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*Beyond Cognitive Metaphor Theory: Perspectives on Literary Metaphor*  
Routledge, New York, 2011

## Book review<sup>1</sup>

The book *Beyond Cognitive Metaphor Theory. Perspectives on Literary Metaphors* edited by Monika Fludernik is a collection of articles that enters a 30-year tradition of studies on metaphor triggered by Lakoff and Johnson's Cognitive Metaphor Theory (henceforth CMT).

The publication of *Metaphors We Live By* by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980 led to an exponential growth of interest in metaphor as an ubiquitous phenomenon in language, communication, and cognition (for a comprehensive review see Gibbs 2008). The main tenet of CMT is that concepts used in everyday speaking (e.g., love, life, war, etc.) are represented and understood through metaphorical processes. Metaphor is considered an integral part of human cognition, effortlessly accessible and used unconsciously and automatically by everyone. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) listed a number of conceptual metaphors that underlie the comprehension of metaphorical expressions. For example, the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY makes it possible to understand metaphorical expressions like "Our marriage is on the rocks" or "We are at a crossroads" (Lakoff, Johnson 1980). Interestingly, not only conventional but also more creative metaphors like poetic metaphors are claimed to rely on the same conceptual tools (Lakoff, Turner 1989). For example, the conceptual metaphor cited above (LIFE IS A JOURNEY) is also responsible for the comprehension of poetic metaphors like "Life is but a walking shadow" (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*) or "In the middle of life's road, I found myself in a dark wood" (Dante, *Divine Comedy*). Thus, poets are claimed to use the same tools as in everyday language but in original, more talented and skilful ways (Lakoff, Turner 1989). Despite the remarkable field guide on poetic metaphors by Lakoff and Turner, within the CMT approach attention has been mainly devoted to conventional metaphors rather than to creative ones. The book edited by Fludernik enters this scenario and tries to fill a clearly visible gap. The main purpose is to focus on the status of creative metaphor by suggesting some text readings and, at the same time, by proposing some insights on how to go 'beyond' CMT while addressing non-conventional metaphors.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I consists of six essays (Chapters 1- 6) and Part II of eight essays (Chapters 7-14). The volume starts with the "Introduction" by the editor and ends with brief bibliographical notes on all contributors. In the introductory chapter, Fludernik lays out the rationale of the volume. After drawing attention to an example of literary metaphor taken from *Measure for Measure* by Shakespeare, the editor introduces the key questions when studying literary metaphor from a cognitive perspective and proposes an approach combining literary criticism and CMT. Then, Fludernik guides the reader through the book by discussing the central thread of all contributions.

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this review appeared in the Linguist List at <http://linguistlist.org/issues/23/23-121.html>

Part I, entitled “Indigenous Non-Cognitive Approaches to Metaphor”, consists of papers focusing on theories of metaphor that are alternative to CMT. The relation between these alternative positions and CMT is not univocal in the sense that, as shown below, figurative language is investigated from very different perspectives.

Chapter 1, “Systematizing Verbal Imagery: On a Sonnet by Du Bellay” by Hans Georg Coenen, provides the basic points of a theory of analogy to metaphor. First, Coenen discusses terminology starting from the assumption that verbal imaginery, including metaphorical language, is based on analogy (i.e., symmetrical relationship between two items), and analogy is based on the concept of description (i.e., attribution of descriptive content to an object). In the second part of his essay, Coenen uses the analogy theory to discuss the interrelation of images in a love poem by the French Renaissance poet Du Bellay. For the explanation of more complex analogies, like those in the Du Bellay’s sonnet, Coenen makes use of a two-dimensional matrix (i.e., a “figurative field”). The author recognizes that the analyzed poem could be an example of the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS WAR, but concludes that an analysis through the identification of a “figurative field” offers “an abstractive and [...] rationally grounded, motivation for the use of imaginery” (p. 34).

In Chapter 2, “Catachresis - A Metaphor or a Figure in Its Own Right?”, Elzbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska challenges the conceptual approach to metaphor by considering it not as the key-notion of conceptualization processes, but rather as one of “figurative and rhetorical bent of the human mind” (p. 36). The basic point of Chrzanowska-Kluczevska’s proposal is a division of figurative language into three groups: “Catachresis one” or metaphor that supplies a lexical gap, “Catachresis two” that is an extremely innovative and even absurd metaphor, and “Catachresis three”, which is a figure on its own and a text-forming strategy acting at a metatextual level of description. These three typologies of figurative language, respectively, are claimed to resemble Cicero’s three official oratoris: *docere* (‘to teach’), *delectare* (‘to please’), and *movere* (‘to move’).

