both with a meaningless O, teaches,
spells out. The way a curtain opened at night
lets in neon, or moon, or a car's hasty glance,
and paints for a moment someone you love, pierces.

And so many mornings to learn; some
when the day is wrung from damp, grey skies
and rooms come on for breakfast
in the town you are leaving early. The way
a wasteground weeps glass tears at the end of a street.

Some fluent, showing you how the trees
in the square think in birds, telepathise. The way
the waiter balances light in his hands, the coins
in his pocket silver, and a young bell shines
in its white tower ready to tell.

Even a saucer of rain in a garden at evening
speaks to the eye. Like the little fires
from allotments, undressing in veils of mauve smoke
as you walk home under the muted lamps,
perplexed. The way the shy stars go stuttering on.

And at midnight, a candle next to the wine
slurs its soft wax, flatters. Shadows
circle the table. The way all faces blur
to dreams of themselves held in the eyes.
The flare of another match. The way everything dies.

(Schmidt 1999: 677–78)

'The Grammar of Light' combines two conventional conceptual metaphors: SEEING IS UNDERSTANDING and ARTICULATING IS UNDERSTANDING. According to Zoltán Kövecses, such combining is within the field of literature "perhaps the most powerful mechanism to go beyond our everyday conceptual system" (2002: 49). The experiential motivation is obvious in the two dominating conceptual metaphors mentioned: When we see clearly we are certain about the *what* of our act, metaphorically we understand. When we are able to articulate fully and with precision, we understand.

² When I refer to cognitive linguistics here, I primarily allude to the work of George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Zoltán Kövecses and Mark Turner.

What is required for seeing in general is evidently light. In the first stanza the “light” and the “mouth” come together in the blessing, the “O” that graphically forms a circle, which in turn evokes unity, repetition, and return. Even though this “O” might be completely devoid of meaning it still “teaches” and “spells out” something. As there is a teaching going on, there is also a learning process, because there are “so many mornings to learn.” The teaching-learning motif is of course related to the basic understanding theme as well. But what is there about mornings to learn? An endless row of monotonous dawns materialising as a string of pale beads through any life lived. We ask again: What is there to learn?

Within the framework of cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphors are understood to have possible linguistic manifestations. But certainly, their instantiation need not necessarily be linguistic, since they might equally well be realised as paintings, cartoons or sculptures. Furthermore, we find an experiential motivation underlying conceptual metaphors, as in the cases of seeing and articulating referred to above. But what are the phenomenological conditions of possibility for this experiential capacity? What makes metaphoricity possible in the first place? There is a requirement that we have a co-presence of at least two fields or domains. A very basic entity as regards ontological metaphoricity is the notion of an object. In so far as consciousness necessarily and primarily is consciousness-of something, the X of which consciousness is conscious has to be an object of some kind. This fact is permeated by a disturbing touch of singularity. How is it possible to have a basic experiential level, one which establishes primordially for the binary structures *X is Y* and *X as Y*, respectively?

In order to look more closely at this issue we may consider a level of experience that possesses an uncanny sense of oscillation between, for instance, the touching and the touched. If we touch our left arm with our right hand we may experience the poise of indeterminacy as regards the main focus. Do we primarily sense the touching or the touched? Obviously we have one focus at a time, even though we may experience a rapid alternation in which we are very close to having both the touching and the touched at the same time. Similarly, if we use Wittgenstein’s famous duck-rabbit, we realise that we see either the duck or the rabbit, but nevertheless we must in some way see both.³ The seeing of the rabbit cannot make the duck disappear, and vice versa. In very basic experiences it seems to be quite possible to have intimate connections between two or more objects without being able to completely let go of a primary focus. This structure could possibly give an experiential foundation to the target and source domain that we find in cognitive linguistics. The primary focus is the source domain and the secondary focus, which is also immediately accessible, is the target domain. But as in the case of the oscillation between the touching and the touched, they

³ The duck-rabbit was originally taken from the psychologist Joseph Jastrow, but Wittgenstein was undoubtedly the one who made it famous.

are close to being manifested as a fused entity. This might shed some light on our ability to immediately grasp a given metaphor.

The poem's third stanza presents a "fluent" morning, but it never becomes quite clear if that means that certain mornings may seem more articulated, more lucid than others. What is indisputably offered to us is the vision of trees and birds as cognitive processes, and vice versa. This beautiful image metaphor draws heavily on the basic entities typically presupposed in what has been categorised as ontological metaphors, namely: objects, substances, and containers. The thoughts are objects, birds, and the consciousness, the tree, is a container. In the blend created, we are persuaded to see how it is possible for the bird-thought to fly from one consciousness-tree to another. Hence the telepathic dimension, which also is based on the conventional CONDUIT metaphor for communication. But what makes possible the immediate connection between the seemingly heterogeneous domains 'tree and birds' and 'consciousness and thoughts'? Phenomenologically speaking, what is required to make such swift experiential transfers and fusions is an *Eidos*.⁴ Having a streak of ideality — i.e. in case we feel inclined to establish absolute identity between repeatability and ideality — this Husserlian concept is nevertheless not to be regarded as opening up a Platonic ontology.⁵ The *Eidos* is part of the experience. What we are dealing with is therefore not to be viewed as a dialectical idealism; it does not trigger some Hegelian *Aufhebung*.⁶ The experience of a particular tree involves an immediate access to its *Eidos*, treeness. How for instance trees behave in disparate perceptions of particular trees accumulates into an experiential core that is continuously modified and barely distinguishable from the rhythm of a life lived. Such experiential patterns are neither completely fixed nor erratically manifested. They are available for free variation and combination in the immediately accessible creative imagination.⁷

⁴ In Greek, the word *eidon*, "to see," has the same Indo-European root as the closely related word *oida*, which means "to know" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 85).

⁵ For Husserl's argument against Platonism, see *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*, § 22.

⁶ Cf. Jacques Derrida's "White Mythology" (1982: 207–73). Derrida claims that "the movement of metaphorization (origin and then erasure of the metaphor, transition from the proper sensory meaning to the proper spiritual meaning by means of the detour of figures) is nothing other than a movement of idealization. Which is included under the master category of dialectical idealism, to wit, the *relève* (*Aufhebung*), that is, the memory (*Erinnerung*) that produces signs, interiorizes them in elevating, suppressing, and conserving the sensory exterior. And in order to think and resolve them, this framework sets to work the oppositions nature/spirit, nature/history, or nature/freedom, which are linked by genealogy to the opposition of *physis* to its others, and by the same token to the oppositions sensual/spiritual, sensible/intelligible, sensory/sense (*sinnlich/Sinn*). Nowhere is this system as explicit as it is in Hegel. It describes the space of the possibility of metaphysics, and the concept of metaphor thus defined belongs to it" (1982: 226). But for Husserl, as well as for the cognitive linguist, there simply is no perception without conception.

⁷ Husserl explains this phenomenon with reference to the perception of a table: "Starting from this table-perception as an example, we vary the perceptual object, table, with a completely free optionality, yet in such a manner that we keep perception fixed as perception of some-

This matter of fact is clearly highlighted in the poem's title, which indicates that even the ever shifting and complex experience of light harbours an immanent grammar, a set of laws which are explorable and grow out of a lifetime's learning of what these phenomena teach us.⁸ Such a construal is compatible with what Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 57), as cognitive linguists, see as three possible sources for primary metaphors: our neuroanatomy, sensorimotor experiences of the human body, and repeated perceptual experiences in which source and target domains are connected. Some form of primordial, experiential abstraction, i.e. an *Eidos*, must exist if all these experiences are to be activated as parts of our general cognitive system. Moreover, the poem's clearly established learning process comments interestingly on the Nietzschean critique of truth introduced in the beginning of our investigation. As Lakoff and Johnson contend, truth may instead be regarded as "relative to understanding", and it is clear that its embodiment "keeps it from being purely subjective" (1999: 107). 'The Grammar of Light' is obviously sensitive to the fact that even if truth is not a metaphysical commodity underpinning a dogmatic system, it is nevertheless not completely absent from life in its oblique streaming.

In the poem's second stanza there is a disturbing line from our metaphorical perspective: "The way / a wasteground weeps glass tears at the end of a street." As is the case with much personification, this expression — at least considered superficially — rests on the EVENTS ARE ACTIONS conceptual metaphor. But what makes this particular case complicated is that there is no event there in the first place. The wasteground is more like a still life. Perhaps the movement of the tears is light reflected in glass and shards of glass, or they might even be substantiations of light. Light does seem to take on more substantial properties in the poem since in the next stanza "the waiter balances light in his hands". LIGHT IS A SUBSTANCE is indeed identified as an established conceptual metaphor.

The third stanza's concluding sentences make the theme of understanding urgent. If we attempt to understand the coins in the waiter's pocket, or that strange "young bell," we are obviously at a loss. What is there to understand? What is there to learn? These rather puzzling lines raise questions

thing, no matter what. Perhaps we begin by fictively changing the shape or the color of the object quite arbitrarily, keeping identical only its perceptual appearing" (1999: 70). In his article in *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, the phenomenologist Jaako Hintikka points out that such laws of possibilities "have to be distinguished in phenomenological analysis from the sensory mass in which they are embedded," but simultaneously he reminds us of the fact that they are "objectively given to us in experience, not added to experience as an afterthought" (1995: 101).

⁸ Cf. Mark Turner's argument in *The Literary Mind*. Metaphoricity is regarded as a subcategory of parable, in turn a subcategory of story, which is more fundamental than linguistic grammar: "Story involves spatiality, motor capacities, the sensory modalities (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste) and submodalities, perceptual and conceptual categorization, image schemas, and our other basic cognitive instruments. Parable draws on all of this structure to create grammatical structure for vocal sound. Grammar, built from such structure, coheres with it" (1996: 141).

about context dependence.⁹ Is poetic metaphoricity different from the everyday language ditto, in the sense that we are asked to expect and accept more breathtaking turns already from the outset when we engage with literature? Consider the following example of entailment incoherence in ordinary language use:

She gave him a headache, and he still has it.
She gave him a kiss, and he still has it.

(Kövecses 2002: 102)

These metaphors are based on the conceptual metaphor CAUSATION IS TRANSFER. In the first sentence the second clause works because we are dealing with a state. But in the second example the entailment does not work because we are dealing with an event, and events do not last. But if we transfer the second case into the context of a poem, then it works very well. A kiss that we feel inclined to keep is a fairly relevant kiss, and perhaps some of us have an experiential basis to back up the claim that such kisses do exist.

The more fundamental question opened is probably to what extent we think propositionally and logically. A pragmatic analysis would claim that it is the patent falseness of metaphors that immediately directs the language user to the metaphorical reading mode instead of pursuing a literal interpretation. Is it the case that we have always already discarded propositional thinking when we engage with literature? Or is it more plausible to assume that the foundation of our cognitive capacity is the 'literary mind' rather than the 'logical mind,' as has indeed been argued by Mark Turner in *The Literary Mind*. In the latter situation, the context dependence indicated above would be of modest importance, at least as concerns the reception phase of metaphors.

In the fourth stanza of 'The Grammar of Light', articulation and seeing merge. The clarity with which the insignificant "saucer of rain" expresses itself is astonishing and even perplexing. But the appearance is not spectacular. What is spoken to the eye is a saucer of rain, nothing more and nothing less. Apart from the merging of perceptual fields, the saucer of rain itself is not metaphorically given. This clarity seems to be momentary and transient in the poetic world in focus here, since the lamps we pass are "muted" and since the only thing the stars are capable of is an endless stuttering that never seems to reach any acceptable level of clear articulation.

⁹ Cf. Gerard Steen's far-reaching claims concerning the importance of context when engaging with metaphors in the literary reading act: "When readers know they are reading a literary text, and this is usually the case, they mobilize specific reading strategies and knowledge about literary discourse which guide their reception process" (1994: 47). Steen also asserts that "readers pay special attention to metaphors in literature as opposed to non-literary discourse" (1994: 241).

It is this intense poise between heterogeneous conceptual and semantic entities that Michael J. Apter has discussed as a form of experiential synergy (1982: 56). The specific exhilaration may be felt in various cultural fields, among which poetry is a prominent one. As we already have seen, 'The Grammar of Light' is built around the activation of slumbering conceptual metaphors. Bringing the domains of seeing and articulating together implies that they are forced into a synergetic situation in which they are simultaneously themselves and not themselves, breaking the 'Law of the Excluded Middle' in logic. But the logical impossibility is a phenomenological reality, and according to Apter, synergy may be described as "increased vividness associated with enhanced arousal" (1982: 56). Metaphoricity brings out this synergetic vitality in the poem. The darkness and the inarticulate level of the text only enhance its exhilarating effects.

The fifth and concluding stanza continues the light-seeing-speaking conjunction. The fact that the candle "slurs" indicates that we are to be denied any clear and straightforward articulation and vision. But what is nevertheless spelled out is "the way" a seemingly insignificant appearance appears. The construction "the way" is emphasised all through the poem. It occurs six times, once in every one of the first four stanzas, and twice in the last one. What is important in the poem is not light itself, but the ways of light. These ways of experience are what Husserl tries to capture with his experience-concept, designated *Eidos*. Even a glimpse of "neon" or "moon" is momentarily crucial. From the poem's metaphorical-experiential viewpoint, it is completely irrelevant that the former is 'artificial' light and the latter 'natural' light. The ways of light do not bother about such oppositions. Even the quick glance of a car is on a par with having the one we love briefly and piercingly illuminated. The last stanza's blurring of "faces reflected in the eyes" is vital to the reception of this linguistic *chiaroscuro*.

Intertwined with the importance of the ways of light is the poem's emphasis on circularity. Close to the foreseeable end, the table is circled by shadows, the blurred faces are held in the roundness of the eyes, the light flare of a match is most certainly circled by a halo of darkness. The temporal movement of the poem is from night to morning to day to evening to night. The meaningless "O" of the first stanza, with its circularity and unity, is perhaps not so meaningless after all. Nothing is exhaustively understood, but a great deal is learned anyway, even though the learning will perpetually go on. There is only the way.

Towards the end of our reading it becomes increasingly difficult to deny the presence of the conceptual metaphors LIGHT IS LIFE, DARKNESS IS DEATH, and A LIFETIME IS A DAY. The poem's final sentence challenges the thrust of the circularity stressed above. Evidently, this immanent tension is the strength of the art work at hand and a conspicuous indication of the synergetic effect introduced by Apter. By pointing out that death is an eternal darkness, it disputes the validity of return. To some extent it speaks like Catullus:

soles occidere et redire possunt:
nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
nox est perpetua una dormienda.

The sun can set and return again;
when our short light has once set,
it is one eternal night to be slept through.

(Catullus, Carmen V; Godwin 1999: 28–29)

Repeatedly the text promises that there will be teaching, learning, and articulation, only eventually to show that these things are surrounded by silence, death, and darkness. But even if nothing is entirely understood and everything is potentially meaningless and dies, something is spelled out and something is learned: the poem itself with its momentary power to synergetically challenge the suggested meaninglessness.

To conclude the propositional part of my paper, I may say that I have suggested a possible experiential motivation for heterogeneous domains appearing coterminously. I have also proposed that this way of regarding metaphoricity does not eliminate the literal dimension; neither does it purge textuality from elements of truth and straightforwardness. Furthermore, I have claimed that the Husserlian experience-concept *Eidos* introduces the immediacy of the creative imagination, which is imperative to metaphoricity. Thereby I have deliberately refrained from placing emphasis on the cognitive unconscious. Phenomenologically speaking, there is no need to posit such a metaphysical realm.

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Universality and Variation in the Use of Metaphor

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Abstract. Cognitive linguists have so far paid a great deal of attention to the remarkable universality of many conceptual metaphors. However, their theories fail to account for the equally impressive diversity of metaphorical conceptualization both across and within cultures. The present paper is an attempt to lay down the foundations of a theory of metaphor that is capable of simultaneously accounting for both universality and variation in metaphor.

Keywords: universality of metaphor, variation in metaphor, dimensions of metaphor variation, causes of metaphor variation.

1 Introduction

The general question that I will be concerned with in this paper is the following: *To what extent and in what ways is metaphorical thought relevant to an understanding of culture and society?*

Clearly, any answer to this question forces us to consider issues typically discussed in two broad ranges of disciplines: cognitive science and the social sciences. Typical representatives of the former include contemporary cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics, whereas a chief representative of the latter is anthropology in its several forms (symbolic, cultural, semantic, etc.). Metaphor has always been of great interest to many anthropologists since the very beginnings of the field (see, for example, Fernandez 1986, 1991). The general difference between the two ranges of disciplines in the handling of metaphor seems to be a slightly different focus on what they find most important in the study of metaphor. While scholars in cognitive science tend to ask “What is metaphor?” and “How does it work in the mind?”, scholars in the social sciences tend to focus on the issue of “What does metaphor do in particular social-cultural contexts?”

Many anthropologists working on issues related to metaphor had found new inspiration for their work in the cognitive linguistic theory of metaphor

that was first developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their widely read book *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). But it soon became clear that, although in many ways inspirational, this book (and much of the research that grew out of it; see Kövecses 2002) does not in every way meet the needs of anthropologists. One major reason for this was that, as a general tendency, cognitive linguists have overemphasized the universality of some of the metaphorical structures that they found, and they ignored the many cases of nonuniversality in metaphorical conceptualization (Fernandez 1991).

This situation presents cognitive scientists and linguists working on metaphor with a challenge: *Can the cognitive linguistic view of metaphor simultaneously explain both universality and diversity in metaphorical thought?* I wish to take up this challenge and argue on the basis of a wide range of data that the cognitive linguistic view of metaphor can successfully perform this job. To be sure, in order for it to accomplish the task, it needs to be modified, revised, and supplemented in several ways. My major goal in this work is to develop such an ‘updated’ and relatively comprehensive theory of metaphor that makes the theory more readily useful to people working on issues in the social sciences.

In other words, this paper is an attempt on my part to bring one possible version of the cognitive linguistic theory of metaphor closer to those who have an interest in studying the role of metaphor in complex social-cultural phenomena, such as emotions, politics, thought, morality, as well as highly abstract cultural processes and entities such as time, life, and personhood. This way, I hope to continue the ‘debate’ or dialog between cognitive linguists and anthropologists that was called for by James Fernandez more than ten years ago (Fernandez 1991: 8). I do not intend to do this by surveying the huge anthropological literature on metaphor; that would be a huge task in itself. Instead, I try to offer a reasonably comprehensive metaphor theory of what I take to be issues relevant to social scientists on the basis of the data that I have collected or that have been accumulated by other cognitive linguists interested in the issue of metaphor variation. Anthropologists and other social scientists can then judge whether the theory I arrive at is valid when compared with their theories based on their own data. This way we can begin to work together toward building a better account of the role of metaphor in understanding our own cultures and those of ‘others’.

2 Universality in metaphor

Metaphor is linguistic, conceptual, neural, bodily, and social all at the same time. Since cognitive linguists claim that metaphor is of the mind, the brain, and the body, many people who are familiar with the view of metaphor that originates from Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) *Metaphors We Live By* often

expect that what we call ‘conceptual metaphors’ are largely or mostly universal. They also often criticize this view for ignoring the obvious diversity of metaphors across and within cultures. My major goal in this paper is to offer a balanced view that takes into account both the universality and diversity of metaphor. In this view, we have to be able to answer the following questions:

- (1) Which metaphors are universal and why?
- (2) What are the dimensions along which metaphors vary?
- (3) Which aspects of metaphor are affected by metaphor variation?
- (4) What are the main causes of variation?
- (5) How do the causes that produce variation interact with the causes that produce universality?

In this paper, I will try to outline my best answers to these questions. However, before I begin, it will be useful to briefly look at an example of universality in metaphorical conceptualization.

It seems that several unrelated languages may share several conceptual metaphors for particular emotion concepts. One of these emotion concepts is happiness. There are a large number of conceptual metaphors for happiness in English (Kövecses 1991), but three of them stand out in importance: HAPPINESS IS UP (“I’m feeling *up*”), HAPPINESS IS LIGHT (“She *brightened up*”), and HAPPINESS IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER (“He’s *bursting* with joy”).

The Chinese cognitive linguist Ning Yu found the same conceptual metaphors in Chinese (Yu, 1995, 1998). Let us take HAPPINESS IS UP as our example. (Ning Yu uses the following grammatical abbreviations: PRT = particle, ASP = aspect marker.)

HAPPY IS UP

Ta hen gao-xing.
he very high-spirit
He is very high-spirited/happy.

Ta xing congcong de.
he spirit rise-rise PRT
His spirits are rising and rising./He’s pleased and excited.

Zhe-xia tiqi le wo-de xingzhi.
this-moment raise ASP my mood
This time it lifted my mood/interest.

Hungarian, a Finno-Ugric language, also has the same conceptual metaphors, as can be seen from the examples below:

HAPPINESS IS UP

Ez a film feldobott.
this the film up-threw-me
This film gave me a high. — This film made me happy.

Majd elszáll a boldogságtól.
almost away-flies-he/she the happiness-from
He/she is on cloud nine.

It is a remarkable fact that the same metaphor exists in the three languages. After all, English, Chinese, and Hungarian belong to very different language families and represent very different cultures of the world, which presumably did not have much contact with each other when these conceptual metaphors evolved. The question arises: How is it possible for such different languages and cultures to conceptualize happiness metaphorically in such similar ways? Three answers to the question suggest themselves: (1) it has happened by accident; (2) one language borrowed the metaphors from another; and (3) there is some universal motivation that enables the metaphors to emerge in these cultures.

If it is true, as cognitive linguists claim, that ‘simple’ or ‘primary’ metaphors (Grady 1997; Kövecses 2002) are motivated by universal correlations in bodily experience, we can be pretty sure that it is the third explanation that gives us the correct answer to the question. Indeed, when we are joyful, we tend to be up, moving around, be active, jump up and down, rather than down, inactive, and static. These are undoubtedly universal experiences associated with happiness (or more precisely, joy), and they are likely to produce universal (or near-universal) simple or primary metaphors.

The HAPPY IS UP metaphor is a generic-level metaphor. We know that metaphors tend to be universal or near-universal at this level. Specific-level metaphors tend to be different cross-linguistically. For example, a specific-level version of the metaphor HAPPY IS UP in English is HAPPINESS IS BEING OFF THE GROUND. As Ning Yu (1995, 1998) observed, this specific metaphor does not exist in Chinese.

3 Dimensions of metaphor variation

I will distinguish two kinds of dimensions along which metaphors vary: the cross-cultural and the within-culture dimension.

3.1 Cross-cultural variation

The most obvious dimension along which metaphors vary is the cross-cultural dimension. Variation in this dimension can be found in several distinct forms. One of them is what I call **congruence**. This is what obtains between a generic-level metaphor and several specific-level ones. Another is the case where a culture uses a set of different source domains for a particular target domain, or conversely, where a culture uses a particular source domain for conceptualizing a set of different target domains. Yet another situation involves cases where the set of conceptual metaphors for a particular target domain is roughly the same between two languages/cultures, but one language/culture shows a clear preference for some of the conceptual metaphors that are employed. Finally, there may be some conceptual metaphors that appear to be unique to a given language/culture. I will demonstrate congruence and alternative metaphorical conceptualization by some examples.

3.1.1 Congruent metaphors

There is some evidence that THE ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER metaphor may be near-universal (see Kövecses, 2000a). What is especially important about this conceptual metaphor is that it functions at an extremely general level. The metaphor does not specify many things that could be specified. For example, it does not say what kind of container is used, how the pressure arises, whether the container is heated or not, what kind of substance fills the container (liquid, substance, or objects), what consequences the explosion has, and so on. The metaphor constitutes a generic schema that gets filled out by each culture that has the metaphor. When it is filled out, it receives unique cultural content at a specific level. In other words, a generic-level conceptual metaphor is instantiated in culture-specific ways at a specific level. This is one kind of cross-cultural variation.

Consider the following three special cases. In one, Matsuki (1995) observes that all the metaphors for anger in English as analyzed by Lakoff and Kövecses (1987) can also be found in Japanese. At the same time, she also points out that there are a large number of anger-related expressions that group around the Japanese concept of *hara* (literally, ‘belly’). This is a culturally significant concept that is unique to Japanese culture, and so the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS (IN THE) HARA is limited to Japanese.

Second, Ning Yu (1998) studied the PRESSURIZED CONTAINER metaphor in great depth, and points out that Chinese uses a version of this metaphor in which the excess *qi* (i.e., energy that flows through the body) that corresponds to anger is not a fluid, like in English, but a gas. The gas is neutral with respect to heat, but it is capable of exerting pressure on the body-container. The most remarkable feature of the Chinese anger-metaphor is that it employs and is crucially constituted by the concept of *qi* — a concept

that is deeply embedded in the long history of Chinese philosophy and medicine.

Third, Zulu shares many conceptual metaphors with English (Taylor and Mbense, 1998). This does not mean, however, that it cannot have metaphors other than the ones we can find in English. One case in point is the Zulu metaphor that involves the heart: ANGER IS (UNDERSTOOD AS BEING) IN THE HEART. When the heart metaphor applies to English, it is primarily associated with love, affection, and the like. In Zulu it applies to anger and patience–impatience, tolerance–intolerance. The heart metaphor conceptualizes anger in Zulu as leading to internal pressure, since too much ‘emotion substance’ is crammed into a container of limited capacity. The things that fill it up are other emotions that happen to a person in the wake of daily events. When too many of these happen to a person, the person becomes extremely angry and typically loses control over his anger.

In all of the three cases, there is a generic-level metaphor and a specific-level one. The specific-level metaphors are instantiations of the generic-level one in the sense that they exhibit the same general structure. The lower-level instantiations are thus congruent with a higher-level metaphor. Where they differ is in the specific cultural content that they bring to the metaphor.

3.1.2 Alternative metaphors

There can be differences in the **range** of conceptual metaphors (or, more precisely, the range of source domains) that languages and cultures have available for the conceptualization of particular target domains. This is what commonly happens in the case of emotion concepts as targets.

Chinese shares with English all the basic metaphorical source domains for happiness: UP, LIGHT, FLUID IN A CONTAINER. A metaphor that Chinese has, but English does not, is HAPPINESS IS FLOWERS IN THE HEART. According to Ning Yu (1995, 1998), the application of this metaphor reflects “the more introverted character of Chinese”. He sees this conceptual metaphor as a contrast to the (American) English metaphor BEING HAPPY IS BEING OFF THE GROUND, which does not exist in Chinese at all and which reflects the relatively “extroverted” character of speakers of English.

As another illustration, let us take the concept of life as target. Later in the paper, we will see that life is commonly and primarily conceptualized as STRUGGLE/WAR, PRECIOUS POSSESSION, GAME, JOURNEY, and in several other ways by Americans and Hungarians. However, as work by Elizabeth Riddle (2001) shows, speakers of Hmong, a language spoken mainly in Laos and Thailand, conceptualize it very differently. They view life as a “string” that can be cut and broken. The word meaning ‘cut’, *tu*, can also mean ‘to give birth’, ‘to die’, and ‘to kill’. Riddle presents evidence for the existence of the conceptual metaphor not only from language but also from social behavior. Although the Hmong metaphor LIFE IS A STRING resonates as at least vaguely familiar to members of the European cultural sphere who have a

similar metaphor in Greek mythology (the three Fates spinning, weaving, and cutting the thread of life), the Hmong metaphor is much more clearly present among speakers of this language and seems to guide much of their linguistic and nonlinguistic behavior.

3.2 Within-culture variation

We know from work in sociology, anthropology, sociolinguistics, etc. that languages are not monolithic but come in varieties reflecting divergences in human experience. It makes sense to expect metaphor variation in the varieties of language most commonly identified by these researchers. I will present evidence that, I believe, supports the idea that metaphors vary not only cross-culturally but also within cultures. This variation can occur along a number of dimensions including the social, regional, ethnic, stylistic, subcultural, diachronic, and individual dimensions. I conceive of this approach to metaphor variation as the cognitive dimension of social-cultural diversity. I will demonstrate with some examples how metaphors vary along these dimensions.

3.2.1 The social dimension

Social dimensions include the differentiation of society into men and women, young and old, middle-class and working-class, and so forth. Do men, the young, or the middle-class use different metaphors than women, the old, or the working-class? At present we do not have systematic studies from a cognitive linguistic perspective. But we do have some indication that some of these social factors might produce variation in metaphorical conceptualization.

One example of this is the men–women dimension. This dimension seems to be operative in several distinct cases: the way men talk about women, the way women talk about men, the way men and women talk about women, the way men and women talk about the world in general (i.e., not only about the other). In English-speaking countries (but also in others), it is common for men to use expressions such as *bunny*, *kitten*, *bird*, *chick*, *cookie*, *dish*, *sweetie pie*, and many others, about women. These metaphorical expressions assume certain conceptual metaphors: WOMEN ARE (SMALL) FURRY ANIMALS (*bunny*, *kitten*), WOMEN ARE BIRDS (*bird*, *chick*, *hen-party*), and WOMEN ARE SWEET FOOD (*cookie*, *dish*, *sweetie pie*). However, when women talk about men they do not appear to use these metaphors about men, or use them in a more limited way. Men are not called *bunnies* or *kittens* by women. Neither are men characterized as *birds* or *chicks*, but they can be thought of as LARGE FURRY ANIMALS instead, such as *bears*. And women are more commonly viewed by men as SWEET FOOD than men are by women, although women can also sometimes describe men as FOOD, especially for sexual purposes.

3.2.2 The regional dimension

Languages often develop new metaphors when the language is moved by some of its speakers to a part of the world different from where it was originally spoken. The spread of English to the United States is one example (see Kövecses 2000b). Another is Afrikaans (Dutch spoken in South Africa). Afrikaans was carried from Europe to South Africa, and, as shown by René Dirven (1994), it changed its metaphorical patterns. It acquired many new metaphors based on natural phenomena and the animal world.

3.2.3 The stylistic dimension

Style is determined by a number of factors, such as audience, topic, setting, and medium. All of these may influence the selection and use of metaphors in discourse. For example, slang is typically rich in metaphor and may be characterized by metaphors not found in other varieties of language.

3.2.4 The subcultural dimension

Each society and culture consists of a number of subcultures. Subcultures develop their own metaphors, and these metaphors may define the group. There is of course no subculture that defines itself through an entirely new set of metaphors, but some of the metaphors members of the group use may be new relative to the mainstream. For example, we can think of emotionally-mentally ill people as one such group. Although depressed people share many of the metaphors for the concept of depression-sadness that 'non-depressed' people have, like DEPRESSION IS DARKNESS, DEPRESSION IS HEAVY, DEPRESSION IS DESCENT/DOWN, they also have metaphors that are unique to the group. One such metaphor is DEPRESSION IS A CAPTOR (McMullen and Conway, 2002).

3.2.5 The individual dimension

Individuals often have their idiosyncratic metaphors. These can be entirely novel or they may be versions of already existing conceptual metaphors. Thus, one can have a view of love relationships as the action of "pushing a wagon uphill", a metaphor based on LOVE IS A JOURNEY, but adding to it the aspect of requiring an effort to maintain it.

4 Aspects of metaphor involved in variation

In the cognitive linguistic view, metaphor is seen as being constituted by a variety of components that interact with each other. The components include the following:

- (1) Experiential basis
- (2) Source domain
- (3) Target domain
- (4) Relationship between the source and the target
- (5) Metaphorical linguistic expressions
- (6) Mappings
- (7) Entailments
- (8) Blends
- (9) Nonlinguistic realization
- (10) Cultural models

We can conceive of the components as aspects of metaphor. The question for us is: Which of these aspects are involved in metaphor variation? I suggest that all of them are.

Conceptual metaphors consist of a source and target domain (2 and 3). The choice of particular sources to go with particular targets is motivated by an experiential basis (1). The relationship of the source and the target is such that a source domain can apply to several targets and a target can attach to several sources (4). The particular pairings of source and target domains give rise to metaphorical linguistic expressions (5). There are basic conceptual correspondences, or mappings, between the source and target domains (6). Source domains often map materials onto the target beyond the basic correspondences. These additional mappings are called entailments, or inferences (7). The bringing together of a source with a target domain often results in blends, that is, conceptual materials that are new with respect to both the source and the target (8). Conceptual metaphors often materialize in nonlinguistic ways, that is, not only in language and thought but also in social reality (9). Conceptual metaphors converge on, and often produce, cultural models, that is, structured conceptual configurations (10).

Due to limitations of space, I can only demonstrate some of these in this paper.

4.1 Source

Different construals of the same source domain may lead to cross-linguistic metaphor variation. Given a particular source, this source may be construed differently in two languages. A case in point is the source domain of motion in space in English and Turkish, as analyzed by Şeyda Özçalışkan (2002). Özçalışkan showed that English primarily encodes manner into its verbs of motion (e.g., *walk*, *run*, *march*), whereas Turkish motion verbs lack this information concerning motion. Turkish primarily encodes direction into many of its motion verbs (e.g., verbs corresponding to English *fall*, *come*, *spread*, *descend*). This difference in the construal of motion events leads speakers of the two languages to comprehend target domains by means of a

shared source domain that, for them, comes in two versions: the manner-centered one (for English) and the neutral or direction-centered one (for Turkish). In this case, the shared source is at a high level of abstraction, whereas the cross-linguistic differences are found at a specific level of conceptual organization. Moreover, as Özçalışkan notes, this built-in difference in the kinds of information that the source domain encodes may predispose the speakers of the two languages to attend to slightly different aspects of not only the source but also of the target domain.

4.2 Entailments

Both English and Zulu have FIRE as a source domain for anger, but speakers of Zulu make use of entailments, or inferences, concerning the metaphor in a way in which speakers of English do not. In Zulu one can *extinguish* somebody's anger by pouring water on them (Taylor and Mbense 1998). This potential metaphorical entailment is not picked up by the English ANGER IS FIRE metaphor in the form of conventionalized linguistic expressions. Notice, however, that the metaphorical entailment is perfectly applicable to enthusiasm in English, as when someone is said to be a *wet blanket* at a party.

4.3 Linguistic expression

If two languages have the same conceptual metaphor, the linguistic expression of the conceptual metaphor in the two languages may follow a variety of different patterns. Based on the examination of the TIME IS MONEY metaphor in English and Hungarian, I found the patterns below (see Kövecses 2003):

	Word form	Literal meaning	Figurative meaning	Conceptual metaphor
Most frequent case	different	same	same	same
Less frequent case	different	different	same	same
Least frequent case	different	different	same	different

The table shows the regular patterns that we get if we keep the figurative meaning constant; that is, if we want to know how the same figurative meaning is expressed in the two languages. Given the MONEY metaphor, the most frequent pattern is the one in which a(n obviously) different word form with the same literal meaning expresses the same figurative meaning by making use of the same conceptual metaphor. Such patterns give us a way of systematically studying the differences between languages in the expression of metaphorical meaning.

5 Causes of metaphor variation

What causes our metaphors to vary along the dimensions and in the aspects that were discussed in the previous sections? I suggest that the causes can be grouped into two large classes: differential experience and differential cognitive preferences, or styles. In other words, the suggestion is that, on the one hand, many of our metaphors vary because our experiences as human beings also vary. And, on the other hand, our metaphors vary because the cognitive processes we put to use for the creation of abstract thought may also vary.

5.1 Differential experience

On the whole, it may be suggested that differential experience is constituted by divergences in context, social or personal history, and what I call **human concern**.

5.1.1 Awareness of differential contexts

When we use metaphors, we are (mostly unconsciously) aware of the context around us. The contexts that seem to have an influence on the metaphors we use include the physical environment, social context, and the communicative situation. Let us look at cultural context and the communicative situation to demonstrate the point.

5.1.1.1 Cultural context

The broader cultural context simply means all the culturally unique and salient concepts and values that characterize cultures, including, importantly, the governing principles and the key concepts in a given culture or subculture. The governing principles and key concepts have special importance in (metaphorical) conceptualization because they permeate several general domains of experience for a culture or cultural group.

To demonstrate the effect of these differences on metaphor, let us first consider in some detail the near-universal PRESSURIZED CONTAINER metaphor for anger in a variety of cultures. We saw above that, at a generic level, this metaphor is very similar across many cultures. However, at a specific level we can notice important differences in this metaphor across certain cultures. How do these differences arise?

Geeraerts and Grondelaers (1995) note that in the Euro-American tradition (including Hungary), it is the classical-medieval notion of the **four humors** from which the Euro-American conceptualization of anger (as well as that of emotion in general) derived. But they also note that the application of the humoral doctrine is not limited to anger or the emotions. The humoral view maintains that the four fluids (phlegm, black bile, yellow bile, and blood) regulate the vital processes of the human body. They were also believed to determine personality types (such as sanguine, melancholy, etc.)

and account for a number of medical problems, together with cures for them (like blood-letting). Obviously, then, the use of the humoral view as a form of cultural explanation extends far beyond anger and the emotions. In addition to being an account of emotional phenomena, it was also used to explain a variety of issues in physiology, psychology, and medicine. In other words, the humoral view was a key component of the classical-medieval cultural context and it exerted a major impact on the emergence of the European conception of anger as a fluid in a pressurized container.

In Japan, as Matsuki (1995) tells us, there seems to exist a culturally distinct set of concepts that is built around the concept of *hara*. Truth, real intentions, and the real self (called *honne*) constitute the content of *hara*. The term *honne* is contrasted with *tatemae*, or one's social face. Thus when a Japanese person keeps his anger under control, he or she is hiding his or her private, truthful, innermost self and displaying a social face that is called for in the situation by accepted standards of behavior. The notion of *hara* greatly influenced the Japanese conception of anger over the ages.

King (1989) and Yu (1995, 1998) suggest that the Chinese concept of *nu* (corresponding to anger) is bound up with the notion of *qi*, that is, the energy that flows through the body. *Qi* in turn is embedded in not only the psychological (i.e., emotional) but also the philosophical and medical discourse of Chinese culture and civilization. The notion and the workings of *qi* are predicated on the belief that the human body is a homeostatic organism, the belief on which traditional Chinese medicine is based. And the conception of the body as a homeostatic organism seems to derive from the more general philosophical view that the universe operates with two complementary forces, *yin* and *yang*, which must be in balance to maintain the harmony of the universe. Similarly, when *qi* rises in the body, there is anger (*nu*), and when it subsides and there is balance again, there is harmony and emotional calm. Without the concept of *qi*, it would be difficult to imagine the view of anger in Chinese culture.

Thus the four emotion concepts, *anger* in English, *düh* in Hungarian (the two representing European culture), *ikari/hara* in Japanese, and *nu* in Chinese, are in part explained in the respective cultures by the culture-specific concepts of the *four humors*, *hara*, and *qi*. What accounts for the distinctiveness of the culture-specific concepts is the fact that, as we have just seen, the culture-specific concepts that are evoked to explain the emotion concepts are embedded in very different systems of cultural concepts and propositions. It appears then that the broader cultural contexts that operate with culture-specific key concepts account for many of the specific-level differences among the four emotion concepts and the PRESSURIZED CONTAINER metaphor.

The example of the PRESSURIZED CONTAINER metaphor for anger demonstrates how culturally unique key concepts fill out generic-level schemas in the creation of cross-culturally differential metaphors. We can expect such

differences in key concepts to bring about differences not only in the production but also in the understanding of metaphors by speakers of languages that are associated with differential core values. Jeannette Littlemore (2003) shows that when speakers have conflicting core values (such as individualism-collectivism), they are likely to misunderstand each other's metaphors that are based on those values.

5.1.1.2 *Communicative situation*

I mentioned earlier that one of the factors in the communicative situation is the topic. Take, for instance, the sentences described by Jean Aitchison (1987): “Cougars *drown* Beavers”, “Cowboys *corral* Buffaloes”, “Air Force *torpedoes* the Navy”, and “Clemson *cooks* Rice” (Aitchison 1987: 143). These headlines from articles describing American football games exemplify the case where the author of the headline can create a metaphor for defeat in sports on the basis of certain properties of the characters that participate in the ‘story’. Since, for example, cowboys are in the business of corralling animals, the author is in a position to create a metaphor for defeat based on this property of cowboys.

5.1.2 History

One of my students, Niki Köves (2002), showed in a small-scale study that Hungarians primarily use the LIFE IS WAR and LIFE IS A COMPROMISE metaphors for comprehending the concept of life in general, whereas Americans predominantly employ the LIFE IS A PRECIOUS POSSESSION and LIFE IS A GAME metaphors. Why do Hungarians use the metaphors they do for life, and why do Americans use different ones? The issue obviously has to do with the peculiarities of Hungarian and American history. Hungarians have been in wars throughout their more than one thousand year old history as a nation and state and had to struggle for their survival, as they are wedged between powerful German-speaking and Slavic nations. Given this history, it is not surprising that for many Hungarians life is struggle — and less of a game. To point this out is, of course, trivial as far as history is concerned, but it is not trivial as far as the study of the emergence of a particular metaphorical conceptual system is concerned.

Personal history also plays a role in shaping metaphorical conceptualization. This is imperceptibly true of ordinary people but it is much more clearly true of poets and other creative writers. We can suggest that the unique metaphor-based symbolic system that an author uses may be partially determined by his or her personal life histories. For example, Sylvia Plath's metaphors come in part from the fact that her father was German and that he was an entomologist specializing in bees. Or, take Hemingway's symbolic system. Hemingway did bullfighting in Spain, was a big game hunter in Africa, and was a deep sea fisherman in Florida. All of these activities became symbolic in his novels and short stories. Actually, in Hemingway's

case it may be difficult to be sure whether the life story produced the metaphors, the life story was produced by a certain vision of the symbolic system itself, or the life story and the symbolic system envisioned simultaneously influenced each other and jointly emerged.

5.1.3 Human concern

I mentioned above the unique conceptual metaphors used by people diagnosed with episodes of depression. One of them was the metaphor DEPRESSION IS A CAPTOR. Why don't non-depressed (i.e., 'only' sad) people talk about sadness as CAPTOR? Most people do not normally talk about being trapped by, wanting to be free of, or wanting to break out of sadness, although these are ways of talking and thinking about depression in a clinical context. It makes sense to suggest that people with depression use this language and way of thinking about their situation because it faithfully captures what they experience and feel. Their deep concern is with their unique experiences and feelings that set them apart from people who do not have them. It is this concern that gives them the CAPTOR metaphor for depression.

5.2 Cognitive preferences and styles

Many different cognitive processes are at work in metaphorical conceptualization. These include not only "seeing" some kind of resemblance between two things (metaphor) and/or blending them (conceptual integration) and not only providing access to an entity through another (metonymy), but also elaboration, focusing, conventionalization, specificity, and transparency. All of these can be found at work in all languages and cultures, but the degree to which they apply to situations in which metaphorical conceptualization occurs can vary from language to language. We can think of these differentially-applied processes as differential **cognitive preferences** or **styles**. (My use of the term **cognitive style** is perhaps not the conventional one here as compared to the customary usage in cognitive psychology, but this does not in any way affect the argument. On cognitive linguistic work in relation to metaphor understanding using the more customary sense, see Boers and Littlemore 2000.) In this section, I will discuss some of these: experiential focus, metaphor and metonymy, and blending, or conceptual integration.

5.2.1 Experiential focus

Cognitive linguists emphasize that human beings share a great deal of bodily experience on the basis of which they can build universal metaphors. The question that inevitably arises is this: Is this universal bodily basis utilized in the same way across languages and cultures or even varieties? In light of the available evidence it seems that the answer is no. The universal bodily basis on which universal metaphors could be built is not utilized in the same way or to the same extent in different languages and varieties. The notion that I

would like to offer to obtain clarity about this issue is that of **differential experiential focus**. What this means is that different peoples may be attuned to different aspects of their bodily functioning in relation to a target domain, or that they can ignore or downplay certain aspects of their bodily functioning with respect to the metaphorical conceptualization of a target domain.

A case in point is the conceptualization of anger in English and Chinese. As studies of the physiology of anger across several unrelated cultures show, increase in skin temperature and blood pressure are universal physiological correlates of anger. This accounts for the ANGER IS HEAT metaphor in English and in many other languages. However, King's (1989) and Yu's (1995, 1998) work suggests that the conceptualization of anger in terms of heat is much less prevalent in Chinese than it is in English. In Chinese, the major metaphors of anger seem to be based on pressure — not heat. This indicates that speakers of Chinese have relied on a different aspect of their physiology in the metaphorical conceptualization of anger than speakers of English. The major point is that in many cases the universality of the experiential basis does not necessarily lead to universally equivalent conceptualization — at least not at the specific level of hot fluids.

As a matter of fact, the conceptualization of anger in terms of heat has not always been the case even in English. Caroline Gevaert (2001) found on the basis of a variety of historical corpora that heat-related words accounted for only 1.59% per cent of all the words describing anger before 850. The number of heat-related words for anger considerably increased in the period between 850 and 950. Then the number of these words decreased between 950 and 1050 to 6.22% and then to 1.71% by around 1200, and then to 0.27% by around 1300. After 1300 the number started growing again, and after 1400 it became dominant in texts that described anger.

These numbers indicate that the conceptualization of anger in terms of heat is not a permanent and ever-present feature of the concept of anger in English. How can this fluctuation occur in the conceptualization of anger over time? Is it because people's physiology changes in anger throughout the ages? This obviously cannot be the case. I believe the answer is that universal physiology provides only a potential basis for metaphorical conceptualization — without mechanically constraining what the specific metaphors for anger will be. Heat was a major component in the concept of anger between 850 and 950, and then after a long decline it began to play a key role again at around 1400 — possibly as a result of the emergence of the humoral view of emotions in Europe (see Gevaert 2001; Geeraerts and Grondelaers 1995). We can notice the same kind of fluctuation in the use of the domain of SWELL noted by Gevaert, which I take to be akin to what we can call the PRESSURE component in the conceptualization of anger today. Pressure was a major part of the conceptualization of anger until around 1300, but then it began to decline, only to emerge strongly again, together with heat, in the form of the HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor centuries later. The point is that we

should not expect any of the **conceptualized** responses associated with anger to remain constant in conceptualizing anger (and the emotions in general) throughout the ages.

5.2.2 Metaphor and metonymy

Are there any differences in the way the cognitive processes of metaphor versus metonymy are used in different languages and cultures? The most systematic investigation along these lines is a study by Jonathan Charteris-Black (2003). He examined in great detail how and for what purpose three concepts — mouth, tongue, and lip — are figuratively utilized in English and Malay. He found similarities in metaphorical conceptualization. For example, in both languages, the same underlying conceptual metaphor (e.g., MANNER IS TASTE) accounts for expressions like *honey-tongued* and *lidah manis* ('tongue sweet') and in both languages such expressions are used for the discourse function of evaluating (especially negatively) what a person says. However, he also found that the figurative expressions involving the three concepts tended to be metonymic in English and metaphoric in Malay. In English, more than half of the expressions were metonyms, while in Malay the vast majority of them showed evidence of metaphor (often in combination with metonymy). For example, while metonymic expressions like *tight-lipped* abound in English, such expressions are much less frequent in Malay. It seems that, at least in the domain of speech organs, the employment of these concepts by means of figurative processes is culture-specific.

5.2.3 Blending

The differential application of the universal cognitive process of blending, or conceptual integration, is likely to produce a great deal of cultural variation — either within or across languages and cultures. The kind of blending that Fauconnier and Turner (2002) call “double-scope network” is especially relevant here. With “double-scope networks”, the target domain plays an equally important role in contributing to the frame structure of the blend. Selective parts of both source and target make up the emergent frame structure of the blend. We can illustrate this with the ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor. Take the following sentence analyzed by Fauconnier and Turner (2002):

(1) God, he was so mad I could see the smoke coming out of his ears.

This is a novel elaboration of the metaphor ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER. In it, an element of the source is blended with an element of the target. There are no ears in the source and there is no smoke in the target, but in the blend both are present at the same time as *smoke coming out of his ears*. A frame is created with smoke and ears in it that is novel with respect to both the source frame and the target frame.

What happens here is that an angry person's head with the ears becomes the container in the source, and the smoke (steam) in the source will be seen as coming out of the ears (and not through the orifices of the container). This is a true fusion of certain elements of both source and target in the blend. Given the new emergent structure, the blend can be developed further. One can say, for example:

- (2) God, was he ever mad. I could see the smoke coming out of his ears
— I thought his hat would catch fire!

As Fauconnier and Turner note, to understand this sentence, we need the 'smoke coming out of one's ears' frame. But we also need the knowledge based on how intensity is conceptualized in the conceptual network associated with the metaphor. A submapping of the ANGER IS HEAT metaphor is INTENSITY OF EMOTION IS DEGREE OF HEAT. One of the entailments of this metaphor is that a high degree of heat may cause fire (corresponding to 'intense anger may cause a dangerous social situation'). But how does *hat* get into the blend? The fact that it does shows the almost infinite creativity of blends: we can take them further and further, bringing about new conceptualizations that depend on old ones and on the application of systematic cognitive processes. In this particular case the *hat* emerges as we run the previous blend with the 'smoke coming out of one's ears' frame. The head-container with the ears metonymically evokes the hat, which is typically worn on the head. Due to the entailment of the INTENSITY IS HEAT metaphor ('high degree of heat may cause fire'), the hat can be seen as catching fire. This would indicate an overall increase in the intensity in the person's anger.

The kind of anger described by the phrase *smoke coming out of one's ears* could occur in any culture that places a great deal of emphasis on heat in conceptualizing anger. Given this extremely general constraint, which of these cultures will actually come up with such an extended form of anger may be a matter of accident. The universal cognitive processes are available to all speakers in all cultures, but they are not put to use to the same extent by all of them.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to outline a view of conceptual metaphor in which the issue of metaphor variation is just as important as universal embodiment. I demonstrated, by means of a few examples, the basic components of such a theory: dimensions of variation, aspects of variation, causes of variation, and the interaction of the causes that produce variation with universal embodiment that produces universality in metaphorical conceptualization. Such a view can be considered as a first step in the direction of a cultural-

cognitive theory of metaphor. The cultural-cognitive view is a natural and necessary complement of the experiential view. This is not to say that the experiential view has completely ignored the issue of variation in culture — it did not. Rather, the suggestion is that it has not paid enough attention to it and has not taken into account the minimally necessary components of a more complete cultural-cognitive theory of metaphor.

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Can an Awareness of Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) Aid the Translator in His/Her Task?

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Abstract. This paper examines the relevance of conceptual metaphor to the task of translation. Although translation as a human activity is as old as the Babel myth, Translation Studies as a discipline is relatively new and still evolving. Guidelines for translators in English tend to see figurative language as being separate from literal. Advice on metaphor is often restricted to its stylistic status or genre role, or, simply to render literal translations of novel metaphors regardless of context. However, in light of the cognitive linguistic research of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), it would seem that this is insufficient, indeed irresponsible. If the translator understands the cognitive and linguistic processes behind the words or phrases employed in the source text, then s/he is in an empowered position to create a suitable equivalent text in the target language and at the same time to intelligently increase the translation's 'visibility'. The usefulness of employing conceptual metaphor when translating terminology is also examined, as is the translator's responsibility not to disrupt the integrity of the ST.

Keywords: source text (ST), target text (TT), conceptual metaphor, metonymy, equivalence, Adam's apple, *tertium comparationis*, skopos.

1 Introduction

The process of translation attracts many metaphors. For some, it is the creation of a mirror image of the original text in a new setting; Norman Shapiro describes a translation as being like "a pane of glass" (Shapiro, quoted in Venuti 1995), which only reveals its true nature as a piece of secondary or reflected writing by the presence of scratches or imperfections on its surface; while George Steiner slyly suggests that a source text must be seduced and conquered for a translation to be successfully created; and feminist transla-

tion scholars engaged angrily in the 1970s/80s with what they felt to be a general acceptance of the

distinction between writing and translating — marking, that is, the one to be original and ‘masculine’, the other to be derivative and ‘feminine’.
(Chamberlain, quoted in Venuti 1992: 57)

All of the above demonstrates how attractive metaphor is for describing the mysterious process of transferring a message from one set of linguistic signs to another. However, despite Christina Schäffner’s detailed and valuable analysis (2004) of the conceptual metaphors informing European political discourse from a translator’s point of view, Translation Studies still tends to see the actual process of translating metaphors as problematic and somehow separate from ‘straightforward’ literal language. Nevertheless, as anyone who has tried to translate even the simplest literal passage through Babelish knows, translation choices are rarely as simple as they might seem and equivalence is elusive at best.

2 An existing approach to translating metaphor

Whenever you meet a sentence that is grammatically correct but does not appear to make sense, you have to test its apparently nonsensical element for a possible metaphorical meaning. (Newmark 1988: 106)

This metaphor-hostile statement comes from Peter Newmark’s 1988 *A Textbook of Translation*. His eminently practical guide to negotiating one’s way through the translation mine field leaves discussion of metaphor until chapter 10. It also expresses a certain irritation with figurative language, which one might say is typical of English translation textbooks. He says that while the “central *problem* of translation is the overall choice of a translation method for a text”, the strategy, when once decided upon, informs all the hundreds of smaller decisions necessary to the creation of the new text. For him, it is the translation of metaphor that is “the most important *particular* problem” (Newmark 1988: 104). Whether stock or original, for Newmark, metaphor “always involves illusion [...] [It is] a kind of deception, often used to conceal an intention” (ibid). This, I would argue, is a conflation of use with function: as language users we often prefer to imply messages, rather than make blunt statements, for reasons of status, wit, politeness, etc. He goes on to say:

metaphor incidentally demonstrates a resemblance, a common semantic area between two or more or less similar things — the image and the object.
(Newmark 1988: 104)

If this resemblance is just ‘incidental’, then how is a sensible and effective equivalent to be produced? And indeed, is it the text’s function, or form, or both, or neither which is to be translated? Newmark gives many examples of polysemy from single words to extended phrases and suggests possible translations. He even acknowledges that a whole text can be based on a metaphor. But he still presents metaphor in six degrees of conventionality: “dead, cliché, stock, adapted, recent and original” (Newmark 1988: 105). These are, of course, the surface forms in which we encounter metaphor, the importance of which cannot be overlooked, as the working translator must always deal with specifics: each source text is already a given use of language, already a cultural product with a specific context and function(s) that requires a pragmatic response from the translator. However, this fails to provide us with a more generalised framework for engaging with the source text on any deeper level and, in turn, generating more than mere word-for-word equivalence in the target text.