In Chapter 3, “Literary Metaphor between Cognition and Narration. *The Sandman* Revisited”, Benjamin Biebuyck and Gunther Martens discuss the gaps of the cognitive approach to literary metaphor. The aim of their proposal is to maintain the “benefits” of the cognitive approach while introducing some elements that may more clearly show the singularity of literary metaphor and narrative. Thus, the model by Biebuyck and Martens pays attention to the interconnectedness of figurative networks and to the emergence of a “narrative potential” by integrating cognitive, rhetorical, and narratological approaches. The model is proposed within the analysis of Hoffmann’s ‘night piece’, *The Sandman* (1816), a novella that contains several forms of figurativeness. The authors conclude that approaching literary metaphors – and other figures of speech – from a narrative angle may offer more fruitful perspectives of analysis.

In Chapter 4, “Reaching Beyond Silence. Metaphors of Ineffability in English Poetry – Donne, Wordsworth, Keats, Eliot”, Ina Habermann investigates how metaphors are used in literary discourse to express the ineffable. She analyses the following works: Donne’s *The Extasie* (1633), where the ineffable is the impossibility of describing the experience of romantic love; Wordsworth’s *Ode: Intimation of Immortality from Recollection of Early Childhood* (1807), in which the ineffable is a Romantic evocation of eternity; Keats’s *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (1819/20), which contains the evocation of silence, inscrutability, and ineffability, and finally Eliot’s *The Four Quartets* (1944), which attempts to describe the ineffable mystery of life.

In Chapter 5, “Literary Criticism Writes Back to Metaphor Theory. Exploring the Relation between Extended Metaphor and Narrative in Literature”, Bo Pettersson

identifies some shortcomings in CMT when applied to literary metaphor. The author argues that the cognitive approach is not able to account for the complexity and specificity of literature if it follows only a top-down search for conceptual metaphors. Thus, by analyzing specific examples (e.g. Blake's poems *The Sick Rose*, *The Tyger*, and *A Poison Tree*, and Magnus Mill's fiction) Pettersson argues that both extended metaphors and narrative elements, as well as their interrelations, must be taken into account when interpreting both poetic and fiction texts.

Also Tamar Yacobi in Chapter 6 ("Metaphors in Context. The Communicative Structure of Figurative Language") proposes a contextualist approach to literary metaphors by discussing examples taken from poetry and prose with special attention to Henry James. Figures of speech are always embedded in a communicative context, and surrounded by a co-text. Moreover, both transmitters and receivers of the communicated figure of speech have an active role in enriching the functionality of the figure through self-characterization, rhetoric, irony, plot dynamics, semantic density, and emotional and ideological impact. Therefore, metaphors, linked to the communicating agents and relative frameworks, are able to acquire "global narrative roles" (p. 132).

Part II of the book, entitled "Cognitive Metaphor Theory and Literary Analysis", addresses the applicability of CMT to creative uses of language. Chapter 7 "Conceptual Metaphor and Communication: An Austinian and Gricean Analysis of Brian Clark's *Whose Life Is It Anyway?*" by John Douthwaite sets a strong challenge to CMT by proposing a "reformation" from a pragmatic point of view. The dichotomy between conventional metaphors – that are automatically retrieved – and literary metaphors that are reconstructed through a process of pragmatic inferencing, is the focus of this essay. The key question is discussed in both theoretical and practical terms with examples from Brian Clark's play about euthanasia (*Whose Life Is It Anyway?*). The aim of this analysis is to show how meaning is produced in the text and to evaluate the role of cognitive metaphors in the process of constructing meaning.

This critical opening is followed by some reading proposals and creative applications of CMT. Margaret Freeman, in Chapter 8 "The Role of Metaphor in Poetic Iconicity", and disentangles the difference between literary and conventional metaphors by emphasizing the iconic role of metaphor in poetry. She examines the prosodic effects of two sonnets, one by Percy Bysshe Shelley and the other by Horace Smith, which originally had the same title *Ozymandias*, showing how only the first one achieved poetic iconicity through a structuring metaphorical schema. Indeed, Shelley's sonnet is structured around the metaphor ENTROPY IS SHIFT thus becoming an icon of reality, whereas in Smith's sonnet metaphoric schema does not create any resemblance of felt life.

One more reading proposal is provided in Chapter 9, "One should never underestimate the power of books": Writing and Reading as Therapy in Paul Auster's Novels" by Beatrix Busse, where the author applies the theory of blending (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) to Paul Auster's *The Brooklyn Follies* (2006) and *The Book of Illusions* (2002) and examines how the conceptual metaphors WRITING IS ILLNESS and IMAGINATION IS MEDICINE are elaborated in the texts creating interesting blended spaces.