3 Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor

With this in mind, it seems that perhaps an approach based on Lakoff and Johnson’s idea of conceptual metaphor might potentially be very useful to the translator. Although their studies were only conducted in English, they build on Michael Reddy’s pioneering CONDUIT metaphor, revealing it to be a function of perception and thought which may be expressed linguistically and which is not incidental, but fundamental. Conceptual metaphors, the umbrella ideas which are rarely explicitly expressed, but nonetheless are accepted and shared by the whole community of language users, make the entire range of associated metaphorical expressions usable and comprehensible without requiring undue processing effort for either the user or receiver. Conceptual metaphor, as a shared and shareable thought process, can therefore pass over interlinguistic barriers. In 1980 they said:

metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. [...] Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 3)

This universality allows us to look for, and perhaps find, parallels for the orientational and ontological metaphors we use in one language to “identify our experiences as entities and substances” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 25) in another language — even if, as is often the case, there is no exact surface ‘match’. And, even more excitingly for the translator, they found that metonymy, Roman Jakobson’s partner trope of metaphor, also functioned in the

same way. “Metonymic concepts (like THE PART FOR THE WHOLE) are part of the ordinary, everyday way we think and act as well as talk” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 37). The translational options for their example “I’ve got a new *set of wheels*” (ibid) potentially expand if one takes a cognitive linguistic approach.

They further identified that it is neither an incidental, nor a blanket comparison, between the source domain (often a physical entity, e.g. JOURNEY) and the target domain (an abstract, e.g. LOVE) that gives metaphor its power, but specific mappings between the salient features of the two, which best convey the effect intended by the user. This connotational ‘third way’ cannot be created so efficiently by any other device. Different communities will, of course, emphasise different mappings, according to their concerns/prejudices/experience. Once the translator goes beyond merely identifying a metaphor’s static stylistic category and examines the structure which informs it, s/he is in an empowered position to investigate the nature of the idiom; the strength of the image invoked; what relationship it might have to an extended metaphor in the text’s discourse or, indeed, to the larger culture. And, in turn, when considering the TL conventions and genre expectations, the search for a TL solution is no longer limited to a matching TL idiom. The translator may allow him/herself a greater flexibility and even reasonably consider translation by explanation/paraphrase; or translation plus explanation, if the ST author’s intentions and motivations are accessible. The translation may be culturally a secondary text, but it does not write itself; the translator is creating a new text for a new context, albeit one with special intertextual responsibility to its source.

3.1 Non-cognitive linguistic approaches

If we look for a moment at a non-cognitive linguistic approach, we find Rolf Kloepper, for instance, full of breathless enthusiasm in his 1967 review of the treatment of novel metaphorical expressions in a translation into German of Rimbaud’s *Metropolitain*. He claimed it had preserved

all the metaphors: their famous “boldness” is no problem for the translation — on the contrary, the bolder and more creative the metaphor, the easier it is to repeat in other languages. There is not only a “harmony of metaphorical fields” among the various European languages, there are also definite “structures of the imagination” on which they are based. (Snell-Hornby 1995: 57, her translation)

However, as he does not explain what these “structures” might be, he is without the solid framework that Lakoff and Johnson provide. As Dagut comments critically, we are given the impression that

[t]he further removed an utterance is from language “competence” the easier it becomes to translate. As if the unique were, by the very virtue of being unique, immediately translatable, and only the commonplace gave the translator pause. (Dagut 1976: 26)

Practical experience of any text for translation is surely likely to make us doubt such an idea, but Katarina Reiss, whose work centres on communicating a ST’s function, seems convinced. To Dagut’s dismay, she includes Kloepfer’s statement in her own discussion of metaphor in *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik* (1971). She further advises that a novel metaphor, which has been created by the author, should be translated “wortwörtlich” ‘literally’ (43–44). Doing this, one might well achieve an equivalent effect, but it would only be by happy accident and not design. Such expediency is almost shocking and if one were to follow her logic then poetry would be the simplest genre to translate. Each kingfisher flash of new poetic connection, which delights us and conventionally makes this form of expression so demanding for both creator and reader, could be rendered easily by anyone with a good bilingual dictionary.

4 A potential application of conceptual metaphor in translation

Perhaps surprisingly, an awareness of conceptual metaphors also allows us to investigate terminology; words that are established in a culture delimiting their signifieds (Saussure) are often essentially metaphorical in origin. Eugene Nida, working for the American Bible Society, has had practical experience of the problems of achieving both what he termed formal and dynamic equivalence in a greater variety of source and target languages than most other translators would even care to contemplate. In *Towards a Science of Translating* (1964) he identifies the gaps between culturally defined metaphors, even when they are playing a literal role, as requiring particular attention.

With an obvious metaphor, e.g. *Adam’s apple*, it is clear that some adjustment in lexical form is inevitable, especially in regions where apples are unknown and no one has ever heard of Adam. In Uduk, for example, this anatomical feature becomes ‘the thing that wants beer’. (Nida 1964: 219)

For a translator working into either language, attempting to force a literal rendition would constitute what Berman calls “ethno-centric violence” (Berman 1985) and simply confuse both sets of readers. However, if the translator uses the same analytical process which Lakoff and Johnson employed in the endnotes of their updated version of *Metaphors We Live By*

(2003), conceptual metaphor will allow him/her to explore the dual metaphorical structures behind Nida's two terms, as follows.

English: <i>Adam's apple</i>	Uduk: <i>the thing that wants beer</i>
<p>Conceptual Metonym: In Judeo-Christian tradition Adam was the first man. Adam is a man; Adam stands for all men.</p> <p>(The part for the whole)</p>	<p>1st Conceptual Metonym: The thyroid cartilage is in the throat, i.e. in the area of the body where thirst is felt; where beer and its effects are first experienced, although it is the whole man who wants the beer. (The part stands for the whole)</p>
<p>Conceptual Metaphor: The stretched skin over the forward protrusion of the thyroid cartilage evokes the shape of an apple; although this only is one unidirectional mapping, it is still very effective and striking.</p> <p>In English, descriptions of the body abound in such linkings: roof of the mouth, bridge of the nose, arch of the foot, etc. (One object is described in terms of another.)</p>	<p>2nd Conceptual Metonym: Although women also have a thyroid cartilage in the same part of the body, it is not a prominent feature of their physique. In Uduk culture of Southern Sudan women are associated with growing grain and brewing beer, while men are more associated with drinking it. So, a male feature can be described in terms of a male activity. (One aspect can stand for another.)</p>

As this demonstrates, the linguistic terms are very different, but the metaphorical thought processes, by which the respective cultures have created them, are very similar. Conceptual metaphor gave us the tools to investigate the structure and components of these lexical items, alerting the translator to there being no actual apple belonging to an individual named Adam, nor to there being a physiological feature in a man's throat constantly demanding "BEER!".

The literally descriptive medical term *prominentia laryngea* is rare in common parlance, while *Adam's apple* has been in use since at least the 18th century. Interestingly for the purpose of this study, it seems that the Latin *pomum Adami*, which is the direct source of the colloquial English term, is an under-translation of the original Hebrew *tappuach ha adam*. In Hebrew both of these nouns have double meanings: *tappuach* is either an apple or swelling and *adham* means a man, or indeed, Adam himself. In the course of my research, I found some online sources¹ even blaming St. Jerome, the patron saint of translation, personally for this semi-error which is now so embedded in most European languages (Italian: *pomo d'Adamo*, Swedish: *adamsäpple*, etc) (Levin 2004). However, I am glad to say, this was refuted by our chairman after he had consulted the extensive database of post-classical Latin, *Patrologia Latina*.

¹ E.g. <http://www.medterms.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=2137>.

One might argue that a native speaker of English has no need for this kind of analysis, especially if working into a language that uses the same term; nor is the native Uduk speaker going to misunderstand something familiar and established in his language. However, it is a fact of life that most translators today are not in the relatively comfortable position of working from a second language into their own, but conversely into the second language or even more confusingly from a second into a third, in which case analysis based on conceptual metaphor could most definitely be of assistance. One could even speculate that St Jerome might have given us a different term, if Lakoff and Johnson had been active in the 5th century.

4.1 Conceptual metaphor's wider relevance to translation

Furthermore, in order to minimise translation loss one may be able to employ the *tertium comparationis*, a conceptual non-linguistic “invariant against which two text segments can be measured to gauge variation” (Munday 2001: 49), by way of conceptual metaphor analysis. And, although we must not patronise the ST and as Berman says inadvertently “ennoble” it by treating it as “*raw material*” waiting to be rewritten in the mistaken notion that we are “recovering the rhetorical elements inherent in all prose” (Berman 1985, as quoted in Venuti 2000: 291), we are now in the position boldly to consider translating a ST literal phrase by a TT metaphor if it is more suitable to the TT context and *skopos* (Vermeer 1989, as quoted in Munday 2001: 79) (i.e. the whole aim and purpose of producing the translation). As Nida comments:

Some persons object to any shift from a metaphor to another, a metaphor to a simile, or a metaphor to a nonmetaphor, because they regard such an alteration as involving some loss of information. However, the same persons usually do not object to the translation of a nonmetaphor by a metaphor, for such a change appears to increase the effectiveness of the communication. (Nida 1964: 220)

4 Conclusion

And finally, rather than always striving to find an equivalent TT phrase, the translator armed with conceptual metaphor can consider embracing the enlivening effect of foreign expressions as Newmark (1991) encourages us to do, saying:

A language such as English would gain by the literal translation of many foreign key-words, idioms and possibly even proverbs. (Newmark 1991: 35)

Skilfully handled, this strategy could intelligently increase what Lawrence Venuti calls the translation's "visibility" (Venuti 1995 in Munday 2001: 145), i.e. the rhythms and references in a text which make it clear that its ultimate source is in another language and culture. If the translator has access to all the mechanisms at work in both languages, above and beyond simple competence with vocabulary and usage, then s/he no longer scans the text with a sceptical eye and expecting to find: 'Literal word – verb – preposition – **SCARY METAPHOR** – literal word'. Modern understandings of the interaction between thought and linguistic expression can help the translator to see that there is a cline, rather than a gap, between literal and metaphorical usage, and that "the metaphorical web" of language (Newmark 1995: 84) is not a retarius net designed to entrap us, but a flexible, useful material.

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“Þurh beʒʒske. 7 sallte tæress”: Orm’s Use of Metaphor and Simile in the Exegesis of John 1:51

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Abstract. This paper will analyse the twelfth-century English exegete Orm’s response to the challenge of explaining the phrase *videbitis caelum apertum* in John 1:51 to the laity when the relevant passage was missing from his standard source-book. In keeping with tradition, Orm produced three interpretations, one historical, one allegorical, and one tropological. The first two were adaptations of comments in two different Latin texts. The third, however, seems to be Orm’s own composition, which takes the form of an extended gardening metaphor, combining phrases from several different source texts to an effective whole.

Keywords: metaphor, Middle English, exegesis, homilies, *Ormulum*.

1 Introduction

The language of the *Ormulum*¹ has generally been seen as simple and artless, its simplicity being equal to that of its author.² Even so, Orm does make use of various types of figurative language from time to time — *repetitio*, *amplificatio*, simile, metaphor, hyperbole.³ However, this paper will confine itself to a study of his use of metaphor and, to some extent, simile.

¹ A late twelfth-century collection of homilies written in southern Lincolnshire by the Augustinian canon Orm, whose self-proclaimed aim was to bring the gospel to the laity in England; since they knew no Latin, they would otherwise remain in ignorance of the gospel, which was necessary for the salvation of their souls. His own holograph, with all the changes introduced during a long process of revision, is kept at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, as MS Junius 1.

² Cf. Sarrazin (1883: 27), commenting on some passages in the *Ormulum* for which he had not been able to find any Latin sources: “Einige von diesen gedanken sind einfältig genug, dass wir sie allenfalls auf Orm selbst zutrauen dürfen [...]”.

³ For some reason, Orm avoids synecdoche, even when it is present in the gospel passages that he translates, and instead substitutes a more literal expression. For example, Mt 3:5, *tunc exiebat ad eum Hierosolyma et omnis Iudaea* ‘then Jerusalem and the whole of Judea went out to him [i.e. John the Baptist]’ is rendered as “7 menn himm sohhtenn fasste to: /Forr

To a very great extent the metaphors in the *Ormulum* draw their source domains from various aspects of nature: from topographical features such as hills, valleys and rivers, from astronomical phenomena such as the sun, moon and stars, and from various human activities such as baking, hunting and ploughing. This paper will take a closer look at one of the more striking metaphors in the *Ormulum*,⁴ one which derives its source domain from gardening. The metaphor will be considered within its exegetical context, and possible Latin sources for the exegesis will be presented. As we will see, the metaphor itself is more difficult to pin down to a single Latin source.

2 Gospel text

The passage under study is taken from Orm's exposition of part of John 1:51. The Latin text of this gospel verse and Orm's translation⁵ are shown in (1):

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) et dicit ei amen amen dico vobis videbitis caelum apertum et angelos Dei ascendentes et descendentes supra Filium hominis | Icc seġġe ȝuw to fulle soþ̄ 7 wel ȝuw birrþ itt trowwenn. Þatt heffness shulenn oppnedd ben. Biforenn ȝure sihhþe. Swa þatt ȝe shulenn sen full wel. 7 offte godess enngless. Uppwarrd 7 dunnwarrd baþe upp o. Þe manness sune stiȝenn. |
| (John 1:51 Vu) | (H13814–21) |
| ‘And [He] said to him, “Truly, truly I say to you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”’ | ‘I say to you truly, and you should well believe it, that the heavens will be opened before your eyes, so that you will see clearly and often the angels of God climb upwards and downwards on the Son of Man.’ |

himm to se<on 7 herenn. /All út off ȝerrsalæmess land.” (H9241–43) ‘And people went to him steadily [i.e. in great numbers] in order to see and hear him from all over the land of Jerusalem’.

⁴ Morrison (2003: 257) refers to this metaphor in support of his claim that Orm's writing occasionally takes on “an arresting quality”.

⁵ All the passages from the *Ormulum* cited in this paper are newly edited from MS Junius 1. I am grateful to Dr Bruce Barker-Benfield, Bodleian Library, for granting me access to the manuscript in 1997 and again in 2002. All line numbers, however, follow the numbering in Holt 1878, since that is the most recent complete edition generally available. The symbol <◊ indicates an original letter o that was later erased by Orm himself.

3 Exegesis

For interpretations of the Gospel of St John Orm usually relied on a commentary by the Irish monk Johannes Scotus Eriugena (see Johannesson 2007, 2008). But Orm's copy of Eriugena must have derived from the only manuscript extant today (Laon, Bibliotheque municipale, MS 81), from which several pages are missing (cf. Jeauneau 1972: 61; Johannesson, forthcoming). Those pages must have been lost by ca. 1100, when Anselm of Laon used the manuscript for his own compilation of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on John (cf. Andrée 2005: 20f.), and certainly before Orm's copy was made. John 1:51 is one of those passages that were dealt with by Eriugena on pages lost before Anselm and Orm obtained access to the text. The consequence of all this is that both Anselm and Orm had to look in other places for interpretations of verses like John 1:51.

For the clause *videbitis caelum apertum* the *Glossa* only provides a comparison with Jacob's dream of the ladder in Genesis 28:12 (2).

- (2) ¶ **Uidebitis cælum.** Nathanael israelita. dicitur visurus apertum cælum 7 angelos ascendentes 7 descendentes vt olim patriarcha iacob vidit scalam 7 angelos ascendentes 7 descendentes qui per benedictionem vocatus est israel. (G 227)

¶ **You shall see heaven.** Nathanael the Israelite is told that he will see heaven open and the angels ascending and descending, just as Jacob the patriarch once saw the ladder and the angels ascending and descending, he who in the blessing was called Israel.'

Since Orm relied on the *Glossa Ordinaria* to a great extent for source material, it would not have been unreasonable if he had done so here as well. But apparently Orm found this comparison unsatisfactory; in its place he provided three different interpretations of *videbitis caelum apertum*, all based on different sources.

3.1 The historical interpretation

Orm first gives a historical interpretation: it is a straightforward rendering of a comment by Bede (3) about the Gates of Heaven being opened by the Incarnation (or Resurrection, as Orm chooses to interpret Bede's 'God as man penetrated Heaven'), with very little added material. The passage is characterised by Orm's usual kind of reformulations, e.g. "nobis in eum credentibus" 'to us who believe in Him' becomes "Ʒæn alle þa þatt lufenn crist: / 7 hise la^hgess haldenn." 'To all those who love Christ and keep His laws'.

- (3) ① Videmus etenim coelum apertum, quia ② postquam coelum Deus homo penetravit, etiam ④ nobis in eum credentibus ⑤ supernae patri-ae patefactum cognoscimus ingressum. ‘Indeed we see heaven open, because after God as man penetrated heaven, we learn that the gate of the Kingdom of Heaven is open to us who believe in Him.’ (Beda, *In S. Joannis Evangelium Expositio*, PL vol. 92, col. 0656A–B)
- Þiss hátt tatt wass natanaæl. ①
 Bihatenn 7 filippe:
 Wass filledd affterr þatt tatt crist. ②
 Wass risenn upp off dæþe.
 Forr þurh þe laferrd cristess dæþ:
 Wass heffness ȝate all oppnedd. ③
 Ȝæn alle þa þatt lufenn crist: ④
 7 hise laȝess haldenn. (H13822–29)
- ‘This promise that was given to Nathanael and Philip was fulfilled after Christ had risen from death. For through the death of the Lord Christ the gate of Heaven was opened to all those who love Christ and keep His laws.’

3.2 The allegorical interpretation

The second interpretation is allegorical: on the basis of a passage from Bruno Astensis, Orm uses metaphor and simile to show how ‘heaven’ can be taken to signify the Apostles (4). The usual kind of modification can be observed, e.g. “eorum fide et doctrina” ‘with their faith and teaching’ is turned into ‘through their preaching and their example’.

- (4) ① Totus mundus coelo concluditur, tota Ec-lesia catholica inter apostolicae fidei et doc-trinae terminos contine-tur. Quicumque extra hos terminos est, profanus et infidelis est. [...] In eis [sc. apostolis] enim et solem, et lunam, et stellas invenire non est difficile. Ipsi sunt, quibus Dominus ait: ② «Vos estis lux mundi (Matth. V, 14);» sic eorum fide et doctrina tota Ecclesia illuminata est, ③ sicut solis hujus, et lunae splendore tota
- Þ 7 mann maȝȝ unnderrstandenn þiss: Ȝét onn an oþer wise.
 Þatt heffness sholldenn oppnedd ben:
 Biforenn follkess sihhþe.
 Forr heffness her bitacnenn uss. ①
 Þe laferrd cristess posstless.
 Þatt ȝæfenn uss þurh þeȝȝre spell. ②
 7 ec þurh þeȝȝre bisne.
 Soþ lihht her i þiss middellærd:
 To sen 7 tunnderrstandenn.
 All hu mann birrþ þatt weȝȝe gan:
 Þatt ledeþþ upp till heffne:
 All swa summ heffne uss ȝifeþþ lihht: ③
 Þurh sunne. 7 mone. 7 sterness. (H13830–41)
- ‘And you can also understand this in one more manner, that heavens should be opened in the sight of the people: for “heavens” here signifies to us the Apostles of the Lord Christ, who gave us

terra illuminatur, in through their preaching and also through their
quibus et virtutum om- example true light here in this world to see and
nium pulchritudo, quasi understand how we should walk that road that
stellae quaedam corus- leads up to Heaven, just as heaven gives us light
cant. ‘The whole world through sun and moon and stars.’
 is enclosed by heaven,
 the whole Catholic Church is contained within the boundaries of apostolic
 faith and teaching. Whoever is outside those boundaries is profane and impi-
 ous. [...] In them [i.e. the Apostles] it is not difficult to find the sun, the
 moon and the stars. They are the ones to whom the Lord said, “You are the
 light of the world”; by their faith and teaching the whole Church is illumi-
 nated, just as the whole world is illuminated by the splendor of the sun and
 the moon; in them is the beauty of all virtues, just as the stars glitter.’ (Bruno
 Astensis, *Sententiae*. PL vol. 165, col. 0945A–B)

3.3 The tropological interpretation

The third interpretation keeps up the allegorical view of the second one, in that it maintains that ‘heaven’ is meant to signify the Apostles. Against this background, however, it is tropological, or moral, in that it emphasises the importance of watering a penitent heart with bitter and salty tears, something Orm claims (following the Latin exegetical tradition) was taught by the Apostles. For a tropological interpretation in the *Ormulum*, this one is unusually indirect and characterised by the use of both metaphor and simile.

For the benefit of the reader who is not familiar with Orm’s kind of exegesis, a more standard example of a tropological interpretation will be given in (5). What we see there is part of a series of tropological interpretations of the fact that the three Magi brought gold, incense and myrrh as gifts to Jesus. A much more direct address (here *þu*, in other places *we* or *ȝe*) is characteristic of such passages, as well as a much more straightforward description of what a contemporary Christian was to do.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>(5) Ʒ 7 ȝiff þu cwemesst tin drihhtin.
 Wiþþ bedess. 7 wiþþ wecchess:
 Þa lakesst tu þin drihhtin swa.
 Alls itt wiþþ recless wære.
 Forr rihht all swa summ recless smec.
 Iss god. 7 swét to downnenn:
 All swa iss haliȝ bedesang.
 Full swét bifořenn criste.</p> | <p>‘And if you please your
 Lord with prayers and with
 watches, then you make
 sacrifice to your Lord as if
 it were with incense. For
 just as the smoke of incense
 is good and sweet to smell,
 just so is holy prayer-song
 very sweet before Christ.’</p> |
|--|---|

(H10049–52)

But let us return to the moral interpretation of *videbitis caelum apertum*. Here an interpretation of the metaphor will first be given, after which the question of the origin of the metaphor will be addressed.

The full paragraph⁶ in which the metaphor occurs is given in (6) below. It is important to base the interpretation on the full paragraph; Morrison (2003: 257) includes only the first ten verses, and as a consequence he produces an interpretation which works well within those ten verses, but which runs into difficulties when the last twelve verses are also taken into account. According to Morrison, the central metaphor here is of the heart as a withered (*forrlungenn*) plant which we should water with our bitter and salty tears in order to revive it.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(6) ¶ 7 ec þe [p]osstless ʒæfenn uss.
 Þurh lare. 7 ec þurh bisne.
 Soþ rewwsinng off all ure woh.
 Off sakess. 7 off sinness.
 To wattrenn 7 to dæwenn swa.
 Þurh beʒʒske. 7 sallte tæress.
 Þatt herrte þatt wiþþinnenn uss.
 Iss hefiʒliʒ forrlungenn.
 Þurh fakenn trowwþe towardd godd:
 7 towardd mann onn erþe.
 7 forr þatt itt bidæledd iss.
 Off all soþ lufess hæte:
 All iss itt uss bifrorenn swa.
 Þurh hete. 7 niþ. 7 irre:
 Þatt all itt liþ uss wasstmelæs.
 Off alle gode dedess.
 Acc cristess posstless ʒæfenn uss.
 Þurh lare. 7 ec þurh bisne.
 Soþ rewwsinng off all ure woh.
 Swa summ icc habbe shæwedd:
 All swa summ erþe wattredd iss.
 Þurh reʒʒn 7 dæw off heffne.</p> | <p>‘And the Apostles also taught us, through doctrine and also through example, true repentance of all our evil actions, of crimes and of sins: to water and to moisten so, with bitter and salty tears, the heart that within us is badly dried out through false faith towards God and towards man on earth; and because it is deprived of all the warmth of true love, it is all frozen for us through hatred and malice and anger, so that it lies all without fruit of good deeds. But Christ’s Apostles taught us, through doctrine and also through example, true repentance of all our evil actions, as I have explained to you, just as the earth is watered by rain and dew from heaven.’</p> |
|---|---|
- (H13844–65)

⁶ A **paragraph** in the *Ormulum* is a textual unit whose beginning is marked in the manuscript by a *paragraphus*, a sign with the basic shape ¶. The paragraph ends immediately before the beginning of the next paragraph (or a higher textual unit, such as a **fit** or a **homily**). For more details about the textual organisation of the *Ormulum*, see Johannesson 2007.

The paragraph given in (6) is one of many in the *Ormulum* that comes full circle and bites its own tail, like so many serpents in Norse art.⁷ If we juxtapose the first eight and the last six verses of the paragraph, as is shown in (7), we will see that the passages can be read across (below the line) in such a way that a simile arises, which provides the key to the interpretation of the metaphor: we should water the heart with our tears, just as the earth is watered by rain and dew from above.

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (7) | ƿ 7 ec þe þosstless Ʒæfenn uss. | Acc cristess þosstless Ʒæfenn uss. |
| | Þurh lare. 7 ec þurh bisne. | Þurh lare. 7 ec þurh bisne. |
| | Sop rewwsinng off all ure woh. | Sop rewwsinng off all ure woh. |
| | Off sakess. 7 off sinness. | Swa summ icc habbe shæwedd: |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | To wattrenn 7 to dæwenn swa. | All swa summ erþe wattredd iss. |
| | Þurh beƷƷske. 7 sallte tæress. | Þurh reƷƷn 7 dæw off heffne. |
| | Þatt herrte þatt wiþþinnenn uss. | |
| | Iss hefiƷliƷ forrclungenn. | |
| | (H13844–51) | (H13860–65) |

So the heart, according to this plain hint from Orm, is to be understood as the earth, a plot of land, even an orchard, since it is said to be “wasstmelæs” (H13858) ‘fruitless’, which should bring to mind the parable of the tree which bears no good fruit, dealt with in Homily xvii some 3800 verses earlier:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (8) | ƿ 7 ille an tre<ο> þatt i þiss lif. | ‘And each tree that in this |
| | Ne bereþþ nohht god wasstme. | life does not bear good fruit |
| | Shall bi þe grund be<ο>n hæwenn upp. | will be hewn down to the |
| | 7 i þe fir be<ο>n worrpenn. | ground and thrown into the |
| | (H10049–52) | fire.’ |

Understanding the heart as a plot of land rather than a plant means that we cannot translate the participle *forrclungenn* as ‘withered’, as Morrison does: plants wither when they are not watered, but the earth dries out.⁸

In this passage Orm builds a complex metaphor from isolated phrases from five different sources⁹, likening the faithless heart to an arid and frozen plot of ground, a fruitless orchard, which should be watered with the salty

⁷ For a discussion of Orm’s representation of circularity (as a symbol of God) by making the last few lines of a paragraph repeat the first ones (with slight variation), the reader is referred to Mancho 1999.

⁸ No criticism of Morrison’s interpretation of *forrclungenn* is intended: ‘to wither’ is the standard sense of the verb (see e.g. *OED* s.v. †**for'cling**, v.). But the withering or shrinking of organic materials must be due to dehydration, so it is not unreasonable for Orm to have used the participle with the extended sense ‘dried out’.

⁹ It should be noted that comments like that quoted from Haymo in (9) can be found in other texts as well, but since Orm used Haymo’s homilies elsewhere, it seems reasonable to use Haymo’s version as an illustration in (9).

and bitter tears of contrition. I have not been able to find the full metaphor anywhere in the PL database, only the ‘building-blocks’, so I assume that Orm should be given credit for the metaphor.

- (9) ④ In omnibus gen-
tibus per apostolorum
ministerium ⑥ poeni-
tentia et remissio
peccatorum praedi-
cata est ‘Among all
nations through the
ministry of the Apost-
les repentance and
remission of sins is
preached.’
(Haymo Halberstat-
ensis, *Homilia*
LXXIV. PL vol. 118,
col. 0472A)
- ƿ 7 ec þe posstless Ʒæfenn uss. ④
 Þurh lare. 7 ec þurh bisne.
 Soþ rewwsinng off all ure woh. ⑤
 Off sakess. 7 off sinness.
 To ① wattrenn 7 to ② dæwenn swa.
 Þurh beƷƷske. 7 sallte tæress. ③
 Þatt herrte þatt wiþþinnenn uss. ④
 Iss hefigliƷ forreclungenn. ⑤
 Þurh fakenn trowwþe towarrd godd: ⑥
 7 towarrd mann onn eorþe.
 7 forr þatt itt bidæledd iss.
 Off all soþ lufess hæte: ⑦
 All iss itt uss bifrorenn swa. ⑧
 Þurh hete. 7 niþ. 7 irre: ⑨
 Þatt all itt liþ uss wasstmelæs. ⑩
 Off alle gode dedess. (H13842–13857)

[...] tam salutaris doctrinae fluentia effudit, per quae ⑤ arida ⑥ infidelium
 ④ corda ① irrigavit, [...] continuos producit fontes lacrymarum, in quibus
 ⑤ arida terra ④ cordis dulciter ① irrigatur, et ⑩ ad proferendos dignae op-
 erationis fructus fecundatur. ‘[...] so the streams of the teaching of salvation
 pour out, through which [He] waters the arid hearts of unbelievers, [...]]
 brings forth continuous fountains of tears, by which the arid soil of the heart
 is sweetly watered, and abundant fruit of worthy actions is brought forth.’
 (Godefridus Admontensis, *Homilia XLIII*. PL vol. 174, col. 0844B)

Item ② ros praedicatorum doctrinam, ut est illud in libro Job: *Quis est plu-
 viae pater? vel quis genuit stillas roris?*(**Job XXXVIII**) ac si diceret: nisi
 ego, qui ⑤ siccam terram ④ humani cordis guttis scientiae gratuito ② as-
 pergo rore. ‘Similarly the dew of the doctrine that has been preached, as it is
 [said] in the book of Job, “Who is the father of the rain? or who brings forth
 the dewdrops?”, as if he said, “if not Me, Who sprinkle the dry earth of the
 human heart gratuitously with the dewdrops of knowledge.”’ (Rabanus Mau-
 rus, *De Universo Libri Viginti Duo. Liber XI. Caput XIX. De rore*. PL vol.
 111, col. 0328D)

③ lacrymae [...] sunt salsae et amarae ad restringendam carnis luxuriam;
 sunt calidae contra ⑥ frigus infidelitatis, et ad accendendum ⑦ ardorem
charitatis ‘The tears [...] are salty and bitter in order to restrain the desires of
 the flesh; they are hot against the frost of lack of faith, and in order to kindle

the warmth of love.’ (Beda, *In Matthaei Evangelium Expositio*. PL vol. 92, col. 0024C–D)

⑨ Malitiam quoque, iram et odium, [...] ‘Also malice, anger and hatred, [...]’ (Petrus Damianus, [*De Institutis Suae Congregationis.*] *Caput XXVI*. ‘Quomodo lacrymarum gratia possit acquiri.’ PL vol. 145, col. 0358C–D)

We may note in passing that the passages quoted from Godefridus Admontensis and Rabanus Maurus provide support for the suggestion made above that Orm uses the participle *forrclungenn* about the heart with the sense ‘dried out’: “arida infidelium corda irrigavit” ‘[He] waters the arid hearts of unbelievers’ and “siccam terram humani cordis guttis scientiae gratuito aspergo rore” ‘[I] sprinkle the dry earth of the human heart gratuitously with the dewdrops of knowledge’, respectively.

4 Conclusion

It should be clear, I hope, even from this brief presentation, that Orm, far from being “einfältig”, as Sarrazin (1883) had it, was widely read in the Latin exegetical literature available in the late twelfth century. Furthermore, Orm was perfectly capable of producing an extended metaphor in Middle English based on Latin sources, whether he simply rendered a metaphor that he found in his source texts or whether he created one from phrases he remembered from his reading of those texts. He deserves a better press than he has been given so far.

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Using Dictionaries in Linguistic Metaphor Identification

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Abstract. This is a report on the application of a reliable tool for linguistic metaphor identification as developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) to bulk data from natural discourse. The data comes from texts covering four different registers taken from the BNC-Baby corpus. The discussion focuses on the use of dictionaries as a tool to support the intuitions of the analyst in deciding on the metaphorical use of textual elements. The Pragglejaz Group refers to the *Macmillan Dictionary for Advanced Learners* to aid their decision process. The application of the Pragglejaz procedure to a large amount of data by a research group at *VU University Amsterdam* has brought up problematic cases, which may be addressed with the aid of two further dictionaries. A range of cases is presented and their treatment within the metaphor identification procedure using dictionaries as a tool is discussed.

Keywords: metaphor identification, discourse, dictionaries, reliability, corpus.

1 Introduction

Researchers identifying metaphors in natural discourse on a linguistic level face the demanding task of deciding which words or phrases are actually metaphorically used. One approach is to rely on one's intuitions. However, this is a challenge to reliable research, since decisions as to whether language is used indirectly and therefore metaphorically, or in a direct, literal fashion, are not always straightforward. As a consequence, analysts' judgments of metaphoricity of language data often differ, which makes research results difficult to compare and creates problems for proposing valid claims about metaphorical usage (Pragglejaz Group 2007). In order to move away from merely intuitive work and thereby increase the consistency of coding and reduce the number of errors, a group of researchers known as *Praggle-*

jaz¹ developed a rigorous procedure called MIP (metaphor identification procedure) for identifying linguistic metaphors in text and speech. This paper focuses on the use of dictionaries as a tool within MIP, as well as a successor procedure developed at VU *University Amsterdam*.

MIP assumes that metaphorically used words in discourse disrupt semantic coherence by introducing an alien conceptual domain. In *The emphasis on high wages is important*, for example, the contextual meaning of *high* is ‘large in amount’, but there is a more basic sense, ‘large in size from the top to the ground’, which is alien to the target domain of the sentence (*Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*). The cognitive linguistic approach (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) resolves this semantic disruption by invoking a cross-domain mapping. MIP compares contextual meanings of lexical units to their basic meaning: words are used metaphorically if these meanings belong to different domains but can be understood by some form of comparison. MIP describes the basic meaning as tending to be more concrete, related to bodily action, more precise, and historically older. At VU *University Amsterdam*, we have consistently applied a slightly adapted version of this procedure to identify metaphorically used words in corpus data. This paper will demonstrate the procedure as implemented at VU *University Amsterdam*, while focusing on the use of dictionaries therein.

2 Identifying metaphor in corpus data

In the research project ‘Metaphor in discourse: Linguistic forms, conceptual structures, and cognitive representations’ at VU *University Amsterdam*, six analysts², one being the present author, have annotated a number of texts from four domains of discourse taken from the BNC-Baby, a four million word sub-corpus of the British National Corpus. The four domains are news texts, academic texts, literary texts and conversations. A total of 189,564 words have been analyzed. A preliminary analysis of the data shows that 13.7% of all words have been identified as metaphorically used. There is considerable variation between the registers, from 7.8% in conversation to 18.4% in academic texts.

As a first step in the annotation process, the researchers independently mark metaphor-related words in selected texts from the corpus according to the MIP procedure, which will be laid out in detail further below. Subsequently the analysts cross-check the texts of the other team members and make notes when they disagree on the annotation decisions. Finally, there is

¹ Peter Crisp, Ray Gibbs, Alan Cienki, Graham Low, Gerard Steen, Lynne Cameron, Elena Semino, Joe Grady, Alice Deignan, Zoltán Kövecses.

² Eva Biernacka, Lettie Dorst, Berenike Herrmann, Anna Kaal, Tina Krennmayr, Irene López-Rodríguez.

a group discussion to resolve those cases of disagreement. This procedure has proven to be very reliable. For four reliability tests covering thirteen different texts representing all registers, Cohen's Kappa lay between 0.79 and 0.88 and Cochran's Q between 4.50 and 24.33. Between 4.9% and 11.9% of all words did not receive inter-coder agreement. These figures are impressive, since they indicate the status before group discussion; the ensuing discussion reduces analyst bias further. The reasons for inter-coder disagreement are twofold: (1) Most of the cases of disagreement are clear coder error and can quickly be resolved through discussion. Coder error can be anything from misapplication of the procedure to overlooking metaphors. (2) The remaining cases are ambiguous because, although MIP assumes it to be so, language does not always work according to the oversimplified dichotomy of metaphorical versus non-metaphorical usage.

An example given below demonstrates the application of MIP to a clear case. Most words in discourse are similar, in that they pose no problems for the procedure. In summary, the steps of the MIP procedure (Pragglejaz Group 2007: 3) are:

- 1) Read the entire text to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
- 2) Determine the lexical units in the discourse.
- 3) (a) Establish the contextual meaning for each unit.
(b) Establish a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than in the given context. The basic meaning tends to be more concrete, related to bodily action, more precise or historically older.
(c) Decide whether the more basic meaning and the contextual meaning contrast with each other but can be understood in comparison.
- 4) If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.

It is important to note that this procedure merely identifies linguistic metaphors as surface expressions of possible underlying cross-domain mappings, i.e. a mapping from a source to a target domain. It is not aimed at identifying conceptual metaphors. It is difficult but crucial to hold metaphors on a linguistic and on a conceptual level apart, because they are not equivalent. "[L]inguistic forms do not express everything there is to conceptual structure" (Steen 2007: 175). The relationship between these two levels of **conceptual** metaphor and **linguistic** metaphor (e.g. Steen 2007) is complex and easily conflated. Cameron (2003: 19), as well, notes that "the terminological distinction is not always maintained [...]". The MIP procedure is also not concerned with the processing of metaphors by readers or listeners. As Charteris-Black (2004) points out, a metaphor that was intended as such is not necessarily interpreted metaphorically. An advantage of the bottom-up analysis of MIP is that refraining from presuming conceptual metaphors, as suggested

by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), reduces bias towards finding precisely those linguistic expressions that match the preconceived mapping. MIP, as a reliable procedure for identifying linguistic metaphor, prevents the researcher from seeing “[...] concrete manifestations of conceptual metaphors everywhere” (Steen 2007: 27). In using MIP to find linguistic metaphors in discourse, metaphorically used words are regarded as a **basis** from which to construct cross-domain mappings (e.g. Crisp 2002: 7). MIP identifies the metaphorically used words, but not the mappings.

The following example demonstrates a test of the metaphoricality of the lexeme *valuable* as used in the sentence below. The excerpt is taken from a newspaper text from the BNC-Baby corpus. The fragment specification is given in parentheses:

- (1) Professional religious education teachers like Marjorie B. Clark (Points of View Today) are doing valuable work in many secondary schools in trying to separate the facts about religion from the myths and fantasies with which they have become encrusted [...]. (k58-fragment01)

In order to demonstrate the core of the procedure, the focus here is on step 3; step 2 will be revisited in the later discussion. The contextual meaning of *valuable* must first be established. Though the full text is not given here, recall that the first step of the procedure requires obtaining a general understanding of the overall meaning of a text, which is why the text needs to be read through in its entirety. In this case the contextual meaning is clear and straightforward, namely ‘very useful and important’. The next step is to find a meaning that is more basic than the contextual meaning. Such a more basic meaning is ‘worth a lot of money’. Both the contextual meaning and the basic meaning are found in the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*. The contextual meaning and the basic meaning clearly contrast but can be understood in comparison with each other. Therefore, *valuable* must be marked as metaphorically used in this context.

3 Dictionaries as a tool

In applying step 3, which was briefly demonstrated above, MIP uses the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* as a tool to support the intuitions of the analyst. *Macmillan* is based on a fairly recent, well-balanced corpus of 220 million words, which makes it suitable for identifying metaphor in contemporary texts. Its language data stems from a broad range of text types and from both written and spoken discourse. All this is crucial, since the BNC-Baby data — to which we apply MIP — is all drawn from contemporary sources. In addition, the dictionary does not ignore the

issue of metaphorical language, which suggests that there was some awareness of the issue (Pragglejaz Group 2007: 16). Steen (2007: 98) points out the advantage of relying on a dictionary rather than one's intuitions:

[D]ecisions about conventionalized meanings have been reached across the complete language, with reference to many patterns of usage, and independently of any particular concerns with decisions about metaphor from a cognitive-linguistic perspective.

Analysts are likely to have different (linguistic) knowledge backgrounds. Therefore it may be

[...] convenient to adopt a dictionary as a concrete norm of reference, so that you have an independent reflection of what counts as the meanings of words for a particular group of users of English (Steen 2007: 97).

Furthermore, the use of dictionaries allows for checking and replicating decisions. Deignan (2005: 63) cautions, though, that dictionaries do not show how their data is embedded in a wide, natural context. Unlike the Pragglejaz Group, in the VU *University Amsterdam* group we rely on two further dictionaries, for reasons that will be elaborated in the next section. One of the dictionaries, the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, is also corpus-based. Like *Macmillan*, the corpus is relatively recent and well-sampled. It was compiled using the *Longman Corpus Network*, a 330 million word database. The third tool is the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a historical dictionary.

We use the dictionaries for two main purposes: (1) to assist in the establishment of the lexical units in a stretch of discourse (step 2); (2) to identify the contextual and the basic meaning of the lexical unit to be analyzed and to subsequently determine whether the two meanings can be contrasted and also understood in comparison to each other (step 3). The paragraphs below discuss a variety of issues that arise when applying *Macmillan* and demonstrate how and why we supplement the use of this dictionary with two further dictionaries.

(1) Single headwords listed in *Macmillan* are usually regarded as a lexical unit. Therefore, the unit of analysis is commonly the word. As laid out by Steen et al. (forthcoming) there are a number of instances when more than one word make up a lexical unit. Such multiword units are generally phrasal verbs, compounds, poly-words and proper names. The focus here will be on the treatment of the first two cases, since the dictionaries are used as tools to assist in establishing the number of units candidate compounds and phrasal verbs consist of.

Some compounds are spelled as two separate words, so it is necessary to check whether the candidate compound has an entry of its own in the dictionary. For instance, *secondary school* in the above example designates one single referent and is found as a headword in *Macmillan*. It is instructive to

examine the stress pattern of the word; primary stress on the first part indicates a compound. This is the case in the current example, which is why *secondary school* is one lexical unit, even though it consists of two separate words.

Phrasal verbs such as *to hang on a minute*, *to pick up the phone*, and *to make up one's mind* cannot be decomposed without losing their meaning (Pragglejaz Group 2007: 26). Moreover, as Steen et al. (forthcoming) point out, the verb-particle combination designates one referent in the projected text world. As an example they name *show up*, which, in a context such as *my friend did not show up at the party*, refers to 'the action of not arriving at a particular place', signifying one single referent in the text world. The difficult task is to distinguish phrasal verbs from prepositional verbs, which are treated as two separate lexical units. A detailed discussion of how these two phenomena differ and are distinguished is beyond the scope of the present paper. Instead, we note the issue connected with using the dictionary, namely finding the basic and the contextual meanings. *Macmillan* and *Longman* do not distinguish between phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs. The dictionaries take both phenomena together, labeling them as "phrasal verbs". This means that the analyst needs to exercise caution when establishing the basic and the contextual senses. For a prepositional verb that is, wrongly, treated as a phrasal verb in the dictionaries, the contextual sense will likely be under the phrasal verb entries. The basic sense, however, needs to be checked by looking at the main senses of the two units.

(2) The dictionaries are heavily used in step 3 of the metaphor identification procedure, especially the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*. Section 3.1 discusses a number of cases that motivated the additional use of the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. The focus of this discussion is on the last part of step 3, namely contrasting the contextual and the basic sense. Section 3.2 moves on to explicating the treatment of cases that cannot be solved with the contemporary dictionaries alone. This addresses step 3(b) of the procedure, namely finding the basic meaning of the lexical unit. Section 3.3 then discusses two issues that analysts come across when trying to locate the contextual meaning in the dictionary as required in step 3(a), namely novel language use and the use of specialized terms. Finally, section 3.4 addresses the use of language that is literal but still carries the potential of a cross-domain mapping.

3.1 Conflation in *Macmillan*

At VU *University Amsterdam* we consider *Macmillan* as our main source. We consult *Macmillan* first — and not *Longman* — since, in building the procedure, the Pragglejaz Group used *Macmillan* to support their intuitions. It is important to note that *Macmillan* alone suffices to solve most cases. However, the application of MIP to such a large number of words from a

variety of discourse types has shown that relying on *Macmillan* alone is unsatisfactory for the following reason: metaphorical meanings depend on a contrast between a contextual and a more basic sense. The main criterion for deciding whether two senses are sufficiently distinct is whether the contextual and the basic sense are listed as two separate, numbered sense descriptions in the dictionary. Sense descriptions that are subsumed under one single sense are regarded as manifestations of the same meaning. For instance, *Macmillan*'s third sense description of *run*, 'if a machine or engine runs or you run it, it is working', includes the subsenses 3a 'to start or use a computer program' and 3b 'to own and use a motor vehicle', which are monosemous. This is also the case for the adjective *great*, as used in (2).

- (2) Some urban gardeners want their gardens to be extensions of their homes, with a great deal of paving, good furniture and lighting. (a3e-fragment03)

The *Macmillan* dictionary lists the meanings 1a 'bigger or more than usual', and 1b 'used for emphasizing the physical size of something or someone'. Because of the conflation of an abstract and a concrete sense, these descriptions cannot be contrasted according to the rules of MIP relying on *Macmillan* alone. The opposition of physical size (which would qualify as a basic meaning) and amount (the contextual meaning), however, does seem to point towards a metaphorical tension. Indeed, in *Longman* there is a separate sense for physical size. As *Longman* does not combine abstract and concrete senses, we take the view that they can be considered sufficiently distinct and *great* can be marked as metaphorically used. We use *Longman* as a 'second opinion' when meanings seem to contrast, but do not appear as separate sense descriptions in *Macmillan*. We could just as well consult *Longman* first and refer to *Macmillan* for second opinions.

Similarly, *Macmillan* sometimes subsumes human and non-human senses under one sense description. As Steen (2007: 98) notes, senses are sometimes collapsed that, had more space been available, might have been presented as two separate numbered sense descriptions. Deignan (2005: 63) makes a remark about the rather brief dictionary examples due to restricted space. She points out the pedagogical purpose of corpus dictionaries, namely that some examples may be simplified for the target audience or may ignore subtle meanings.

Another example of subsuming two different meanings under one sense description is the case of *groom* in (3).

- (3) Perfectly groomed from head to toe and with all that assurance she was ready to take on the world. (bmw-fragment09)

The contextual sense is listed in *Macmillan* as sense 1b ‘to look after your appearance by keeping your hair, body, and clothes clean and tidy’. The fact that the basic sense ‘to clean and brush an animal, especially a horse or a dog’ is described as sense 1 and is not located under a separately numbered sense description suggests the word is not metaphorical, according to the criterion of sufficient contrast, just as in the example above. Consulting *Longman*, however, resolves the issue. This dictionary lists the contextual sense ‘to take care of your own appearance by keeping your hair and clothes clean and tidy’ and the basic sense ‘to clean and brush an animal, especially a horse’ as separate senses. They can therefore be treated as sufficiently contrastive to be understood in comparison with each other, and *groom* may be marked as metaphorically used. As demonstrated, *Longman* proves to be particularly helpful in solving problems related to the last sub-step of step 3, in which the analyst establishes whether the basic and the contextual sense are contrastive enough to allow for a mapping.

For a number of cases, however, both dictionaries conflate, for instance, concrete and abstract senses. An analyst may intuitively think that *create* in (4) should be marked metaphorically used because of an opposition of designing something concrete and making something abstract.

- (4) But it should be possible to create and enforce enough common rules to prevent the absurd see-sawing of industrial relations legislation we have seen since 1969. (a1f-fragment09)

Both *Macmillan* and *Longman* suggest that the word’s meaning is general, and anything, irrespective of the level of abstraction, can be created. A similar case is posed by the verb *use*, for which, intuitively, there is a contrast between using a tool and using a method. However, both dictionaries conflate abstract and concrete tools. The first entry in *Macmillan* reads: ‘to do something using a machine, tool, skill, method etc in order to do a job or achieve a result’. The verb is conventionally employed in both abstract and concrete contexts. Therefore, *use* in the sense of ‘using a method’ is not metaphorical by the criteria of the identification procedure.

As demonstrated in the above examples, two separate sense descriptions are taken as indicators of sufficient contrast between contextual and basic meaning. However, the analyst must exercise caution and must not blindly conclude that if there are two separate senses he or she can automatically annotate the analyzed words as metaphorical. There are cases for which, even though basic and contextual sense are listed separately, there is not enough contrast to serve as a basis for a potential mapping. This may happen when one sense is a special case of the other, or when the two senses are metonymically related. The first case is illustrated by the lexeme *action* in (5):

- (5) It is the duty of us all to ensure that an entire cultural group is not tainted by the actions of a criminal minority. (as6-fragment01)

The contextual meaning is straightforward to establish: ‘something you do, especially something that seems wrong or unusual to other people’, which is the second sense description in *Macmillan*. One might argue that this is also the basic sense, which would automatically exclude this lexeme for metaphorical usage. Alternatively, analysts may argue for the body-related third sense in *Macmillan* as the basic sense: ‘a movement that you make with your body’. However, these two senses are not sufficiently distinct. Any action of the kind described in the second sense involves some kind of movement. The general sense of ‘something you do’ should be regarded as the basic meaning, and the ‘movement’ sense as a specification of a more general sense. This case demonstrates that, even though commonly the case, the more concrete sense is not necessarily always the most basic sense.

Secondly, a word may not be metaphorically used despite having separate entries for its basic and contextual senses, if the two senses are metonymically related. We illustrate this case by looking at the word *drops* in (6), an excerpt from a news report from the leisure pages of the *Daily Telegraph*.

- (6) Now the path ran through heather high above the burn, past circular sheepfolds long disused and over the stony beds of side streams where the grass hung smooth and inviting, concealing ankle-breaking drops. (ahc-fragment60)

The basic sense of *drop*, ‘a very small amount of liquid with a round shape’, and the contextual sense ‘a distance down to the ground from a high place’, are related; however, this relationship is one of contiguity and not of metaphor. Due to this metonymic relationship the two senses are not sufficiently distinct and *drop* is therefore used literally.

3.2 A third opinion for rare cases

The overwhelming majority of cases can be solved by using the *Macmillan* dictionary, and the *Longman* dictionary as a second opinion when it is needed. However, in the attempt to establish the contextual meaning of a lexical unit, analysts may still disagree on the basic meaning after lengthy discussion and consulting *Longman*. For these rare cases, one recourse is to consult the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* in order to take the historical development of the word into account. A word’s history is usually disregarded for two reasons: First, even though the basic sense is generally also the historically oldest meaning, this is not always the case. Second, when looking at contemporary language use, it cannot be assumed that the language user today still has access to these historical meanings. Nevertheless,

in order to treat these few cases that cannot be resolved by using the contemporary dictionaries alone, the age of a word meaning may be considered as a ‘tiebreaker’. Again, in the great majority of cases, such a tiebreaker is not needed and the *OED* is not consulted.

This procedure is exemplified in (7):

- (7) [...] when the philosophers deny autonomy to women they do so for the same sorts of reason that they deny it to children [...]. (ecv-fragment05)

The contextual sense of *autonomy* is clear: ‘the power to make your own decisions’, which is the second sense in *Macmillan*. Analysts may argue for the first entry in *Macmillan* as the most basic sense: ‘a situation in which a state, region, or organization is independent and has the power to govern itself’. Other analysts may find that the contextual sense is also the basic sense. For the present example, the sense descriptions in *Longman* are similar and therefore consulting *Longman* does not resolve the issue. Some words are not obviously literal or metaphorical, since most language is situated somewhere on a gradable line between these two opposite poles. However, for a quantitative analysis the number of uncertain cases needs to be kept to a minimum. Hence, considering a word’s etymology is useful in making a final decision. The *OED* lists the state-related sense as the oldest (1623). In this example, then, the state-related sense would be treated as the basic sense. This choice is corroborated by the sense being listed first in *Macmillan*, indicating its high saliency. As the Pragglejazz Group (2007: 3) cautions, however, the basic meaning is not always the most frequently used. Although we do use etymology for a small number of cases, we stress that we place more emphasis on a synchronic approach than the Pragglejazz Group does (Steen et al. forthcoming).

The *OED* is also useful when the exact nature of the relationship between two senses is unclear. This may indicate that they derive from a basic meaning that is no longer used. The meanings of *issue*, as in (8), ‘a subject that people discuss or argue about, especially relating to society, politics etc’, ‘a magazine that is published at a particular time’ and ‘a set of things, for example SHARES in a company, that are made available to people at a particular time’, illustrate this case. All senses are equally basic, since they developed from the old meaning ‘the action of going, passing, or flowing out; egress, exit; power of egress or exit; outgoing, outflow’ as found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

- (8) Parliament urged to think on housing issue. (a7y-fragment03)

3.3 Novel language use and specialized terms

For a minority of cases in the corpus the contextual meanings of words cannot be located in either *Macmillan* or *Longman*. This concerns words that are used in (1) a novel way, as well as (2) highly specialized terminology, such as occurs especially in some sub-genres of academic text.

(1) For a novel metaphor the lexical item itself is commonly found in the dictionary; however, its novel contextual meaning has not made its way into the dictionary (yet). Consider the lexical unit *roof* in the following excerpt from a newspaper article on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

- (9) A pyramid administrative structure, establishing links from popular committees in villages right up to the Executive Committee of the PLO (in its capacity as a Cabinet), can be established. During the Intifada the people have been engaged in building the side walls. A government would provide the roof which would bring these walls together. (a9j-fragment01)

The basic sense of *roof* as described in *Macmillan* comprises 1 ‘the top outer part of a building’, 1a ‘the top outer part of a temporary structure’ and 1b ‘the top outer part of a vehicle’. The contextual sense cannot be located in the dictionary, though, because the word is used in a novel way to refer to the overarching abstract structure that a government represents. Of course, the question remains under which conditions a term can be called novel. One possibility is to check in a large corpus such as the BNC World. A random sample of 50 hits out of 4,030 occurrences of *roof* returns mostly literal uses. None of the metaphorical uses resembles the contextual sense of this example. What remains is to decide what frequency of occurrence marks the cut-off point between conventionalized and novel uses (e.g. Cameron and Deignan 2006: 678). In that regard, dictionaries are unable to capture all contemporary language use, since there is a frequency threshold a meaning needs to pass in order to be considered sufficiently conventionalized (Steen 2007: 100).