Chapter 10 by Michael Kimmel ("Metaphor Sets in *The Turn of the Screw*. What Conceptual Metaphors Reveal about Narrative Function") opens a very new perspective for exploring texts from a broader narratological perspective. Kimmel discusses how conceptual metaphor may contribute to narrative functions following five levels: (i) theme-setting and foregrounding, (ii) enrichment of motifs and creation of symbolic nodes, (iii) generation of plots and characters, (iv) creation of specific literary effects, and (v) reader affective involvement. The author proposes an integrative viewpoint, based on

empirical observations, that shows how metaphor directly affects, for instance, literary characterization, interaction, and immersive reading.

In Chapter 11, “Hyperliteralist Metaphor: The Cognitive Poetics of Robert Musil in His Novella *Die Portugesin*”, Ralph Müller focuses on Robert Musil’s aesthetical reflections and discusses how his metaphorical style in the work *Die Portugesin* can be interpreted within the cognitive poetics framework. Müller claims that the identification of conceptual metaphors in literary texts should be completed by information about contextual and stylistic differences between linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors. After explaining what “hyperliteralist” metaphors in literature are, the author displays how cognitive principles work and how “moderate hyperliteralism” may be useful in describing Musil’s metaphorical realizations.

In Chapter 12 (“Storyworld Metaphors in Swift’s Satire”) Michael Sinding focuses on the interplay of CMT and cognitive narratology by discussing allegory and satire in Swift’s *A Tale of a Tub*. Sinding shows how metaphor may enter a spatial modeling in Swift’s work, considering that spatialization of metaphor – and other rhetorical figures – is very common in storyworlds of satiric narrative. The question is discussed within a wide perspective which combines CMT (specifically, the analysis of the main conceptual metaphors for satire’s action schema) and cognitive narratology (by looking at the interplay of metaphor and story).

In Chapter 13, “Conventional Metaphor and the Latent Ideology of Racism”, Andrew Goatly addresses more general issues on texts and focuses on how ideology and discourses of racism turn into metaphorical representations. Goatly argues that there are certain cognitive metaphors (e.g., SIMILARITY IS PROXIMITY, CATEGORY IS A DIVIDED AREA) which, even if indirectly, support cognitive structures of division and exclusion. Note that this claim, supported by several instances from newspaper articles, is set between an ideological interpretation of CMT and cultural studies.

The final chapter, “The Journey Metaphor and the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL Schema in Agnes Varda’s Autobiographical Gleaning Documentaries” by Charles Forceville, broadens the applicability of CMT by discussing non-verbal realizations of conceptual metaphor. Forceville concentrates on two autobiographical documentaries by the French film director Agnès Varda, which are strictly related to the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema, and points out aspects of metaphor that transcend traditional verbal metaphor, thus opening up very new patterns of analysis.

Overall, this collection of essays provides very fascinating contributions to the field of metaphor studies. The title and the subtitle exemplify the two main aims of the book. One aim is to show what there is ‘beyond’ the cognitive approach to metaphor by proposing alternative views. This aim is achieved in the first part of the book where valid positions contrasting with CMT (e.g. Coenen’s theory), as well as more extended, context-driven approaches (e.g. Pettersson’s contribution) are proposed. It is clear that the theories presented here are only a small part of the possible ways of addressing the question. The clearest shortcoming with respect to alternative perspectives is the lack of any reference to the account of literary metaphor developed within the Relevance Theory (Pilkington 2001; Sperber, Wilson 2008). Moreover, unexpectedly, the challenge to CMT outlined in the first part is not totally maintained in the second part of the book where most contributions confirm the validity of CMT approach. Nevertheless, Part II embodies what is promised by the subtitle (“Perspectives on Literary Metaphors”) and accomplishes the other aim of the book, i.e., overcoming the strong interest in conventional metaphors, which has dominated metaphor studies in the wake of CMT. This aim is achieved by providing fascinating analyses of literary metaphor within creative interpretations of poems and

novels, and by re-creating a communication between literary and linguistic studies. Noticeably, in Part II, interest in literary metaphor – clearly visible, for example, in Habermann's, Freeman's, and Pettersson's essays – is coupled with interest in a broad range of creative uses of figurative language that involve in genre studies (Sinding), ideological discourse (Goatly) and non-verbal metaphorical representations (Forceville).

As regards the audience the book is intended for, though highly specialized in its theoretical proposals, the book may be suited for both metaphor study experts and beginners since the key concepts, especially those of CMT and the theory of blending (Fauconnier, Turner 2002), are extensively explained throughout the chapters. Moreover, the very careful applications of CMT to text analyses in the second part of the book prove as a valuable field guide for all kinds of audience. The fact that the main tenets of cognitive approaches to metaphor are discussed in more than one chapter of the book in relation to specific topics or selected literary texts is a great advantage because chapters can be individual, high-level readings, even though the book maintains a strong central thread.

In conclusion, in relation to existent literature on the topic, this book has an important advantage that consists in paying attention to a wide range of creative metaphors by matching theoretical speculations to text analyses. Thus, this book is a noteworthy starting point for going beyond CMT without disregarding its precious heritage.

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