The delicacy of treating cases of novel language use is also demonstrated by the word *outskirts* in (10).

- (10) Walking here, you leave the 20th century behind on the outskirts of the forest and enter the reconstructed emptiness [...]. (ahc-fragment60)

At first sight, *outskirts* may seem to be novel, since the contextual meaning is not in the dictionary. This would make it, according to the above definition, novel. The only meaning for *outskirts* given in the dictionaries is ‘the areas of a town or city that are furthest away from the centre’. In this example, however, the word refers to the areas of a “forest” that are farthest away

from the center, which means that in the present context, the lexeme is used in a novel way. A search of *outskirts* in BNC-World shows that most items are used in the meaning as described in the dictionaries. Only two out of fifty randomly selected hits (600 in total) were used in a novel way, and none of them was applied to a forest. The *OED* cites no etymological relationship between *outskirts* and *forest*. This rules out a play on an old meaning of *outskirts*. However, an alternative reasoning — against novel metaphor — is to assert that the item is a new specification of a basic meaning that has not yet made its way into the dictionary. Following this line of reasoning, the item cannot be marked as metaphorically used.

(2) The problem of technical language is twofold. Firstly, some terminology, particularly in texts from the academic register but also in some news articles of the sports and business section, is so specialized that it has not made its way into any of the dictionaries aimed at the general language user. Therefore, the contextual meaning cannot be established using *Macmillan* and *Longman*. In some cases the word's meaning can be traced in the *OED*, as is the case with rugby terminology such as *loose-head* or *fly-half* encountered in a sports report (a80-fragment15). However, as useful as the *OED* may be in some cases, it is less appropriate for dealing with technical expressions in highly specific texts such as writings on math and science.

Secondly, the analyst may encounter problems even before trying to locate the contextual meaning in one of the dictionaries. Consider this excerpt from a collection of lectures on electromagnetic theory:

- (11) We only need to remember the differential equation for the scalar potential [formula] eqn 2.12 and its solution in the form of eqn 2.24. [...] First we shall assume that the current density is confined to a thin wire in which case the integration variable may be changed into [formula] where S is a vector normal to the cross-section [...]. (fef-fragment03)

Assuming the analyst is a general language user, such a text may already pose problems for the usually straightforward step 1 of the MIP procedure (getting a general understanding of the meaning of the text), and therefore even more so when deciding on the appropriate contextual meaning of each individual unit. In principle it remains possible to establish the relevant meanings of all the words in this example. The excerpt is taken from a coherent, full text. Therefore, enough contextual information is available to derive its meaning if only expert knowledge were available. In order to consider such specialized terms as are highly infrequent in our overall data, informants who have special knowledge are required, or, alternatively, a specialized dictionary.

For the purpose of looking at the data from the general language user's point of view, we simply mark such highly specific items WIDLII. WIDLII

(When In Doubt Leave It In) indicates the possibility that a word is used metaphorically. Therefore, whenever the contextual meaning of a specialized word cannot be established, while at the same time a contrast to a more basic meaning cannot be ruled out by the tools at hand (*Macmillan, Longman, OED*), the word is coded WIDLII.³ The issue of including or excluding technical language has been discussed in e.g. Cameron (1999: 119 and 2003: 67). Judgment on metaphoricity may be dependent on whether one looks at the data from a non-expert versus expert perspective.

[...] language that appears metaphorical when viewed from *outside* the shared discourse world of speaker and listener, is not justifiably categorised as metaphorical *within* it (2003: 67).

3.4 Direct language use

Finally, we discuss a further phenomenon that must be approached without the use of dictionaries. Consider the following excerpt from a news report:

- (12) For many years Thomason lived in New York in his apartment at the Chelsea Hotel. From there *like a buzzard in its eyrie* he would make forays round the US and abroad in spite of his advanced age. (a1h-fragment05)

The words printed in italics are used in a literal fashion. The person in this text is compared to a large bird. This creates a shift from the domain of humans to the animal domain. These two domains can be mapped onto each other. This phenomenon of direct language use that still triggers a cross-domain mapping cannot be captured by contrasting basic and contextual meanings. The coder cannot carry out the analysis merely on a linguistic level, as was the case in all examples discussed so far. He or she has to make (rough) decisions on source and target domains and may need to construct possible mappings. Such comparisons are, as in the example above, frequently signaled by words such as *like* or *as*, but such a signal is not obligatory. The example below shows a much more elaborate simile whose presence is not signaled and where the mapping extends across a longer stretch of text (relevant parts marked in italics):

- (13) IN SYSTEMS development nothing is more fundamental than assessing user requirements. [...] But many system developers are unable to assess requirements properly. They seem to think that you can ask a

³ The word *down* in ambiguous contexts, such as in this extract from a conversation, is also marked WIDLII: “[...] you walked down the other end [...]” (kbd-fragment21). Absent sufficient context it is impossible to decide whether *down* refers to movement towards a lower place (literal) or along a path (metaphorical).

businessman what his requirements are and get an answer that amounts to a draft system specification. *A doctor doesn't ask his patient what treatment to prescribe. The patient can explain only what the problem is. It is the doctor that provides the remedy.* [...] A user may have a deep knowledge of business problems, but knowing little about computers, has no idea how they should be tackled. Yet, analysts are heard asking time and again, 'Tell me what you want. [...]' But of course the users don't know what they want, so they end up getting another duff system. *An effective analyst provides the same service to the business as the doctor provides to the patient.* He finds out what the needs of the business are, and prescribes the cure. (a8r-fragment02)

Since this analysis extends beyond the linguistic level, such data cannot be analyzed using MIP. The dictionaries are not suitable for detecting such **literal metaphors**. Note, however, that within metaphorical language use of this type, individual words can still be metaphorical because the unit may have a more basic meaning which is not the contextual meaning. For instance, in the above example the preposition *to* in the second section printed in italics is used indirectly, since the most basic meaning of *to* involves some kind of movement from one concrete spot to another. By contrast, in the current example the service provided is abstract and therefore cannot move from a concrete place to another. Therefore, the analyst must additionally check the basic and contextual meaning for each word by using the dictionaries in the way that has been described in the previous sections.

4 Conclusion

Corpus-based dictionaries are a useful tool for metaphor identification on a linguistic level. Instead of relying on intuition, using dictionaries serving as a norm of reference makes identifying linguistic metaphor more reliable. We have applied a rigorous method for identifying metaphors in discourse (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) and extended by the metaphor research group at VU *University Amsterdam*. The application of this procedure to academic texts, news texts, fiction and conversation excerpted from the BNC-Baby has proven to be highly reliable, as shown by multiple reliability tests. The application of MIP to a large amount of corpus data has revealed cases that are not amenable to straightforward solutions. The successor procedure therefore adopts two further dictionaries to treat these special cases: The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, another corpus-based dictionary, serves as a second opinion when needed — for instance to check whether words have two separate sense descriptions that *Macmillan* has subsumed under one single sense. The *Oxford English Dictionary* is only

consulted in the rare cases where appeal to *Longman* and analyst discussion fail to resolve a discrepancy in coding. Only then is a word's etymology considered.

Nevertheless, there are limitations to using these three dictionaries as tools for the identification of metaphors in discourse. Since neither *Macmillan* nor *Longman* distinguish phrasal verbs (one lexical unit) from prepositional verbs (two lexical units), the tools must be applied with caution in this case. The identification of novel metaphor is also challenging because the mere absence of a word or word meaning from the dictionary does not automatically mean that it is in fact used in a novel way. Cases of (potential) novel use have proven to be very infrequent in our data; therefore this problematic aspect is, along with a general awareness of the restrictions imposed by the framework, only minor. A further issue that general-purpose dictionaries cannot deal with is the identification of metaphorical usage of specialized terms, as may occur in specialized texts. Of course, specialized dictionaries may remedy the problem; a researcher will need to decide about the feasible number of dictionaries. Finally, literal language use that still involves some contrast between two domains cannot be dealt with using the dictionaries, since the analysis of such items needs to move to the conceptual level.

The use of dictionaries for linguistic metaphor identification obviously has its limitations. However, if an analyst is aware of these limitations, corpus-based dictionaries are an important and useful tool in moving away from guesswork and intuition, instead supporting analysts' linguistic metaphor identification with carefully compiled language data.

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Is Time A-changin'?: A Synchronic Investigation of the Idioms Used in *Time*

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Abstract. A newly-available net-based corpus of 105 million words of written American English (*Time Magazine*, 1923–2006, at <http://corpus.byu.edu/time>) was investigated for the occurrence and diachronic distribution of various types of ‘pure’ idioms such as *be raining cats and dogs*. Idioms from the *Collins COBUILD Dictionary of Idioms* (2002 (1995)) were selected for four types of variation and change. Group 1, the 46 idioms labeled “old-fashioned”, proved to be noticeably more common before 1970. Group 2, several constructions of the type *as scarce as X*, exhibited considerably more variation than in more diversified corpora such as the *British National Corpus*. Group 3, Biblically-derived idioms, were generally less common after 1960, but with the lowest frequencies in the 1930s. The frequencies for the final group, 32 idioms focusing on deception, were relatively constant from the 1950s on, with an interesting dip in the 1970s. Changes in editorial policies may possibly have influenced these results. While not of sufficient magnitude for detailed studies of individual items over time, the *Time* corpus clearly is sufficient to provide us with a great deal of data and numerous valuable insights into the use of these idioms.

Keywords: idiom, corpus, language change, variation, American English.

1 Introduction

By now a spry octogenarian, *Time* first hit the newsstands in March, 1923, and (together with *Newsweek*, which was launched a decade later) has remained a weekly icon of American households ever since. The recent release of the *Time* corpus (<http://corpus.byu.edu/time>) by Mark Davies marks a milestone in synchronic corpus linguistics, as it has now become possible quickly and easily to tap into this linguistic record of middle-class American writing. The present paper explores one dimension of this usage: *Time*’s idioms, and some of the ways this usage may have changed.

2 Idioms

In the present paper, **idioms** are defined in the narrower sense of (relatively fixed or frozen) idiomatic expressions (Langlotz 2006, Nunberg et al. 1994; cf. also Alm-Arvius 2007, Cruse 2006, Gustawsson 2006, Makkai 1972). They include such well-known phrases as:

- (1) a one-horse town
- (2) to catch forty winks
- (3) It ain't over till the fat lady sings

These expressions form a rather amorphous subset of the more general class of **formulaic language** (Wray 2002), for which further terms such as **fixed expressions and idioms** (Moon 1998) abound.

Idioms in this narrower sense (what Moon (1998: 23) calls opaque metaphors or **pure idioms**) will here be taken to exclude a number of related phenomena, such as *ad hoc* coinages not in general use, foreign phrases (*idée fixe, caveat emptor*), single-morpheme items (*cran-*, as in *cranberry*), compounds (*fire escape, dance hall*) and intertextual quotations (*O brave new world!*, *No man is an island, Let them eat cake!*). However, the borders leak, the guards are not always vigilant, and so we find that the erstwhile intertextual phrase *a sea change* is now generally used as simply an idiom meaning 'a major change', with no discernible links to *The Tempest*.

As the more salient characteristics of idioms in this narrower sense, Nunberg et al. (1994: 492–93) present:

- **Conventionality:** Idioms are conventionalized: their meaning or use can't be predicted, or at least entirely predicted, on the basis of a knowledge of the independent conventions that determine the use of their constituents when they appear in isolation from one another.
- **Inflexibility:** Idioms typically appear only in a limited number of syntactic frames or constructions, unlike freely composed expressions (e.g. **the breeze was shot, *the breeze is hard to shoot*, etc.).
- **Figuration:** Idioms typically involve metaphors (*take the bull by the horns*, metonymies (*lend a hand, count heads*), hyperboles (*not worth the paper it's printed on*), or other kinds of figuration.
- **Proverbiality:** Idioms are typically used to describe — and implicitly, to explain — a recurrent situation of particular social interest (becoming restless, talking informally, divulging a secret, or whatever) in virtue of its resemblance or relation to a scenario involving homey, concrete things and relations — climbing walls, chewing fat, spilling beans.
- **Informality:** Like other proverbial expressions, idioms are typically associated with relatively informal or colloquial registers and with popular speech and oral culture.

- Affect: Idioms are typically used to imply a certain evaluation or affective stance toward the things they denote.¹

Of these “more-or-less orthogonal properties”, the preference for proverbiality and informality are the ones that might be most expected to have a negative impact on the use of idioms in *Time*, a magazine which is part of a relatively formal written genre. As we shall subsequently see, however, *Time* has long had a house predilection for playful language, and contains numerous feature articles that fall within less formal spheres.

In order to have an operational definition of idioms, *CCDI*, the *Collins COBUILD Dictionary of Idioms* (2002), has been chosen as the reference point or selectional base.² It includes a total of 1,390 headwords (with singular and plural forms combined) and 3,485 different idioms, a number of them with two or more main variants (which are not distinguished when counting for the present paper). *CCDI* is solidly based on the corpus evidence provided by the *Collins COBUILD Bank of English (BoE)* database, which at the time of *CCDI*'s first edition (1995) consisted of just over 200 M (i.e. 200 million) words. Its major drawback for the present investigation is that the American component of the *BoE* was much smaller than a geographically balanced corpus of English would require, a point that needs to be remembered in a study of *Time* data. This is most clearly seen in its tendency to overlabel items as BrE (Minugh 2008).

It has repeatedly been shown that although individual idioms often are experienced as salient in their contexts (particularly as headlines), they are as a whole strikingly infrequent in corpora. As *CCDI* (1995: v) notes,

[I]dioms are comparatively infrequent [...] Nearly one third of the idioms in this dictionary occur less often than once per 10 million words of the corpus. The idioms in the highest frequency band occur in our data at least once per two million words of English. [...] [O]nly a few of these occur as frequently as any of the words we have marked for frequency in *The COBUILD English Dictionary*.

These figures of less than 1 per 1 M words have been repeatedly confirmed (Moon 1998, Minugh 1999: 65, Minugh 2008) and have never been seriously questioned. As a consequence, it has until quite recently not been possible to conduct major empirical studies based on corpus evidence of the kind envisioned by Sinclair (1991: 102):

¹ This passage is abridged from the original, which also includes further material in footnotes.

² This selection is not completely unproblematic. A comparison with the Oxford equivalent, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms* (1993), indicated a surprisingly large number of items found in only the one dictionary or the other: almost 30% for both works.

So if we need, say, fifty occurrences of a sense of a word in order to describe it thoroughly, then the corpus has to be large enough to yield fifty instances of the least common sense.

Sinclair's benchmark, amply motivated in his 1991 study, would then imply that for idioms occurring once per 5 M words, and having only one sense (a typical situation), a satisfactory investigative corpus should consist of at least 250 M words. Moreover, an investigation wishing to examine change over time should then have successive subcorpora, each of at least that order of magnitude.

3 The *Time* corpus

By such a yardstick, the *Time* corpus is clearly inadequate for a definitive investigation. Nevertheless, at roughly 100 M words, it is the first large-scale historical corpus of (an important genre in) American English, and therefore well worth investigating further.³ With that caveat in mind, let us now consider the make-up of the *Time* corpus.

The *Time* corpus is essentially a search engine that examines the entire range of articles in *Time* from its first publication in 1923 onward. This database contains about 105 M words in over 275,000 articles and is text-only (no advertisements, pictures, or the like).⁴ It permits reasonably sophisticated corpus searches for strings that allow us to find not merely the canonical forms of idioms, but also variants, such as (1), repeated here for convenience' sake:

- (1) a one-horse town
- (1a) a one-mule town

The genre of the *Time* corpus is clearly journalistic, normally a prose that is collectively written and edited, rather than primarily bylined from one author. The range of areas written about is not unlike that of a major newspaper. As regards time constraints, these are more relaxed than in a daily newspaper, although breaking stories clearly have a much tighter deadline

³ There is no American equivalent of the 100 M-word *British National Corpus*, itself primarily from the 1980s and early 1990s; the *American National Corpus* is currently at only 22 M and has as yet no announced completion date. These large corpora (and Mark Davies' newly-released *BYU Corpus of American English*) are in any case based on post-1980 English.

Web-based corpora such as OUP's in-house-only *Oxford English Corpus* or the UKWaC 'British English Web Corpus', both currently at 2 B words, are even more recent, being post-2000.

⁴ "The 275,000+ texts were taken from the [TIME Archive](#), which is freely available online" (Information section, *Time* corpus). Each citation is specifically linked back to the issue, date, page and article in question.

than many of their feature articles. The language is almost exclusively American English, although in more recent years a greater number of (translated) articles or partial contributions have appeared from abroad.⁵ As with newspapers, a certain minimal duplication can occur in e.g. weekly lists of the most popular movies or books.

One way in which a corpus can be examined for representativeness is to look at the distribution of some common words, and compare that to the total number of words. This was carried out with the words {*and, he, they, she, man, house, state, money*}, comparing entire decades only, i.e. 1930s to 1990s. There is a quite satisfactory match between the general distribution of text and these words, as is shown in Figure 1. The shape of the curve suggests that we first see a rise in the size of issues as people’s buying power and the magazine’s circulation are on the increase, followed by a shift to a more picture-oriented format, probably fueled by a drop in the costs and complications of color printing. Even if the motivations for such changes lie outside the scope of the present paper, it is clear that the words in these texts have not undergone any startling relative changes in frequency.

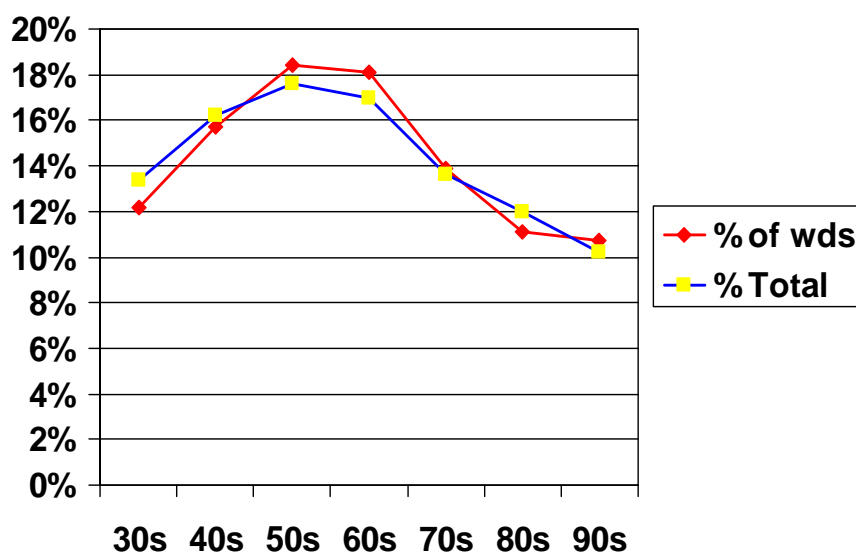


Figure 1. Distribution of words (1930s–1990s): articles per decade v. total number of words per decade.

⁵ A complicating factor for the magazine is that there now are three additional regional versions (Europe, Asia, and South Pacific) plus *TIME for Kids*; this variation is apparently not reflected in the database, which presents the core American version.

4 Idioms: variation and change

4.1 Variation

Previous discussions of idioms have not indicated any patterns in which the individual idioms exhibit changes as idioms over time, although they naturally may be expected to participate in any change that occurs in the pronunciation and forms of their component words. Given that the idioms themselves often are anchored in given images or schemata, this is only to be expected. Thus, we would not expect social changes to effect a change in the featured part of idiom (1), producing form (1'):

- (1) a one-horse town
- (1') a one-car town

or in some Flash Gordon future, even

- (1'') a one-rocket town

Note that this is not to claim that such idioms cannot possibly be found, merely that they would be extremely rare, precisely because they violate the pattern of 'an animal to ride on or pull a wagon'.

A query of the 2B word net-based *OEC* database produced *one*-{*oxen, mongrel*} *town*, plus 85 instances of *one-horse town*, but none indicating a shift to a non-animate source of locomotion.⁶ Instead, the variation that does exist, and which can be considerable, instead varies the type of object for which there is only one instance in the town.⁷ Thus, we find instances of *one*-{*industry, paper, pub, stop, team, typesetter*} *town*, plus 15 instances of a locomotion-oriented variant: *one-street town(s)*. Perhaps the most spectacular variant was the following:

- (4) Croydon has just changed from being a one Starbucks town into being a two Starbucks town (*OEC* weblog 20.03.0009.002)

Looking at the *Time* data, we find a similar pattern: *one*-{*newspaper* (10), *industry* (4), *paper* (3), *company* (2), *party* (2), *crop, doctor, factory, saloon, square, stoplight, street, tart, team*} *town*, with the figures in parentheses indicating the number of instances. The phrase *one-crop town* is particularly interesting, as it is on the fuzzy border of idiomaticity, being quite close to a

⁶ Both hyphenated and non-hyphenated variants included.

⁷ The element *town* can of course also be varied, but the variation is sharply limited: {*town, hamlet, village, ?city*}. A *one-orchestra city* could be a potential variant of this idiom, but a *one-party country* is probably merely referential (Mackenzie & Mel'čuk 1986:101).

typical (non-idiomatic) phrase from the domain of economics, *a one-crop economy*.

Another point worth noting is that although the *Time* corpus is only a twentieth the size of the *OEC*, it actually contains more variants of this particular idiom, which is in keeping with the impression mentioned earlier, i.e. that *Time* has a relatively strong predilection for playfulness of language.

4.2 Change

One type of change may be described as ‘loss’, whereby an idiom becomes regarded as so ‘old-fashioned’ that it ultimately drops out of use. There are thus two dimensions involved here: how the idiom is perceived by speakers, and frequency-based corpus evidence of its non-use/disappearance. The two can to some extent be conflated, since dictionaries and style guides provide (corpus-based?) labels such as ‘old-fashioned’, a normative judgment that may hasten an idiom’s demise — at least, to the extent that such guides have an effect on users of English. This latter point is not irrelevant for a corpus based on a single editing staff and house style, as it is presumably more sensitive to such judgments.

To some extent, idioms, like any other lexical items, can disappear merely as a consequence of falling out of fashion, a phenomenon primarily seen in (overused) slang. But another pressure on lexical items can be the fact that their anchor in everyday life disappears, through changes in the world people experience and know. As the horses in example (1) cease to be regarded as part of most people’s everyday life, this scenario (owning a horse > doing okay) becomes less and less relevant, although this particular scenario may have been saved by a transformation: increasing numbers of people have horses as a form of pet or hobby. Other such areas might include terms from sailing ships or the sphere of agriculture.

As more drastic examples, consider (5)–(7):

- (5) a blot on your escutcheon
- (6) a mess of pottage
- (7) it ain’t over until the fat lady sings

Ever since blotting paper began to disappear with the post-WWII development of the ballpoint pen and disappearance of ink-wells, *blot* has been losing ground, from a high of 9.6 tokens/M of *blot** in the 1940s to 1.9 in the current decade. Of course, escutcheons have never been in great favor in the peerless U.S., and the last *Time* reference to an actual escutcheon was in 1930. Thus, it is hardly strange that (5) is opaque to Americans, who lack the domain of a titled upper class — it may never have been all that relevant for non-heraldic Americans, and certainly is not so today.

A larger-scale form of this same kind of change is when an entire major domain undergoes a sea-change, such as the Western shift from an overtly religious Christian society, with Biblical texts continually present and invoked, to its present state, where such texts and their metaphors are much less frequently invoked. If an idiom such as (6) is no longer associated with the Biblical story of Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:29–34), it becomes almost unintelligible, since *a mess of* has long since become primarily associated with untidiness or even excrement, rather than a dish of lentils, and *pottage* is also obscure.⁸

A second form of change would be when an individual idiom becomes more popular, spreading beyond its original domain(s) and/or geographical regions. Thus, (7), an American idiom documented since at least the 1970s, first surfaces in the *Time* corpus in 1984:

- (8) In the old joke, the opera is not over until the fat lady sings. (*Time*, June 18, 1984)

However, it really took off and spread when George G.W. Bush used the expression on the campaign trail in New Hampshire in 1988. Political cartoons and reporting helped spread an awareness of the idiom to Great Britain, and by 1991 there even was a Dublin band called *The Fat Lady Sings*. The idiom is listed in *CCDI* (1995: 233) without a regional label, and is also to be found in the *BNC*, and is currently rampant in Internet discussions of the 2008 U.S. elections.

Other idioms emerge full-blown and Venus-like from the murky waters of politics, as the Nixonian *smoking gun* (labeled an Americanism by *CCDI* [1995: 174–75]), or Churchill’s 1940 recasting of the older *blood, sweat and tears* as *blood, sweat, toil and tears* (*CCDI* [1995: 35]).⁹ The high social status of the first user and the high stakes of its first use guarantee that it becomes widely disseminated, although not necessarily remembered.

5 The *Time* test data

5.1 Old-fashioned idioms

Of its 3,485 entries (some 4,400 if all the variants are counted), the *CCDI*, with its emphasis on “real English,” excludes all obsolete or archaic idioms,

⁸ For its Biblical use (the exact phrase was not in the *King James Version*), see *OED*, *mess* n.¹, I, ‘a portion of food’, sense 2a. This is the only subsense not marked ‘obsolete’ or ‘regional’. Neither this use of *mess* nor the word *pottage* are to be found in e.g. the Cambridge *Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*.

⁹ For its origins, see e.g. Flavell & Flavell (2006: 43–44).

but retains a total of 46 idioms it labels as ‘old-fashioned’. These ‘old-fashioned’ idioms include:

- not have a bean
- not know how many beans make five
- have a bee in your bonnet
- cut the cackle!
- set your cap at someone
- be the cat’s whiskers
- be raining cats and dogs
- be in the catbird seat
- pull someone’s chestnuts out of the fire
- get your dander up
- cheer someone to the echo
- enough is as good as a feast

The reader is at this point invited to see whether he/she would accept the above items. It is of course entirely possible for a given idiom to be in general use, but not in an individual’s personal repertoire (a point our English Department has repeatedly observed when creating tests for learners, with the test checkers often complaining that they do not recognize a few idioms selected by the test makers). The most famous of these ‘old-fashioned’ idioms is probably *be raining cats and dogs*, which — as corpus linguists have repeatedly noticed — may hold the distinction of being the most-taught and least-used idiom in English. In the author’s (subjective) judgment, at least, the following are still clearly in circulation:

- be in apple-pie order
- a little bird/birdie told me
- the cat’s meow (*not* the cat’s whiskers!)
- warm the cockles of your heart
- in two shakes of a lamb’s tail
- snug as a bug in a rug
- catch forty winks

and possibly the following:

- in for a penny
- turn up like a bad penny
- scarce as hen’s teeth
- (not) up to snuff
- sober as a judge

These 46 items were therefore tested against the *Time* corpus. Most idioms, as *CCDI* notes, may be expected to occur between 1 and 10 times per 10 M words, so the ‘old-fashioned’ items may be expected to occur at less than that level in recent decades, but be more frequent previously. The results clearly indicate that a number of these idioms have been in use throughout the 20th century, as Table 1 illustrates.

Table 1. The 10 most frequent ‘old-fashioned’ idioms in *Time* corpus, per 10 M words

Idiom	Total Freq	20s–50s	60s–00s
<i>get someone’s dander up</i>	6.4	10.7	2.5
<i>(not) be up to snuff</i>	3.3	4.7	2.0
<i>cheer someone to the echo</i>	2.1	3.9	0.4
<i>be in the catbird seat</i>	1.9	0.6	3.1
<i>(be in the catbird seat)</i> ¹⁰	(0.9)	(0.0)	(1.8)
<i>a blot on your escutcheon</i>	1.7	2.4	0.7
<i>warm the cockles of your heart</i>	1.5	2.6	0.4
<i>have a bee in your bonnet</i>	1.4	1.8	0.4
<i>cock a snook at someone</i>	1.0	1.8	0.4
<i>of the first water</i>	1.0	1.4	0.5
<i>(pushed around) from pillar to post</i>	0.9	1.2	0.5

In addition, at least one such item, *be in the catbird seat*, appears to have come into circulation in the latter part of the century — and here Thurber’s play may have been instrumental in helping it become known. Another six items occurred once in the latter part of the century and not at all in the former part, even if only one occurrence is too slim a reed to base claims upon; only one other item, *turn up like a bad penny*, occurred twice in the latter, but once in the former part of the century.

At the same time, we may note that a total of 11 items occurred only once in the 85 years of the *Time* corpus, and a further 10 did not occur at all. This could be interpreted as indicating that they are more than old-fashioned, and are in fact obsolete or archaic. However, 18 of these 21 were labeled as BrE by *CCDI*, so that they are not to be expected in AmE.¹¹ Those entirely missing are as follows:

- know how many pins make five
- pin your ears back (‘listen carefully’)

¹⁰ The figures in parentheses are with all overt references to Thurber’s play *The Catbird Seat* removed.

¹¹ It should perhaps be mentioned that the 200+ M then-*Bank of English* had a relatively small AmE contribution, and its component from *Time* would not have been particularly large, so that there is little danger of circular reasoning based on identity between the *BoE* texts and the *Time* corpus.

- enough is as good as a feast
- be up a gum tree
- not my line of country
- (clever as) a cartload of monkeys
- not on your nelly
- sell the pass
- two shakes of a lamb's tail ('BrE, old-fashioned AmE')
- spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar

Since the absolute numbers of tokens for the individual idioms per decade are relatively small (even the largest, *get someone's dander up*, occurs more than 5 times per decade during only the 30s to the 60s), their numbers have been aggregated for the comparison in Figure 2 (cf. also Table 1, above).

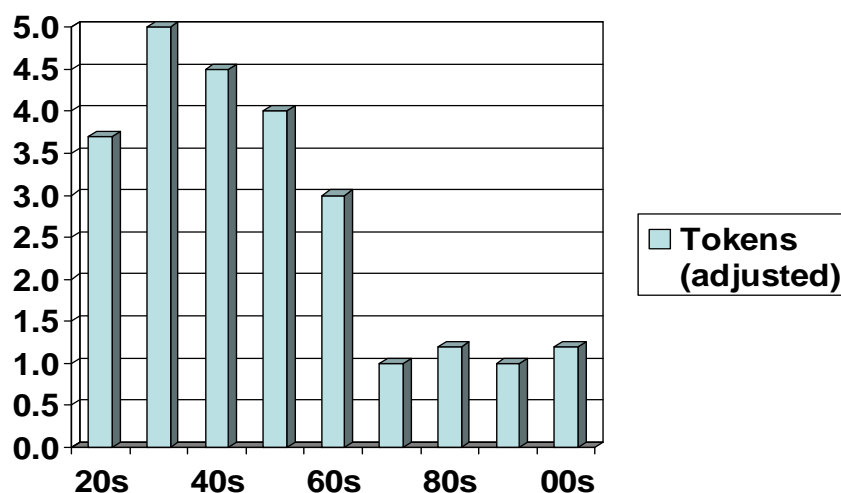


Figure 2. The (adjusted) frequencies per 10 M for 'old-fashioned' idioms in the *Time* corpus

What emerges is a fairly strong sense that some sort of change appears to have taken place in the (late?) 60s, and the temptation is almost irresistible to link this linguistic shift to the social changes ushered in by the social turmoil in the U.S. of the late 60s: student unrest, the growing power of the civil rights movement, the resistance to the war in Vietnam, 'flower power' and the first stirrings of the feminist movement. If this is correct, we are seeing a re-evaluation of 'received wisdom'.

5.2 Creative variation

In examining the variations for the idiom *a one-horse town*, we have already claimed that *Time* tends to encourage verbal fireworks, one way of accomplishing this being precisely through variation of (otherwise relatively) fixed idioms. Treating them as constructions with a fairly open slot, we can then examine further instances, such as:

- (9) as scarce as X
- (10) as slippery as a Y
- (11) as happy as a Z

The canonical form for (9) is $X = \textit{hen's teeth}$, which in fact did occur six times.¹² But there are no less than a further 22 instances which vary this pattern. Here are some of the more spectacular ones, which fall into two categories: the relatively rare cases of sheer inventiveness, as in

- as scarce as heavy-metal bands at Republican rallies
- with good seats at good shows always as scarce as bagels in Mecca

and the more common pattern of context-triggered comparisons, as in

- Giggles on the Associated Press service are about as scarce as deadpan reporting in the National Lampoon
- signs of a Sino-Soviet thaw are about as scarce as palm trees in Peking and Moscow
- In questions of air safety, definitive answers are as scarce as anti-gravity screens
- an estimated 30% increase in store traffic has [...] made parking spaces as scarce as Cabbage Patch dolls
- Hollywood is finding that adaptable novels are as scarce as cheap real estate
- prominent women economists were almost as scarce as generals in skirts
- The three networks alone settled 350 staffers in Des Moines, and hotel rooms were as scarce as subways
- good generals were as scarce as good shoes in the Continental Army.

A similar pattern may be seen in (10), *as slippery as Y*, where only two of the ten instances are the canonical *as slippery as an eel*, with a third instance

¹² Similar data may be found for *as rare as X*. *As scarce as could be* did not occur, although numerous other adjectives occurred in this construction.

playing on it (*slippery as an eel's hips*). The others are either physically related, as in

- a brick path worn slippery as slate
- with a ball as slippery as shaving soap

or inventive:

- Kansas men (= 'football players') were slippery as noodles
- Slippery as wrestlers covered with oil, [neutrons] slide through the electric fields
- The stucco and chicken-wire cliffs of Hollywood success [...] [are] treacherous, lonely and slippery as glass
- as slippery as Wagner's without Wagner's soaring sense of continuity
- this principle is as slippery as a wet fox in a rabbit hole.

For (11), the structure *happy as a Z*, no single canonical form seems to exist; instead, *CCDI* lists a number of variants: *as happy as {a clam, a lark, a pig in muck, a sandboy, Larry}*, with *clam* being AmE, *lark* neutral, and the others BrE. No particular order of preference is given.

Here, however, the *Time* corpus outdoes itself. All but *sandboy* are represented in the corpus, some repeatedly: *happy as a clam (at high tide)* (4+3), *a lark* (5), *a pig (in muck)* (2+1), as well as three proper names (*Lark* [a Studebaker], *Larry* 2x). There are a further two instances of *happy as a grig* ('lively person') and three of *happy as a king*, but more noticeably, there are another 46 additional terms, all different. Here are a few:

- as happy as a five-year-old with his curls cut off
- wonderful Florida sunshine that he is apt to sit back, happy as a grapefruit, and soak it up
- as happy as a hayride down the middle aisle of Oklahoma!
- The Hotel Business: [...] as happy as a room clerk with a waiting list
- as happy as a Teletubby on tequila

Again, we see this mixture of context-linked and purely inventive forms. And again, it may be noted that the (various) canonical forms account for only 18 of the 70 instances. This is far more variation than that found in e.g. the *BNC* (Gustawsson 2006, Minugh 2006), and confirms the claim that *Time* is more playful in its use of idioms.

5.3 Secularization?

Although modern America is often characterized as more overtly religious than much of today's Europe, it may nevertheless be plausibly maintained that the secularizing process has not left the U.S. untouched (cf. the discussion in Gilbert 2000: 24–44). If this is the case, there should be a shift towards less awareness of Biblically based idioms, as well.

A search of the idioms in *CCDI* revealed a total of 33 idioms directly deriving from the Bible (this fact is rarely indicated in *CCDI*, which provides little or no etymological information for its idioms, so that a few other idioms with Biblical origin may have been missed). All 33 are to be found in the *Time* corpus, although with frequencies ranging from 10.7 to 0.2 per 10 M. The most frequent idioms often have inflated numbers because they are the name of a contemporary book or play; the second number indicates the frequency when such references are removed:

- an olive branch (10.9, 10.7)
- a thorn in your side/flesh (9.1)
- the day of reckoning (7.4)
- wailing and gnashing of teeth (6.1)
- beat/turn swords into plowshares (5.9, 5.1 without the Plowshare movement)
- in seventh heaven (5.5, 1.7 without the play/film)
- fall by the wayside (5.1)
- fall from grace (4.6, 4.4 without the play)

Of these items, the most frequent, (*hold out*) *an olive branch*, is one of the idioms that most easily lends itself to more general use, since it functions as a synonym for '(offer to) make peace', '(be willing to) negotiate'. This sense does not require a religious framework, unlike e.g. *fall from grace*, which primarily is to be construed via the scenario of Christian theology (particularly through the loaded term *grace*). In general, we may note that many of these terms have accrued specific historical and cultural meanings that may be invoked, such as the Plowshare peace group of the 80s. These specific meanings help keep the idioms alive, at the same time as they remove them from their primary use as transmitters of general human experience and wisdom.

Again, as the numbers are not very large, the aggregate numbers will be considered when investigating the change in the use of these idioms over time in the *Time* corpus. The results may be seen in Figure 3:

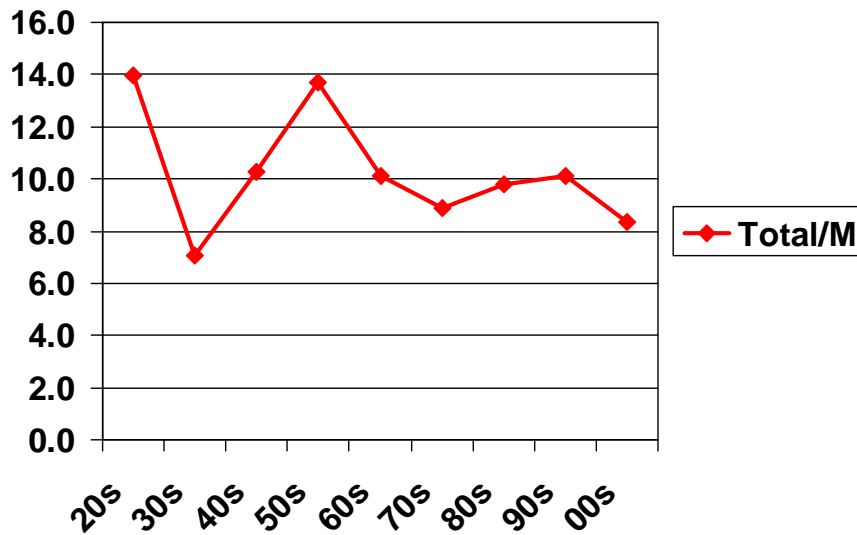


Figure 3. Biblical idioms in the *Time* corpus (per 10 M)

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Figure 3 is the dip that occurs in the Great Depression. That was of course a time of major economic trauma and conflict, and it is possible that a religious scenario that included days of judgment was not what people wanted to hear, as the judgment would apply to them. During the 40s and 50s, a judgmental scenario may well have better fitted the concept of apocalyptic struggles with the Nazis, and then the Communists, both of which were external enemies of America. Such speculations would, however, require an investigation into the details of the use of these idioms, a procedure beyond the present investigation.

In any case, with the exception of the 30s, we may possibly be seeing a pattern not unlike that of Figure 2, where there is a break with the past in the 60s: from then on, there is a relatively steady, lower level for such idioms, with no sign that the Bush administration has succeeded in convincing *Time* to bring these particular Biblical idioms back into use. A word of caution is in order, however: as these particular idioms are anchored in the Bible, their potential for being brought back into various domains of public use is considerably larger than many of the other idioms based on e.g. agricultural life of the past. In other words, they may at any time arise like Lazarus from the tomb of the forgotten.

5.4 In an age of deception

The semantic field of deception offers an opportunity to examine a relatively static area of society, as it is difficult to believe that deception would suddenly become more salient to human activities. The need for such idioms might be expected to remain relatively constant during the near-century of the *Time* corpus, even if it is by no means given that the gatekeepers at *Time* (i.e. its editors and policy-makers) maintained exactly the same policy towards articles mentioning such behavior.

To test this question, another feature of the *CCDI* dictionary was utilized: the second edition of this dictionary lists 32 different semantic areas for its idioms (2002: Index, 1–17): DECISIONS, LOVE, INFORMATION, HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT, SADNESS, MONEY and so on. The group that will be examined here is DECEPTION, with 41 idioms. All but three of these are relatively easily searchable, and these 38 form the basis for the next investigation.¹³ Of these 38, 5 are labeled as currently British, 6 American and 1 Australian. The most common are listed below, again with the second figure indicating that proper names have been removed, and with regional labels in square brackets:

- give/pay lip service to sth (17.5, 17.0)
- go through the motions (13.7)
- cloak and dagger (8.2)
- a shell game (5.5)
- monkey business (4.6)
- made out of whole cloth (4.2) [AmE]
- a white lie (3.3, 2.6)

These are rather a mixed bag, with some derived from espionage (*cloak and dagger*), others from fraudulent tricksters (*shell game*), yet others from hypocrisy (*lip service*, *go through the motions*), and at least one from the American slave trade (*sell sb down the river*).

As with the religious idioms, the numbers are too small for reliable item-by-item analysis. The top quartile, or eight most common idioms, as listed above, account for no less than 654 of the total of 887 tokens, or 73.7%. Many of the other expressions fail to occur at all for decades at a time. Instead, the aggregate figures will again be used, the results being seen in Figure 4 (below).

¹³ As this paper is not technically oriented, the details of the searches have not been presented. For an item such as *pull sb's leg*, the problem lies in the noise ratio: normally, this is a question of so many false hits appearing in a simple search that it becomes impractical to investigate the item in question.

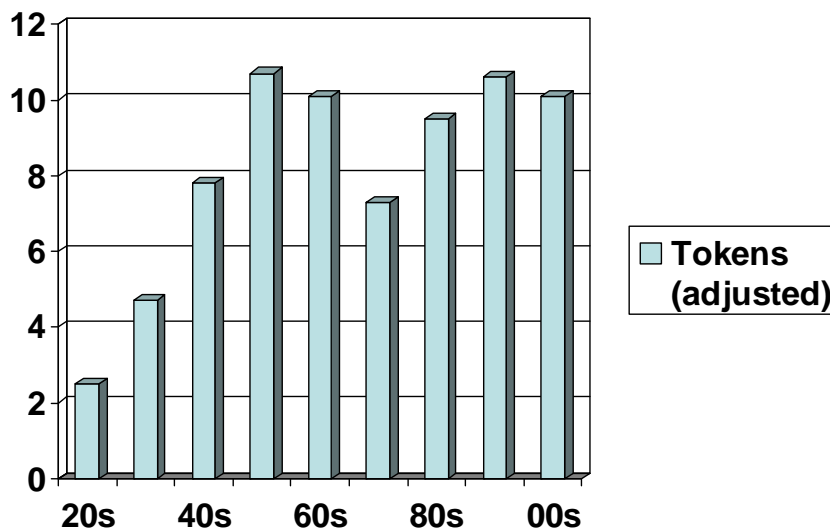


Figure 4. *Time* corpus tokens from the semantic field ‘fraud’, per 10M

Interestingly enough, the Depression of the 30s does not seem to have unleashed a storm of accusations about fraud, at least in *Time*. Instead, the peak appears to have been in the 50s (a decade traditionally seen as soporific, at least under the Eisenhower administration). Here, the split between the first and second half of the century does not seem to hold; rather, there is an eroding of trust that culminates during the period when fear of Communism is at its height, followed by the distrust in the Vietnam War period, with a return to skepticism from the Reagan administration on through today. As noted above, however, such a large-scale shift need not reflect actual social changes, since it suffices for *Time*’s gatekeepers to shift policies on what they write about or how they express it.

Returning to the idioms themselves, we may note that a few of them were completely missing from the *Time* corpus:

- do the dirty on someone [BrE]
- sell the pass [BrE]
- lie through your teeth
- be economical with the truth

In at least the latter instance, it is somewhat surprising that *be economical with the truth* is listed without a regional label; it originated in an inspired ministerial moment in the mid-80s, in connection with the *Spycatcher* trials in Britain, and appears to be firmly anchored in the British political tradition,

so that if it were to appear in *Time* (which it failed to do) one would expect it to be in a British connection.

Among the items that appeared rarely, one in particular stands out: *to speak/talk with forked tongue*. This was a standard cliché of Hollywood films, where the Indian brave or chief (it varied) expressed his disbelief in the probity of the white man — usually correctly so. It clearly failed to make it into *Time*, presumably precisely because it was such a cliché, although it appears to be making a strong comeback as a term of abuse on the Internet.¹⁴

Again, however, it appears that a much more detailed study of the individual instances would be necessary, before making major claims about the shifts in deception idioms during these eras.

6 Conclusions

The most important conclusion to be drawn from this investigation is that the *Time* corpus comprises a fascinating resource for information about American English of the twentieth century. Its 100 M words contain a wealth of examples for many different types of investigation into linguistic and cultural matters, and the corpus search engine is sufficiently sophisticated to provide access in a relatively non-technical way.

At the same time, it must be remembered that *Time* is a collective enterprise under the control of the fairly stringent editing of one single publishing house, and represents one single genre, albeit with articles on many aspects of human life. News items from the spheres of politics and economics dominate, and of course are primarily drawn from the United States. These caveats having been stated, it nevertheless remains true that the *Time* corpus is the first major diachronic source for studies of American English, and no comparable source yet exists for British (or other varieties of) English.

With regard to general analyses of idioms in the strict sense, the size of the *Time* corpus is clearly still inadequate to achieve even the reasonable goal of 50 instances per meaning or diachronic unit examined, as set forth by John Sinclair in 1991; for most of these idioms, the entire corpus is not even sufficient to produce 50 instances in total. Here, it appears likely that only the Internet-based, automatically-retrieved corpora of the 21st century will be large enough to begin to satisfy that criterion. But for a general analysis of English, that merely begs the question of genre, as well, since Internet writing is not equivalent to all writing — not to mention the additional mode of spoken English.

¹⁴ The Internet as a source is beyond the scope of the present paper, but it would appear as if its untrammled nature, as opposed to the relative dignity of *Time*, may mean that numerous ways of attacking and belittling opponents are making a strong comeback via the Internet.

On a more positive note, the *Time* corpus appears to contain a plethora of examples for studies of how idioms may be varied, particularly through context-based (text-anchored) variation of one of their slots, as in the spectacular variation the *Time* corpus exhibits as regards constructions such as *a one-X town*. Since the great danger with idioms is their overuse as given clichés, it is indeed nice to know that being *happy as a clam at high tide* is not *the only game in Time's town*.

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Iconicity in Metaphors

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Abstract. This paper is part of a broader study dealing with metaphors. This part aims to show how the iconic principle helps in understanding indirect meaning introduced by conceptual metaphors. It will be an attempt to prove that at a conceptual level metaphors make use of ‘the reversed iconic principle’.

The discussion will begin by focusing on the idea of an icon in relation to language. It will then move on to the principle of iconicity and its components: iconic sequencing, iconic proximity, iconic quantity and how they are realized in metaphors. The presentation will be complemented with such notions as ‘structural complexity’ and ‘processing complexity’ as elements crucial for approaching the iconic principle.

Keywords: metaphor, iconic principle, dynamic conceptualization, structural complexity, processing complexity, epistemic correspondences, ontological correspondences.

1 Introduction

In my discussion of the relationship between iconicity and metaphors, I shall concentrate on two major fields: one connected with iconicity as presented by Ungerer & Schmid (1996), Dirven & Verspoor (2004), Langacker (2005), Tabakowska (2005), and another connected with metaphors as discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Croft and Cruise (2005). I assume that iconicity is present in conceptual metaphors and will focus on the fact that metaphors modify it. I have also made the assumption that iconicity may serve as one of mechanisms underlying the process of metaphor creation.

2 Icon and iconicity

The discussion of the above relationship should begin with the definition of an icon. Generally, an icon is based on similarity, which means that under-

standing icons requires recognition of this similarity (Ungerer & Schmid (1996) or Dirven & Verspoor (2004)). From a linguistic point of view an icon is based on similarity between form and meaning and as Wierzbicka (quoted in Tabakowska 2005: 60) points out, in English the idea of similarity is expressed by the words “like, how or as”. And, as Tabakowska (2005: 60) adds:

While absolute identity remains a hypothetical construct, only some properties of objects that are compared are perceived as overlapping: similarity is defined as ‘identity in respect of a number of features’.

Another idea that must be mentioned at this point is found in Peirce who, according to Ungerer & Schmid (1996:251), extends the notion of ‘icon’ to cover similarities between the structure of language and the structure of the world. It follows therefore that it is the perception of the relationship between certain images or formal units that serves as grounds for understanding an icon.

However, Peirce (quoted in Tabakowska 2005: 61) introduced “hypo-icons”, sometimes called “iconic representamens”, among which he included metaphor. His definition that links the ideas in question involves comprehending signs (being either grammatical constructions or texts and discourses) that are composed of simple elements “which collectively gain and share iconic qualities” (Tabakowska 2005: 62). Thus, Peirce and Tabakowska suggest that metaphor, on the whole, seems to evoke and create a consistent image that in its final form is recognized as an icon.

Nevertheless, both my focus and my major concern relate to the possibility of iconicity being a motivational element that partially influences the process of metaphor creation. Therefore, I suggest that metaphors apply iconicity and the iconic relations revealed in them are of the character mentioned in the iconic principle.

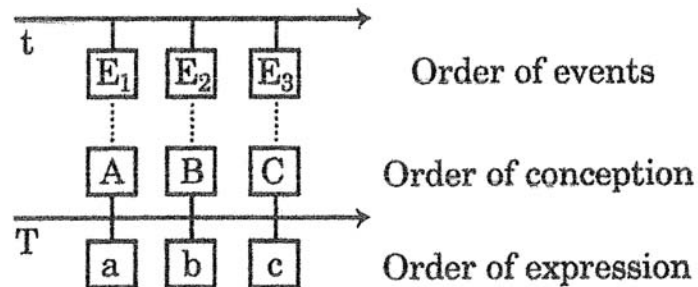
Ungerer & Schmid (1996: 251) present the iconic principle by enumerating three constituent components, viz. **iconic sequencing**, **iconic proximity** and **iconic quantity**. In their opinion, in the iconic sequencing the order of linguistic elements corresponds to the natural sequence of events (e.g. *first she got into the car and then she drove away*, where the arrangement of the linguistic elements reflects the precise order in which these events happened). Another component of the iconic principle — iconic proximity — focuses on the fact that the closer the relationship between elements, the closer they are placed together (e.g. *a tasty French butter biscuit*, where the adjectives that are more inherent to the concept in question are physically closer to the form expressing this concept). The iconic quantity makes prominent the fact that the form should be relevant to the amount of information provided (e.g. one can call somebody *an idiot* or *this stupid brainless creature*; thus, the longer the form, the more information is present).

Nevertheless, Ungerer & Schmid (1996: 253) note that “words together with grammatical structures are compared to categories and cognitive models of the real world”. As a result, they suggest a modified version of the iconic principle, where iconic sequencing is based on similarity between the sequence of linguistic expressions and the sequence of respective event categories. Furthermore, iconic proximity functions on the basis of the mental distance of associated mental categories. Additionally, iconic quantity stresses the fact that the length of a linguistic expression corresponds to the complexity of the cognitive model evoked.

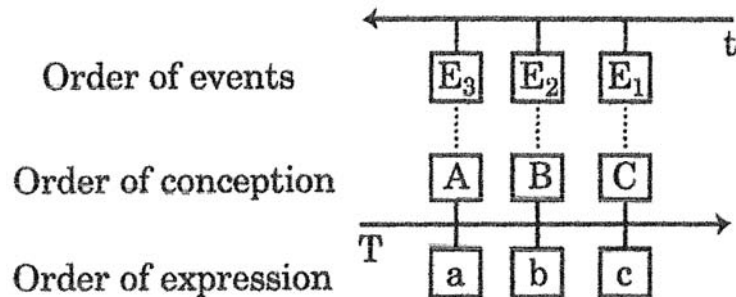
On the other hand, Dirven & Verspoor (2004) use the terms ‘sequential order’, ‘distance’ and ‘quantity’ with respect to components of the iconic principle. For them, the sequential order stresses the linear order of elements in a linguistic construction (e.g. *first she got into the car and then she drove away*, where not only is the focus on the order of elements within one clause, but the linear order of clauses is also determined by the sequential order). It is conceptual dependence that is the decisive factor in the proximity of particular elements in a linguistic construction. This means that the more common the concepts of particular elements, the shorter the distance between them in a linguistic construction. And, as Dirven & Verspoor (2004) claim, this is especially visible with nouns that take either singular or plural verbs, depending on how close they are conceptually. Their last element — quantity — is similar to Ungerer & Schmid’s (1996) idea and links form with the meaning expressed; namely, that more form is expressive of more meaning and less form should express less meaning (e.g. *they live in a biiiiiiiiiiiiig house*, which expresses the iconic idea of an extremely big house).

Moreover, Langacker (2005) relates iconicity with the idea of dynamicity. He points out that dynamicity, or rather **dynamic conceptualization**, influences the way we reach certain concepts/ideas, since these concepts are not independent and must be analyzed in a given order. This has the effect that these concepts are reached conceptually/mentally in a given order and that we assume they happened exactly in this order. He suggests the following diagram (2005: 94):

a.



b.



The symbols “a”, “b”, “c” are words/expressions that form a certain construction and they are the phonological element. “A”, “B”, “C” stand for meanings of each of these components, respectively, and are commonly the conceptualizations evoked by phonological representation, while “ E_1 ”, “ E_2 ”, “ E_3 ” represent factual events marked by the phonological elements.

The picture above shows that when the order of elements in the construction is compatible with the order of conceptual elements, we can process information successfully and with a minimum of effort. Naturally, the order of conceptual elements should be compatible with the actual order of events (as shown in a). However, Langacker (2005) also points out that because of certain pragmatic rules, the order can be reversed and still be understood, although the strategy will be more difficult and more complicated (e.g. in obituaries, as shown in b). He calls this phenomenon “counter-iconicity” (2005: 96), which requires the process of “reconceptualization” (2005: 96), i.e. the receiver must reconstruct the path of events.

Croft & Cruse (2005: 175) point out that in approaching the iconic principle one follows two paths: **structural complexity**, understood in terms of the number of elementary components and their interconnections, and **processing complexity**, understood in terms of the cognitive effort involved.

3 Figurative language

According to Croft & Cruse, figurative language has its precise place and function:

Figurative use [of language] may simply be more attention-grabbing, or it might conjure up a complex image not attainable any other way, or it may permit the conveyance of new concepts. (2005: 193)

Furthermore, they also highlight the fact that it is almost impossible to talk about figurative language without considering the positions of a hearer and a speaker. They claim that the speaker's motivation in using figurative language stems from the feeling "that no literal use will produce the same effect" (2005: 193), while the hearer perceives that "no equally accessible and relevant construal is possible" (2005: 193). Consequently, it is more the function of a figurative expression rather than the expression itself that plays the crucial role.

In addition, Croft & Cruse (2005: 194) also note that metaphor (as an instance of figurative language) "is the result of a special process for arriving at or construing a meaning". Therefore, they no longer treat metaphor as a stable phenomenon with a certain degree of conventionalization (depending on what kind of metaphor it is) but they regard it as an active, dynamic process of meaning formation.

Nevertheless, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) provide evidence that conceptual metaphors are a matter of conceptual mapping between two semantic domains (which are called a source and a target domain, respectively) rather than just a linguistic phenomenon. Their definition of metaphor states that "a metaphor is understanding one concept in terms of another" (1980: 5). In their opinion, such metaphorical mapping and reasoning organizes our conceptual thinking about the target domain and is also present in everyday language and thought.

However, Croft & Cruse (2005: 196) reveal two kinds of correspondences in conceptual mappings: **epistemic correspondences** and **ontological correspondences**. The epistemic correspondences focus on the relationships between elements in the source domain and the relations between the elements in the target domain, while the ontological correspondences exist between elements of one domain and those of the other. Needless to say, the question which should be posed at this point concerns the epistemic correspondences and how they are different or similar to metonymy. But, as it is my opinion that this problem requires separate considerations and a separate paper, I shall not elaborate on this idea here.

4 A case study

Attention should lastly be focused on the relationship between iconicity and metaphors, or rather on those components of the principle of iconicity that work in metaphors. These dependencies and relationships will be discussed with application to the metaphor *the night has a thousand eyes*.

The first component refers to the iconic sequencing / sequential order, where the sequence of linguistic units evokes the sequence of the respective cognitive categories (Ungerer & Schmid 1996). Two questions come to mind immediately: What is the sequence? What are these categories? In order to find answers to these questions, the following analysis should be carried out:

the night has a thousand eyes

Sequence: S → NP VP (the sequence of elements in English
syntax for declarative sentences)
NP → art. N : *the night*
VP → V NP
V : *has*
NP → art. Adj N : *a thousand eyes*

As we can see, the sequence of linguistic units follows the rules of English syntax for declarative sentences. Furthermore, the order of linguistic elements governs the order of cognitive categories that are activated in the mind. In this case, the order will be:

- 1) the category of *the night*
- 2) the category of the verb 'to have': *has*
- 3) a complex category of *a thousand eyes*

Therefore, as the above analysis shows, the answers to the questions about the sequence and categories seem to be straightforward and do not pose any difficulties (especially in terms of either structural complexity or processing complexity). Moreover, the iconic sequencing / sequential order does not reveal much about metaphor and that is the reason why it is of minor significance for the process of metaphorization.

The next element to be taken into account is iconic proximity, which is understood to be the mental distance of associated objects (Ungerer & Schmid 1996). To put it another way, the problem concerns the distance of concepts that go into creating a metaphor.

The concepts are as follows:

- *the night*: an abstract noun that refers to the time after sunset and before sunrise; the period when the stars and the moon are visible

- *has*: ‘to have’; a verb expressing possession
- *a thousand*: a number of sth; a large quantity
- *eyes*: organs which enable the body to see

The mental distance between the particular concepts is:

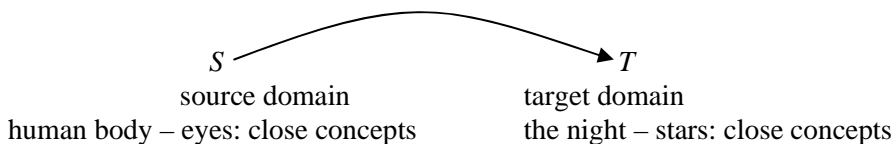
- *the night* and *has*: distant (since possession is not a concept typical of abstract nouns)
- *has* and *eyes*: quite close (since eyes are an inherent part of the body)
- *a thousand* and *eyes*: distant (since eyes are usually in twos)
- *the night* and *eyes*: distant (since the night is not a living organism and therefore it cannot have eyes)

As a result, one can see that metaphorization takes place where the concepts are mentally distant and, as a consequence, it is justifiable to claim that metaphors violate the iconic principle in regard to the iconic proximity. Moreover, it seems that metaphors, actually, make use of the reversed iconic principle, which can be formulated as:

‘In a metaphor, elements that are conceptually distant are placed together.’

Bearing this in mind when referring to iconic proximity, we can say that metaphors modify (or even, as some claim, may reject) the iconic principle.

However, I think that this iconic proximity is present at the level of epistemic correspondences in mapping where



Epistemic correspondences are revealed in the link that suggests ‘stars are to the night what eyes are to a human body’. Considering the epistemic level of metaphorical mapping between domains at which the iconic proximity is present, the claim that the iconic principle is rejected in metaphors seems to be no longer valid.

Finally, the iconic quantity / quantity (where the length of the linguistic expression corresponds to the complexity of the model evoked (Ungerer & Schmid 1996)) also finds its application in metaphors. As has been suggested by the definition of this component, a short expression should evoke a relatively simple cognitive model (e.g. *a glass is on the table*), whereas a longer expression should evoke a relatively complex model (e.g. *the bottom of the glass touches the surface of the table*).

However, it is my contention that in metaphors other combinations are possible. One is that a simple expression may evoke a relatively complex cognitive model (e.g. *an egghead*). Equally, it permits a situation where a long passage may evoke a relatively simple cognitive model (e.g. a long literary description of a simple object like an apple or a book). Thus, metaphors reformulate the component of iconic quantity, allowing for two other possibilities not present in its basic version.

5 Conclusions

All things considered, there is a relationship between metaphors and iconicity, although this relationship may not be easily seen at the general/basic level. Furthermore, the components of the iconic principle do not have equal influence in metaphors (especially in the case of iconic proximity and iconic quantity). On the whole, iconic proximity is present at the level of epistemic correspondences in metaphors and this requires that the iconic principle be reformulated. As regards the iconic quantity, metaphors complement it and introduce an additional aspect, which also provokes the need for yet another reformulation of the iconic principle.

As has been discussed above, this paper is simply an attempt to find certain regularities linking metaphors and iconicity. The conclusion, however, should not be that iconicity is omnipresent in metaphors, but rather that it provides a useful means for the creation and analysis (possibly even some tendencies) of indirect meaning.

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Conceptualizing the World

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Abstract. In this paper, I will discuss a number of metaphorical changes in scientific discourse, by comparing Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* and its translations into Estonian and Finnish. By collecting small differences in the texts under a larger metaphorical construction of thought, it seems to me reasonable to consider this construction to represent different possibilities of conceptualizing the world. When there are alternatives to choose from, the languages considered tend to prefer — at least in the texts under study — different metaphors for describing the same phenomena. However, the question of whether, and to what extent, those metaphors are characteristics of the specific language, of the specific discipline, or just of the personal language usage of a scientist or translators remains open.

Keywords: metaphor, scientific discourse, translation, world, cosmology.

1 Introduction

The purpose of Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* is — to put it very simply — to make the reader acquainted with the universe and its history from a scientific viewpoint. Maybe it would be more correct to use the word *universe* in the title of the paper, but it seems to me that *world* in a broader sense is also a suitable way to mark everything that surrounds mankind, and which man is constantly expanding — via metaphor — according to his shifting horizon of knowledge. The world and the world view as a source domain will be projected onto the universe as a target domain.

Naturally, the basis of all this remains the claim of Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 158) that we define our reality by using metaphors and that we behave according to them in all aspects of life, not just in politics or in love.

Also, metaphors become particularly relevant in attempting to conceptualize the abstract and the strange. Above all, these qualities characterise the subjects investigated by scientists. Thus, metaphors are the tools (or at least one of them) of hypothetical thinking by scientists, no matter how much they

themselves try to argue against this claim¹. The aims of using metaphors in science are seen traditionally as 1) the need to cover linguistic gaps where the necessary terminology is absent, and 2) the possibility of handling phenomena to which direct access is absent, to give **epistemic access** to phenomena which otherwise cannot be grasped by the human senses (Kuhn 1998, Boyd 1998). Undoubtedly, we may regard the universe as a phenomenon of a type that we cannot touch, nor test very much of it directly.

For metaphors in science it is characteristic that, by handling them as a valid analytical framework, as for example the use of the term *play* in economic theory (Sznajder 2005) or the use of the conceptual framework of 'mechanics' to describe the functions of the human body, scientists tend to forget that a metaphor is not a direct and straightforward reference to the phenomenon under consideration, and that highlighting one aspect always comes at the expense of ignoring other aspects. Scientists growing up with certain paradigms do not perceive them as metaphors at all, but tend to take them as absolute truths. Here I can find a justification, too, for those linguists who break in on scientific discourse. Definitely, the expressions there are hard to analyze if you do not have enough specialised scientific knowledge. But, on the other hand, the view from the outside makes it easier to notice the presence of metaphors. From the viewpoint of another discipline, metaphors do not appear to be self-explanatory. Even more, this self-explanatory nature is called very much into doubt in this kind of comparative examination, where you can see that, even in science, which regards itself as something very exact and objective, it is also possible to talk about the same phenomena in very different ways.

According to the well-known definition of Max Black (Black 1962: 37), the metaphor selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the principal subject in such a way that things can be understood. Metaphors do not give us an absolute truth, but they do partially give us understanding. If we are using different metaphors when talking about the same **principal subject**, then via these metaphors we will organize and emphasize the features of this subject in different ways, and we will understand it differently. Of course, the epistemic access I mentioned earlier, achieved by these means, will be — at least slightly — different.

The term 'different' should not be taken here as critical of translations or of translators. And I will not claim that in this or that language it is not possible to express something somehow, or that there are strict models for doing so. Rather, my aim is to demonstrate that at least in the texts looked at here we can find some different preferences in the use of metaphors.

The peculiarity of the following material is that, since these bigger models or metaphors of thought are possible in every observed language, I will

¹ Scientists do not totally deny their use of metaphors, but they see them more as a device to illustrate and to attract attention to their speech (in the Aristotelian sense).

talk about what kind of metaphorical model a certain language prefers in concrete texts, rather than how it metaphorizes the world/universe as an object of understanding in general. However, my comparison is not quantitative in the sense of statistics, and it is not corpus-based. The term “preference” will be used to refer to the markedly higher frequency of some metaphors in certain texts.

2 Examples of changed metaphors in translations

Because of the limited material, I will present in this section only a few examples that I believe are representative and typical. I have divided my material into three major subgroups, in the hopes that this will make it easier to follow my train of thought. In the first group, you will find examples in which the English *to produce* is translated into Finnish as *syntyä* ‘to be born’, while the examples of the second group demonstrate cases where *to increase* is changed to the concept *kasvaa* ‘to grow’ and in the third group you can see examples that in some other way support my claim about different models of conceptualizing the world.

Translations of the phrases which differ from the English text are given in brackets. The words and phrases in focus are printed in italics. At the end of the example, I document the sources of the observed phrases (the list of abbreviations is at the end of the paper).

2.1 *To produce vs to be born*

The most salient change we can find is in the description of situations where something is *coming into being* or *is caused to be* (i.e. originates from something). In English, the concept *to produce* is (almost) always used; in Estonian, this whole metaphoricity tends to be replaced by neutral, non-metaphorical expressions, which can be re-translated into English precisely as *coming into being*. And in Finnish, we notice a preference for using the framework of the concept *syntyä* ‘to be born’ and *synnyttää* ‘to give birth’.

Of course, in English and in Finnish we can name both of these as fixed translations: even in dictionaries they are given as one equivalent to the term *come into being*. However, the Finnish translator also uses the concept *syntyä* ‘to be born’ to translate other kinds of expression besides *to produce*. The causal link between two objects seems to be important in these cases.

The preferences found do not mean that another way is not possible in the languages in question. Moreover, in the texts studied here, for example, the stars with their whole life cycles are sometimes “born” in every language, and sometimes they are just “produced” in all these linguistic universes.

- (1) [...] annihilation would become faster than *production*. – [...] annihileerumine muutub kiiremaks kui osakeste *teke*. [‘coming into being’] – [...] hiukkasia tuhoutuu enamman kuin uusia ehtii *syntyä* [‘to be born’]. (H129/E639/F117)
- (2) [...] their debris *went to form* other stars. – [...] nende jäänused *läksid* teiste tähtede ja planeetide *moodustamiseks*. – [...] joiden jäänteistä *syntyi* uusia tähtiä [...] [‘were born new stars’] (H137/ E645/F125)
- (3) It is difficult to see how such chaotic initial conditions *could have given rise* to a universe that is so smooth and regular [...] – [...] kuidas nii kaootilised algtingimused *said tekitada* [‘could have given a cause to be’] universumi, [...] – [...] miten kaosmaisesta alkutilasta *on voinut syntyä* [‘could have been born’] maailmankaikkeus, [...] (H136/E644/ F124)
- (4) [...] there are relatively few ranges of values for the numbers that would allow *the development of any form of intelligent life*. – [...] mis lubavad *ükskõik milliste mõistuslike eluvormide teket* [‘coming into being’]. – [...] ettei luonnonvakioissa ole älyllisen elämän *synnyn* [‘the birth’] kannalta paljonkaan pelivaraa. (H139/E646/F126)
- (5) [...] *they developed* in the oceans – [...] *nad tekkisid* ookeanides [‘they came into being’] – *Elämä syntyi* luultavasti valtameressä [‘life was born’], [...] (H133/E642/F121)
- (6) [...] an early generation of stars first *had to form*. – [...] pidi kõigepealt *moodustuma* varajane tähtede põlvkond. – [...] tähtien ensimmäinen sukupolvi *syntyi* [‘was born’]. (H137/E645/F125)
- (7) [...] the density fluctuations in such a model to *have led to the formation* of many more primordial black holes. – [...] sellises mudelis *oleksid põhjustanud* palju rohkemate ürgsete mustade aukude *moodustamist* [‘have caused the formation’]. – [...] tiheydenvaihtelut *olisivät synnyttäneet* [‘would have given birth’] mustia aukkoja enamman kuin [...] (H136/E645/F124)
- (8) Some of the heavier elements *produced near the end of the star’s life* [...] – *Mõned tähe elutsükli lõpupoole tekkinud* [‘caused’, ‘made’] raskemad elemendid [...] – *Osa tähdessä syntyneistä* [‘born in the star’] raskaista alkuaineista [...] (H132/ E642/F120)

2.2 To increase vs to grow

The second group of examples deals with cases where something is changing in size, i.e. it is increasing or decreasing. In the original text, and mostly also in Estonian translations, these phrases cannot even be seen as metaphorical. Their metaphorical equivalents in Finnish, where the same things are growing, are in accordance with the preference demonstrated in the first group, the examples of *to be born*. The framework of *kasvaa* ‘to grow’ is in the Finnish translation preferred to such a great extent that the decreasing phe-

nomena of the original text are translated into Finnish through a reversed situation, with the help of the growing of an opposite phenomenon (see example 12). In some cases, the same tendency to translate *to increase* as *kasvama* ‘to grow’ can also be found in the Estonian translation (examples 13–14). However, this tendency is not as obvious and I would not name this as a preference here.

- (9) The bubbles were supposed *to expand and meet up with each other* until the whole universe was in the new phase. – Mullid paisuvad [‘are swelling’] ja saavad üksteisega kokku, [...] – Nämä kuplat olisivat sitten kasvaneet toisiinsa kiinni [‘have been grown up close to each other’] [...] (H144/E650/F131)
- (10) [...] that this *increase in disorder* is always greater than the *increase in the order* of the memory itself. – [...] korrapäratuse suurenemine on alati suurem kui mälu enda korrastatuse suurenemine. – [...] epäjärjestyksen kasvu [‘the growth of disorder’] on aina suurempi kuin muistissa tapahtuneen järjestyksen kasvu [‘the growth of order’]. (H164/E664/F147)
- (11) [...] that in which *disorder increases*. – [...] milles korrapäratatus suureneb. – [...] kuin epäjärjestyttä kasvattavan ajan [‘[the direction of] time which makes disorder grow’] suunta. (H164/E664/F147)
- (12) [...] in which *disorder decreased* with time – [...] milles korrapäratatus aja jooksul kahaneks. – [...] jossa järjestys kasvaa [‘order is growing’] ajan myötä. (H163/E663/F146)
- (13) *Disorder increases with time* because we measure time in the direction in which *disorder increases*. – Korrapäratatus kasvab ajas [‘disorder grows in time’], sest me mõõdame aega suunas, milles korrapäratatus kasvab [‘disorder grows’]. – [...] epäjärjestys kasvaa ajan kasvaessa [‘disorder grows by growing of time’], koskaa mittaamme aikaa epäjärjestyksen kasvun suuntaan [‘in the direction that disorder grows’]. (H164/E664/F147)
- (14) No boundary condition causes *disorder to increase* [...] – [...] rajade puudumine see, mis viib korrapäratuse kasvule [‘is leading to the growth of disorder’]. – [...] reünattomuusehto saa maailmakaikkeuden epäjärjestyksen kasvamaan [‘will cause the disorder of the universe to grow’]. (H169/E668/F152)

2.3 Mechanical vs organic

Example 15 probably best illustrates what I mean by the title of this subsection. Again, when describing the end or not-end of the existence of something, in English and in Estonian texts non-metaphorical, technical terms are used for this purpose. And in Finnish this is expressed via the metaphor of a living organism.

- (15) The neutrinos and antineutrinos, however, would *not have annihilated with each other*, [...] – Neutriinod ja antineutriinod aga *üksteist ei an-nihileerinud* [...] – Sen sijaan neutriinot ja antineutriinot *jäivät eloon* [‘stayed alive’] [...] (H129/E639/F117)

Example (16) is not typical in the sense of the continuous repetition throughout the text. But because here you can see very clearly and directly that the Finnish translator abandons the whole concept of *mechanism*, I thought it necessary to demonstrate this change, too.

- (16) Thus there has to be *some mechanism* that would eliminate the very large effective cosmological constant and so change the rate of an expansion from an accelerated one to one that is slowed down by gravity, [...] – [...] peab olema olema *mingi mehhanism*, [...] – Tarvitaan siis *jokin syy* [‘a kind of cause/reason’] miksi [...] (H144/E650/F130)

Example (17) involves the disappearance of another metaphorical expression typical in general English scientific usage — in Estonian and in Finnish, light or particles, or whatever else, do not escape from the sphere of influence of forces; rather they will continue to stand up to, or even resist, these forces. I suppose that, underlying this, there is the interpretation of the influence of forces in English as a kind of mechanism, namely a trap.

- (17) [...] *to escape* the attraction of the strong nuclear force. – [...] et *seista vastu* tugeva vastastikmõju külgetõmbele [‘to stand against the attraction of the strong interactional effect’] – [...] *vastustamaan* vahvaa ydinvoimaa [‘to resist the strong nuclear force’] (H130/E640/F118)

Finally –

- (18) The laws of *science* will hold at them [...] – *Loodusseadused* [‘the laws of nature’] kehtivad ka seal [...] – *Luonnonlait* [‘the laws of nature’] pitäisivät paikkansa edelleen [...] (H154/E657/F139)

Do the laws according to which the universe is developing belong to nature or to science? Are they naturally there or are they seen as applied from outside, as constructs of the scientific viewpoint?

If the author or the translator consistently chooses one particular variant from all possible variants, then something is shifting in the whole text — and, besides the question of how exactly the text changes, it would be only natural also to ask the question of what this change means. In the next section, I will give one possible explanation of these demonstrated differences on the textual level, via changes on the metaphorical level of thought.

3 Schemas

I assume that underlying all these changes demonstrated in the previous section — *to produce vs to be born, to increase vs to grow, mechanical vs organic* — we can find different models to look at objects in the universe, different ways of conceptualizing the world.

To illustrate this, I have used the well-known schemas of Fauconnier's blending theory (Fauconnier & Turner 1988), in a very simplified manner. Usually schemas of the blending theory are used to analyze concrete single expressions or linguistic metaphors rather than the conceptual metaphors behind a collection of expressions. Without analyzing each expression separately, my view is that it is possible to use schemes based on Fauconnier to generalize the differences which I have found in my comparisons (actually, the idea originates with Viimaranta 2006).

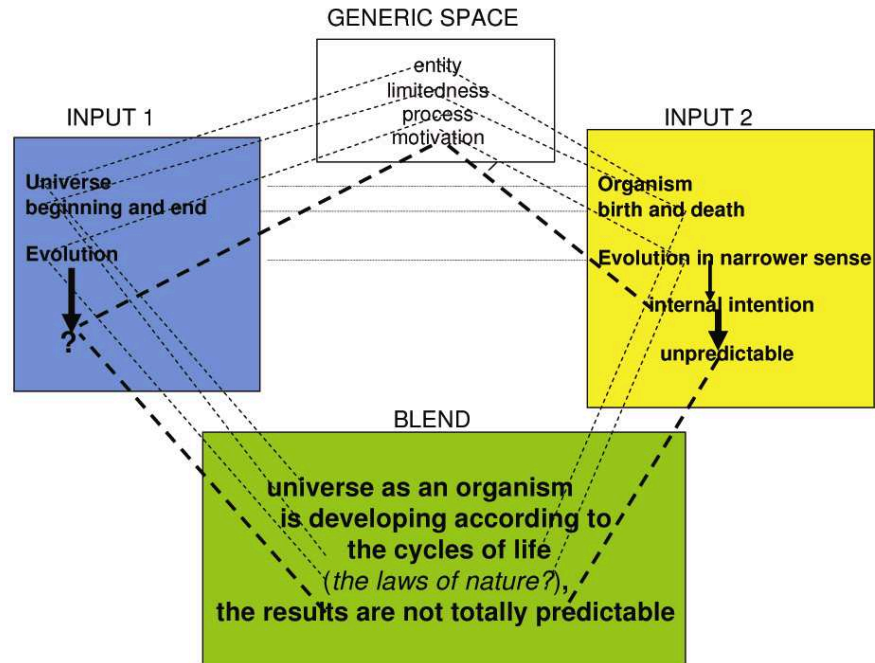
3.1 The universe as mechanism vs the universe as organism

In observing how the texts in question describe phenomena in the universe, we may say that, linguistically, the universe (or the world) is conceptualized primarily in two ways. Although we may argue about how to name them, I have chosen to refer to them as UNIVERSE AS MECHANISM and UNIVERSE AS ORGANISM. To some extent all three languages looked at here use both of these concepts; in any case, we cannot say that this or that kind of expression is not possible in a particular language. But here the above-mentioned preference will be essential. The proportion of each model in the translations is totally different. It is evident that, in the source text, the presentation of the model based on UNIVERSE AS MECHANISM prevails — primarily by preferring the term *to produce* to describe something arising or causing something to be. In Finnish, the same aspect is observed from the viewpoint of a living being, through the concepts *syntyä* 'to be born' or *synnyttää* 'to give birth'. And in Estonian, most of the metaphorical expressions used tend to disappear, to be replaced with neutral, non-metaphorical vocabulary like *tekkima* 'to give a cause to be', where it is not possible to draw up a blending scheme (the second domain is absent).

The main difference between these two models involves the principal differentiation of domains through the existence/absence of the consciousness or will — in other words, of intention. In the schemas, instead of intention you can see in the input-domain of the universe only a question mark — because this is what we actually do not know, that which we are making presuppositions about via the metaphor of a mechanism or else via the metaphor of an organism.

In the following I will summarize in the comments on the figures some deductions that seem important to me, by applying a corresponding metaphor.

Figure 1. Universe as organism – EXISTENCE AS LIFE

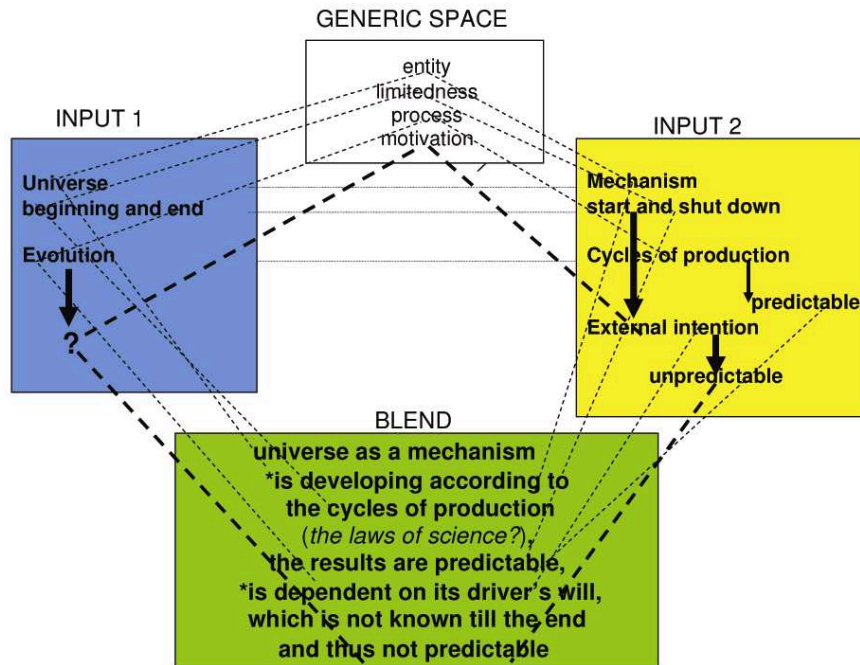


An organism is a living being which, by obeying the laws of natural forces and environmental influence, is able, at least to some extent, to direct his/her activity consciously, and thus his/her behaviour is not predictable with total accuracy. The concept of being born is paired with death, the ultimate finite event, i.e. the life cycle is not reversible, the cycle of the same living being cannot be repeated. And, of course, living beings are always emotional beings, and it is only natural that they become tired or ill sometimes.

The conceptualization of entities as living beings is well-known; it is perhaps best described by the conceptual metaphor EXISTENCE IS LIFE.

For a mechanism, it is characteristic that its activity does not need the premise of its consciousness or will; the mechanism only obeys the laws (of mechanics) automatically and we can predict the result or at least calculate it if we know all the data. But, implicitly, both the existence of a mechanism, and the principles and purposes of its work, are caused by a consciousness outside itself. Provisionally, we can call this the Starter/Driver or Creator, who is the source of unpredictability and intention. The cycles of production are repeatable and, hence, not finite. Shutdown and re-start are dependent on the Starter's will. In addition, the mechanism does not have feelings, nor does it experience exhaustion or illness.

Figure 2. Universe as mechanism – PROBLEM AS CONSTRUCTED OBJECT



From conceptual metaphors, it seems to be more suitable to highlight here the metaphor A PROBLEM IS A CONSTRUCTED OBJECT.²

This kind of difference, transferred onto the universe by its nature, is definitely a theological problem. I will not handle God as a specific domain in my schemas; this concept is too unlimited and requires much more competence than I have. Let us be satisfied at the moment with the condition that His presence or absence in the universe may be just one of the prerequisites and also one of the implicit inferences of using this schema to explain the world.

The image of the world as mechanical clockwork has been in existence since at least the 17th century. It is important and ironic in my opinion that this image is also repeated in the deeper level of language, even when trying to call this kind of view of the universe into doubt. Actually, in some sense Stephen Hawking's entire book is like a mild and rational protest against God as a Starter of the universe (e.g. Hawking 1988: 10); Hawking is convinced that the universe is also self-sufficient and perfect without Him — yet for his statements he prefers to use a language where the need for a Starter implicitly exists.

² In my opinion, this seems to be characteristic of a scientific world-view rather than a specific language such as English.

But we cannot say that the other, more ‘living’, schema of the universe (preferred in the Finnish translation) is more correct, even if it is more pleasing. The non-metaphorical description of the universe created by the Estonian translator is also not wrong. They are both just different ways of seeing the world, of conceptualizing and understanding it.

4 Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to give a short overview of how the way in which the universe is conveyed in language is changed by translation. I suppose that beyond these changes we can find a change in the metaphorical model of thought, too. The described models UNIVERSE AS MECHANISM and UNIVERSE AS ORGANISM seem to be of different importance, especially in the English source text and in the Finnish translation of it. In the Estonian translation, most of the metaphorical expressions following the mechanical model of the original text are replaced with non-metaphorical vocabulary.

I believe that my assumption that different languages may prefer different metaphors in their descriptions of the same phenomena or, more specifically, in their conceptualizing of the world, has been supported, at least to some extent. However, the question of whether and to what exact extent those metaphors are characteristic of a specific language or just of the personal language usage of a scientist or translator remains open.

My material may give rise to many alternative interpretations and questions. The most intriguing question for me, as an Estonian, is where the metaphors disappear to in the Estonian language. One possible solution would be to explain the Estonian non-metaphoricity with the help of the universalism hypothesis in translation studies (Tirkkonen-Condit 2002). According to the claims of universalism, there are two tendencies notable in translated language: the standardization of the target language and the interference of the source language. In other words, the universals of the source language, to which we can find direct equivalents in the target language, will be over-represented (the effect of interference); and other traits which are otherwise characteristic of the target language will remain under-represented.

At first glance, this view seems opposite to my material. But if I stand by the claim that there must be some preferred metaphors in certain languages for understanding certain phenomena, perhaps in some way the universalism hypothesis makes a point here as a reason for the disappearance of the English metaphoricity in Estonian. The metaphors of the source language disappear just because they do not, I suppose, fit in with natural usage in Estonian. And the Estonian language’s own metaphors (or characteristic and preferred ways of using language) will be under-represented, because they are in contradiction to the metaphorical construction of the source text. So the transla-

tor will use neutral language which is not in direct conflict with metaphors in the source text nor with metaphors in the target language.

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Abbreviations

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E – Estonian translation (Hawking 1992, Hawking 1993a–d)
F – Finnish translation (Hawking 1989)

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'The Death of the Moth': Recurrent Metaphors for Life and Death in Virginia Woolf's Writing

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Abstract. Making use of Claes Entzenberg's view of metaphor, not as substitution but as an expression of interpretive activity, this paper discusses Virginia Woolf's practice of engaging the reader in the process of meaning-making through an idiosyncratic and extended use of conventional symbolism. The focus is on recurrent images for mortality, death, and on the contexts, both historical and linguistic, in which they occur, since the contextual influences the reader's interpretive strategies. Particular attention is given to the image of the moth that often appears in Woolf's writing and which is the topic of a posthumous essay. The moth is not only used conventionally as an image of the self, but along with the butterfly is often a means for Woolf to pit the life force against violent and predatory forms of death. Finally the paper demonstrates how, paradoxically, the act of interpreting this symbol of mortality engenders a process of defamiliarization that leads the reader back to a literal understanding of death itself.

Keywords: symbolism, metaphor, interpretive activity, context, mortality, moth.

It might seem surprising that a writer so well known for innovation as Virginia Woolf also makes extensive use of conventional symbols and metaphors. One obvious example would be water as a metaphor for the mind — particularly its unconscious levels, the stream as the journey of life and waves breaking as a sign of the passing of time and/or eternity. Nonetheless, in a letter to Roger Fry in 1927 Virginia Woolf remarked, rather cryptically: "I can't manage Symbolism except in this vague, generalized way" (Nicolson 1977: 385). This might seem a strange remark in a writer so famous for her figurative writing. But reading on, it becomes apparent that Woolf distrusts the use of symbolism if its effect is to fix meaning. Be that as it may, her writing is also characterized by repetition and the recurrence of a number of signifiers that resonate metaphorically, and similarly, throughout her work

(the house, the window, the beak of a bird or the bridge over the Thames, to name but a few). It would, however, be very unwise to reduce these recurrences to a rigid set of meanings. For indeed, as Woolf herself wrote: “The writer’s task is to take one thing and make it stand for twenty” (1994: 404).¹

This remark would suggest that Woolf, at one level, espoused a fairly conventional notion of metaphor as substitution. However, in stressing the polysemic potential of images, she also conveys an idea of metaphor as more than simple Aristotelian decoration. In what follows, I shall therefore be looking at a few images for death and destruction and particularly at a recurrent image, the moth, to consider how these images acquire multiple connotations, or to use Ricoeur’s vocabulary, how they demonstrate “cumulative capability” (1977: 136). As Richter has observed, Woolf’s practice involves “enriching and expanding the symbol (or image) building it up until its full energy potential is reached [...]” (1970: 184). However, I would argue that this full “energy potential” can only be understood through acts of interpretation on the part of the reader such as I shall demonstrate here.

In adopting this position I have been inspired, to some extent, by Claes Entzenberg, who has argued at length for a view of metaphor as an interpretive activity, part of the sense-making process, rather than a quality inherent in the linguistic object. Thus, in his view, “a surface representation, whether a deviant or a non-deviant word, phrase, utterance”, only becomes metaphorical when interpreted as such (1998: xxv). Following on from I.A. Richards in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Entzenberg also points out that “[i]n the actual sense-making activity, we might use dictionary and encyclopedic knowledge, commonplace and/or ad hoc associations, knowledge about [literary] context, the actual [text] as a whole [...] historical backgrounds and traditions, etc., in short, different contextual frames for determining the content of actual lines” (1998: 95). In other words, when studying metaphor we need “an extended model that can work without reference to some metaphorical word meaning, replacing the linguistic content with the actual, social, interactive encounter between some (linguistic) entity and creative intention (author and/or reader)” (Entzenberg 1998: 101–102).²

It is not my intention, nor indeed am I qualified to enter into the debate over the ontological status of metaphor. Nonetheless, Entzenberg’s contextual position is evocative in the context of hermeneutics in general, and Woolf’s writing practice in particular, insofar as she too gives readers an active role in the creation of meaning. In ‘How Should One Read a Book?’ Woolf famously urges the reader to become the author’s “accomplice” and to open up her mind to “signs and hints of almost imperceptible fineness” in the texts before her (1986: 259). As she envisages this process, an interpreta-

¹ Quoted by Richter (1970: 184).

² Entzenberg observes too that what has been described as the “radical indeterminacy” of texts is not a quality inherent in them, but a consequence of various contextual interpretations.

tion that fully realizes the author's intention demands a lot of the reader, who must become aware of the "impalpable" nature of words as well as developing "great fineness of perception" and "great boldness of imagination" (1986: 259–260). Reading is thus represented as a co-operative activity that depends on the reader's ability to recognize, or reclaim, the potential (metaphorical) resonances of words. I will be suggesting here that Woolf's texts enable this process by starting from conventional, or familiar, figures that set up chains of association that lead the reader further and further away from the apparently simple symbolism with which the textual moment started. How far this process will carry is dependent on contextual constraints such as lexical, historical, social and cultural knowledge — and, one might add, on how much research the reader is prepared to invest in the interpretive act.

It would be possible to use any number of Woolf's recurrent images to illustrate this process, but I have chosen to concentrate on images of death and mortality, since they occupy such a central place in her imaginary landscape. As any reader of Virginia Woolf's oeuvre will know, death is ever-present there as topic, theme, motif and image. Insofar as Woolf's novels can be said to have plots, death is often pivotal, providing closure in her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, circumstance in *Jacob's Room*, a goal in *Mrs Dalloway*, a turning point in *To the Lighthouse* and an entry to *The Years*. The texts are also full of signifiers that point to death and mortality, working along a continuum from the literal to figuration, often in close correspondence with images of death's foil, life itself. Before turning to this, however, let me consider an example of how an image can achieve metaphorical significance through interpretation.

Many years ago, I had a disagreement with a very famous senior scholar over Woolf's use of symbols. Never, he said, would so subtle a writer make use of crude and obvious emblems. (We were disagreeing about a moment in Woolf's last novel, *Between the Acts*, when one character stamps on a snake that has a toad stuck in its mouth, which seemed, to me, to be emblematic of the masculine violence that haunts this text.) But the use of the image of the snake and the toad, in this context, far from being simplistic, sets a process of metaphorical signification going. To start with, within the logic of the text there is a tension between the character's perspective and the metaphorical significance which the narrator applies to this moment. Where Giles simply sees a literal snake, a toad and an impossible and disgusting situation which must be dealt with, the narrator represents the fact that the snake can neither spit out nor swallow the toad as a "monstrous inversion" of birth. Moreover, for the narrator, Giles' actions also have psychological resonance; "action relieved him", she remarks. In other words, the act of killing compensates for the frustration we, as readers, know that he feels when confronted by the pastoral indifference of the pageant to the guns amassing on the continent (Woolf 1992a: 61). Killing the snake and the toad is his contribution to world politics.

To grasp the further metaphorical significance of this, the reader is thrown back on contextual knowledge. While the novel is set in a time immediately before the Second World War, it was written when the threat of invasion was at its greatest. Readers would thus be likely to see the image of the snake and the toad as representing how Hitler's Germany was in the process of swallowing, though perhaps not digesting, large quantities of Europe. However, both snakes and toads are, in Western mythology at any rate, conventional symbols for sin and spiritual danger. Had the toad been some more attractive animal — a baby rabbit, for instance — stuck in the snake's throat, we would presumably have seen this as an emblem of a predatory fascism swallowing the innocent; but Woolf's image suggests that there is little to choose between predator and victim. Seen in this light, Giles' action appears particularly futile and this realization is reinforced by another element in the text: "the white canvas on his tennis shoes was bloodstained and sticky" (Woolf 1992a: 61). Once again this is, at one level, merely literal, but the evocation of the conventional symbolism of innocence and guilt, purity and corruption, in conjunction with the association with game points towards further metaphorical possibilities. Giles' militarist solution to the situation may well pave the way for the massacre of innocents — the novel was completed at the height of the bombardment of London. Giles, we have been told, "had no command of metaphor"; he compares the armies massing in Europe to the spikes of a hedgehog which actually represent a defensive rather than offensive move (Woolf 1992a: 34). But this narratorial comment in advance of his encounter with the snake encourages the reader to be alert to the metaphorical potential of the words used.

As we have seen then, the metaphorical resonance attributable to the image of the snake and the toad is dependent on context, on the reader's receptivity to authorial signals and a shared knowledge of the historical moment. Clearly, at the most basic level, the fairly conventional mementos mori that are to be found in Woolf's texts also rely on simple recognition. Nonetheless, as with the previous image, their metaphorical significance is extended and reinforced by the literary context, verbal associations and historical knowledge. For instance, in the first chapter of *Jacob's Room* the protagonist finds a skull on the beach. This discovery distracts the child from his fear — he has lost his nanny — and becomes a goal towards which he runs. As if this indication of Thanatos were not enough, further contextual knowledge potentially reinforces the symbolic implications of the skull. The fact that little Jacob's surname is Flanders would to the post-First World War reader be a clear marker of his future engagement in the trenches, as indeed is his heroic climb to the top of a small rock (1992b: 5). We are thus encouraged to see Jacob not so much as an individual but as a representative figure standing for a doomed generation. A number of other textual features endorse this reading. His biblical name is one, even if the association is displaced — it is the maid and not his mother who is called Rebecca — or even inverted, since

whereas the Bible's Jacob is the progenitor of the tribes of Israel, Jacob Flanders' line, like that of so many others, will stop with him.

Context, however, makes the skull more than a memento mori; it is used to illustrate aspects of Jacob's personality such as his innocent pragmatism and the indifference of youth in the face of mortality. As far as the child is concerned, the skull is simply something he has discovered on the beach, something that he takes to bed with him and kicks in his sleep. There is, in effect, an "interaction" between various potential meanings in the sentences containing the skull.³ Within the novel's fictional world it is literally a remainder of previous animal life; it is a toy, and it is a foreshadowing.

Following these two attempts to illustrate the creation of metaphorical meaning, I now turn to the moth. Since the moth is a recurrent image, this is to widen the contextual range from single texts to Woolf's oeuvre as a whole. As a signifier the word functions, as did the previous examples, along a continuum from the literal to the metaphorical; that is to say, within the fictional environment the word refers to a known phenomenon in the natural world. However, the attentive reader, I would suggest, is encouraged to take part in a process of expansion converting the moth from its familiar connotation into a simple metaphor for death, and then into an image of the relation of human beings in general, and writers in particular, to their knowledge of mortality.

For this interpretive chain to work, it is important to bear in mind that the moth is not simply a symbol for mortality but also can have many various significations. In fact, Lepidoptera (the collective term for both butterflies and moths) occur frequently as symbols in both western and other cultures. They are markers of the life force or sensuality, for instance, while in Scotland both butterflies and moths can be thought to be witches.⁴ More generally, butterflies, in particular, often convey positives, beauty, youth while moths — perhaps because so many of them are dull in colour — have more negative connotations, including ageing and even insanity — because of their suicidal habit of searching for the light and falling into the flame. Butterflies can suggest marriage and both they and moths indicate fragility and change. Woolf, moreover, intended to use the moth as a metaphor for interruption and transition in what was to become her most experimental novel, *The Waves*.⁵ Harvena Richter has, moreover, discussed the moth as a metaphor for creativity in many places in Woolf's oeuvre; and while the connection between the butterfly/moth and the self is certainly relevant here, I in-

³ For an account of interaction theory, see Ricoeur (1977).

⁴ See Ronald A. Gagliardi, "Lepidoptoral Symbology" at http://www.insects.org/ced4/butterfly_symbols.html.

⁵ This started with a literal event, a swarm of moths that invaded Vanessa Bell's summer home, but in the novel all that remains is a simile when the wings of a moth are compared to the shadow thrown by the setting sun that coincides with the ageing of the authorial alter ego, Bernard.

tend to take my starting point in Woolf's use of the image of the moth as a metaphor for the conflict between the forces of life and of death (cf. Richter 1980: 13–28 and Sandbach-Dahlström 1987: 764–765).

There is a literal connection. The child Virginia and her siblings were in the habit of hunting gorgeously coloured moths by night in the summer season — and, as Lee has remarked, the memory haunted her (2000: 31–32). The procedure of hunting nocturnal moths involved putting out a treacle mixture of sugar and rum to attract them and then killing them with chloroform — prior of course to impaling them on a pin and storing them away in the kind of box you can still see in some country museums or stately homes in the UK. The first account of the Stephen children's moth hunt is in an early diary (1899). This is an extended and humorous account of the method of catching the moths seen both from the perspective of the moths themselves, an imagined teetotal preacher and the excited young hunters. Here the excitement of the hunt also merges with the experience of the beauty of the prey, while the young diarist evokes a romantic attachment to an opium induced stupor and figures death conventionally as a tender embrace:

By the faint glow we could see the huge moth — his wings open, as though in ecstasy, so that the splendid crimson of the underwing could be seen — his eyes burning red, his proboscis plunged into a flowing stream of treacle. We gazed one moment on his splendour, & then uncorked the bottle. I think the whole procession felt some unprofessional regret when with a gleam of scarlet eye & scarlet wing, the grand old moth vanished. (Woolf 1990: 145)

Naturally enough, when this moment recurs in future accounts of the moth hunt it is without the romantic adolescent rhetoric of the original. The tone of an essay entitled 'Reading', presumably written in 1919, is far more sinister. Not only is the procedure described again at great length, but the actual death of the moth is foregrounded:

The scarlet underwing was already there, immobile as before [...]. Without waiting a second this time the poison pot was uncovered and adroitly manoeuvred so that as he sat there the moth was covered and escape cut off. There was a flash of scarlet within the glass. Then he composed himself with folded wings. He did not move again.

The glory of the moment was great. (Woolf 1988: 152)

In addition, where the first account represents the hunters as empathizing with the moths, this version stresses the hunters' feeling of pride, their proof "of skill against the hostile and alien force" that is the forest throbbing with hidden life, through which the group has passed in pursuit of the moth. In this context, the death of the splendid specimen apparently figures the triumph of civilization over the wild.

But this is too simple, as the narrator immediately reports that “a volley of shot rang out, a hollow rattle of sound in the deep silence of the wood which had I know not what of mournful and ominous about it [...]. ‘A tree’, we said at last. A tree had fallen” (Woolf 1988: 152). Since the tree is such a central symbol for life, and indeed for eternity, its fall would link the capture of the moth to the destruction of life itself. However, the process does not stop here; the narrator is actually at pains to undermine her own metaphor replacing the image of death with a description of rebirth or emerging order from chaos. With the coming of morning “order has been imposed upon tumult” and, curiously enough, rather than continuing with the figure of doom, the narrator evokes “bone and form”, not as skeletal reminders of death but as images of “endurance and permanence” (Woolf 1988: 153). In fact, the text encourages the reader to link death, rebirth and creativity through a mixture of images taken from the natural cycle and human endeavour.⁶

Whereas the merging of life with reminders of death in this essay is fairly benign, when the moth hunt recurs in *Jacob's Room* the sound accompanying the fall of the tree, “a volley of pistol shots”, is recorded afterwards and may thus refer to a separate and far more threatening event. While there was a glory to the children's hunt that validated the act of capturing and collecting the beautiful object, the linguistic context in *Jacob's Room* consists of surrounding passages packed with ominous signification and reminders of the violent and futile death that is to come. For, as Richter has noted, Jacob himself is to be “collected” like a dead moth or butterfly on the fields of Flanders (1980: 17). There is indeed nothing in the text that suggests that his death will be glorious. The leaves under the fallen tree are dead, and the moth that Jacob himself catches is not the magnificent red underwing, or indeed the less colourful straw bordered underwing but an inferior specimen. This foreshadows another theme in the novel; Jacob's young man's life is described as strangely incomplete and unfinished. Moreover, the reader is also encouraged to read even more into this since we learn that the maid Rebecca (mother of the biblical Jacob) has “caught the death-head moth in the kitchen” (17). Fate has apparently had Jacob marked out from the start. Thus, out hunting for butterflies — symbols of youth and promise — Jacob crosses turf covered with “little bones” and “bloody entrails dropped by a hawk” and is told how young foxes knock one another over “like two boys fighting” (18). Clearly this moment both presages the landscape of the trenches, which would have become so familiar to readers, and evokes the fatal consequences of masculinity.

⁶ This is one of several explorations of what Woolf calls her “shock receiving capacity” that “will become a revelation of some order ... a token of some real thing behind appearances” (*Moments of Being* 85). By this token surfaces are always already metaphorical.

If images both of moths and of butterflies are a way for Woolf to pit the life force against violent and predatory forms of death, moths are also — and once again conventionally — evoked as metaphors for the self, and thus a way of identifying the essence of the individual. In Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out*, the central character, like Jacob, dies just as she emerges into life. But whereas Jacob's destruction is primarily caused by outer forces, Rachel Vinrace's steady movement towards dissolution can be read as partially willed. This movement is conveyed figuratively by the flight of a slowly ageing moth around the lounge of a hotel. The moth clearly represents both a suicidal impulse and the more general futility of life in the face of an inevitable mortality. This becomes even more apparent if we see it as contrasted with the "great yellow butterfly [...] opening and closing its wings very slowly on a little flat stone" that seems to hypnotise Rachel while she is on an excursion into the jungle (Woolf 1992c: 161). The narrator conflates this moment with what is described as Rachel's awed sense of the possibilities of life, her feeling of being suspended immediately before starting out on a new voyage. Her 'self' and the butterfly become further linked when she is released from her paralysis at the moment it flies away (Woolf 1992c: 161). However, as the flight of the butterfly heralds the beginning of Rachel's progress away from her impending marriage and towards dissolution — she catches a fatal fever in the jungle — this identification, the reader later understands, is ominous.

In *Between the Acts* a slow process of dissolution is figured by the flight of a tortoiseshell butterfly in a deserted library. Without renewal or human intervention the butterfly will die: "beat, beat, beat; repeating that if no human being ever came, never, never, never, the books would be mouldy, the fire out and the tortoiseshell butterfly dead on the pane" (Woolf 1992a: 13). Similarly the futile movement of the moth, "light to light", in *The Voyage Out* signals human abandonment. For this moth is not only an "image of mystical love consuming itself" but also highlights Rachel's lack of determined direction in life as well as figuring her loneliness (Sandbach-Dahlström 1987: 764). The feeling among the hotel guests that the moth should be killed — put out of its misery — as well as their failure to act on this feeling is an illustration of general indifference to individual human suffering and mortality underlining their lack of any genuine interest in Rachel's tragic death:

The conversation in these circumstances was very gentle, fragmentary and intermittent, but the room was full of the indescribable stir of life. Every now and then the moth, which was now grey of wing and shiny of thorax, whizzed over their heads, and hit the lamps with a thud.

A young woman put down her needlework and exclaimed, 'Poor creature! it would be kinder to kill it.' But nobody seemed disposed to rouse himself in order to kill the moth. They watched it dash from lamp to lamp, because they were comfortable, and had nothing to do. (Woolf 1992c: 349)

While the “indescribable stir of life” in the hotel contrasts starkly with the reader’s knowledge of Rachel’s recent death, this passage also produces a sense of continuity. It precisely mirrors the first appearance of the moth. On this occasion the inhabitants of the hotel are compared to “crocodiles so fully gorged by their last meal that the future of the world gives them no anxiety whatever” (Woolf 1992c: 168). Woolf, I think, is obviously relying on an association to the habits of living crocodiles and their apparent indolence to make her point. But, the reader can make even more of this. For, when the crocodile does occur in Egyptian mythology it is even more sinister and frightening, being not only Sobek, protector of the dead, but sometimes an incarnation of the god Ammut, “devourer of the dead” and “demoness of punishment”.⁷ This association accords with what we come to know of Rachel, who is a figure that life itself seems to have consumed and thus punished and for whom death will intervene to protect her from an uncertain future.

As noted, if we accept Entzenberg’s argument, the process of metaphor making depends on context, meaning amongst other things the awareness the reader brings to the act of interpretation. For the reader familiar with Woolf’s work, then, the posthumously published essay “The Death of the Moth” will seem to be a summing up of previous usage. For a Woolf essay, this text is seemingly unusually straightforward, a simple narrative without digression, focusing on the struggle between the forces of life and death with less of the “indirection and suggestion” (Lee 2000: 102) than usually characterizes her personal essays. Nonetheless, in the light of what has gone before, it is hard to read it as merely a meditation on the death of one particular moth. Rather it can be seen as continuing, or mirroring, the shift from *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob’s Room*, where the fates of the moths are closely related to the deaths of the protagonists, to *Between the Acts*, where the dying butterfly expresses a far more generalized malaise. Since this moth is not related to any particular consciousness this might seem a logical conclusion.

But, as always in a Woolf text, things are not that simple. There is, to use a favourite term of hers, an oscillation between affects. At one level the narrator/subject identifies with the limitations of the life of the moth: “The possibilities of pleasure seemed that morning so enormous so various that to have only a moth’s part of life, and a day moth’s at that, appeared a hard fate, and his zest in enjoying his meager opportunities to the full, pathetic” (Woolf 1993: 179). “[B]ecause he was so small, and so simple a form of the energy that was rolling in at the open window and driving its way through so many narrow and intricate corridors in my own brain and in those of other human beings, there was something marvelous as well as pathetic about him” (Woolf 1993: 180). “[T]he thought that all that life might have been

⁷ Ammut appears with the head of a crocodile, body of a lioness and hind quarters of a hippopotamus and represents a fearful threat to life. See <http://www.crystalinks.com/egyptgods1a.html>.

had he been born in any other shape caused one to view his simple activities with a kind of pity” (Woolf 1993: 180). Moreover, the narrator uses the moth to evoke a more general threat, the “doom” that might at any moment destroy some part of human civilization by “submerging” a city and with it “masses of human beings” (Woolf 1993: 181).

Side by side, however, with the sense of wonder and pity, and of identification with the moth, the narrator also adopts an impartial, impersonal pose. The various images for life that come to her mind are visual and come from observation: the moth is a “pure bead”, a “fibre”, a zigzagging movement. This stance in turn engenders a recognition of powerlessness in the narrator/writer who can record the creature’s demise but cannot intervene. As she stretches out her pencil to help the struggling moth, she realizes “that the failure and awkwardness were the approach of death”, and she puts the pencil down (Woolf 1993: 181). In so doing, she no longer identifies with the moth but with the world outside where, at midday, the earlier buzz has been replaced by stasis. The surroundings have become a “power [...] massed outside indifferent, impersonal, not attending to anything in particular” (Woolf 1993: 181). The metaphorical implications are those of war, death as part of the natural world has become an agent, an army, troops collecting outside. Action, the narrator notes, rather cynically, in the face of such an adversary is pointless.

As she watches, however, the narrator is filled with other feelings, wonder and admiration coupled with the recognition that no-one values the life the moth is fighting to retain. This is an indifference that both is, and is not, hers, making the death of the moth a vehicle for the ambivalence of our reactions to the fate of others. The very fact that the dead moth is both “decent” and “uncomplaining” frees us from disturbing emotions such as pity or empathy (Woolf 1993: 181). Also, when at the end of the essay the narrator repeats the word “strange” to convey her feeling for both life and death, the effect is to distance us further from the events she and we have witnessed together.

The effect of the whole essay is thus, curiously enough, not so much to evoke as to defamiliarize death, which becomes something that can be observed, but not understood except in terms of the cliché with which the text ends: “Oh yes, [the moth] seemed to say, death is stronger than I am” (1993: 181). To some extent, this distancing is achieved by the use of the past tense; the events we are asked to interpret are already only memory rather than reality. But the function of that device is not so much to enhance as to simplify the metaphoric process. By substituting a part for the whole, one tiny creature for life itself, the moth for humanity, and by making this part other to the impartial narrator, Virginia Woolf asks us to figure death not as something fearful, nor indeed as something desirable, but as something that simply is.

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