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Unpacking and Evaluating Properties in Conceptual Metaphor Domain Mapping: Cognitive Stylistics as a Language Learning Tool

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1 Introduction

Metaphor is a productive domain for L2 and EFL research. Several illuminating pedagogical studies have been conducted into both traditional metaphor and conceptual metaphor (see, for example, Boers, 2000; Chen and Lai, 2011; Deignan et al., 1997; Gao and Meng, 2010; Hall, 2012; Lazar, 1996; Littlemore, 2004; Littlemore and Low, 2006). The same might be said of stylistics, as it too is a fruitful area for L2 and EFL research (see, for example, Burke, 2004; Burke et al., 2012; Carter and McRae, 1996; Clark and Zyngier, 2003; Gower, 1986; Hall, 2005; 2014; Short, 1989; Teranishi et al., 2012; Watson and Zyngier, 2007). What this chapter seeks to do is to bring together these two disciplines (conceptual metaphor and stylistics) within a framework of second language (L2) learning. The goal is to create a productive and transferrable 'pedagogical cognitive stylistics'. L2 and EFL metaphor experiments have concentrated on increasing a learner's vocabulary and enhancing his/her language acquisition. The conceptual metaphorical stylistic analysis set out in this chapter, however, seeks not only to do this, but also to stimulate a deeper level of thinking and comprehension in L2 learners. In doing so it hopes to facilitate concept retention through a kind of 'reverse engineering' process of idiom unpacking and concept elaboration. Language learning is enhanced not only by

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acquiring new terms and new knowledge, but also by understanding language at a deeper level, which includes comprehending the bodily basis of language and thought, and in particular, in this case, unpacking and considering which characteristics and properties are mapped from the source domain to the target domain in specific contexts, and why. In what follows, the basics of conceptual metaphor within a stylistics framework will be briefly explained. Next, a conceptual metaphoric stylistic analysis will be conducted, interspersed with a number of practical, interactive activities. Last, a range of further hands-on stylistic conceptual metaphor exercises will be presented that can help L2 and EFL learners achieve a deeper and more meaningful level of language acquisition.

2 Conceptual metaphor

For thousands of years, metaphor has been seen as language that is creative and striking. This can be traced from Aristotle's works on poetics and rhetoric right up to I. A. Richard's notions of 'tenor' and 'vehicle' described in the first half of the 20th century (Richards, 1936). The advent of conceptual metaphor appears to have put an end to this view. Conceptual metaphor theory is a central concept in cognitive linguistics. It first came to light when Lakoff and Johnson published *Metaphors We Live By* in 1980.[1] As the title suggests, whereas metaphor had primarily been dealt with in the domain of literary and poetic language, i.e. something unique in the sense of being highly wrought, it now became part of general linguistics. This meant that examples of metaphor abound in everyday utterances and written texts of all types and genres. Almost every sentence is replete with metaphors, or so the argument goes. A central claim made by Lakoff and Johnson is that metaphor is a basic pattern that is grounded in bodily experience, which underlies human thought and human language. Put another way, conceptual metaphor can be seen as a mapping across domains via language.

Conceptual metaphor theory is thus concerned with the notion of mapping between two domains. Mapping refers to a set of organized metaphorical correspondences between closely related entities or ideas. The two domains that are operational in the process of conceptual metaphor mapping are known as 'source' and 'target'. So in the sentence 'Achilles is a lion' the qualities that are mapped are aggression, fearlessness, dominance, independence, pride, etc. rather than qualities like shaggy-mained, four-footed, warthog-eating, lazy, etc. The source

domain, where the mapping comes from, is akin to the traditional metaphorical notion of 'vehicle', while the 'target' domain, where the mapping ends up, is the 'tenor'. So conceptual metaphor is centrally concerned with trying to understand which qualities, characteristics and elements are mapped from a source to a target. Traditionally, there are three types of conceptual metaphor. They are known as (i) structural, (ii) orientational and (iii) ontological. We will look at each of these in a moment and will see how these conceptual metaphors function in literary, and other creative, texts.

When you read the conceptual metaphor examples and the analyses in this chapter for the first time, you should be considering how you are going to get your students actively involved in thinking and learning activities above and beyond the ones that have been suggested once you ask them to read the chapter in a classroom setting. Here are four rules of thumb that I use in my own teaching, which should help to generate enhanced levels of learning and critical thinking. They are that you as a teacher should (i) encourage, (ii) embolden, (iii) stimulate and (iv) inspire your students in their learning adventure. This EESI model, when deployed appropriately, will lead to easier learning.

- *Encourage* your students to enter into a constructive-critical dialogue with all the literary/textual examples that they will encounter. (*Get them to write ideas down in the margins, or elsewhere, so that they are easily retrievable when later assignments and/or papers need to be written.*)
- *Embolden* your students to engage in a constructive-critical dialogue with all the critical observations that experts make about texts and also with what you, as their teacher, say about those observations in the classroom. (*Students can, for example, critically consider whether or not evaluative and interpretative statements made by an author/analyst have been sufficiently grounded in the actual language of the text.*)
- *Stimulate* your students to take a meta-level perspective on their own learning processes and experiences. (*In the case of this chapter, it is hoped that students will come to realize how a thorough understanding of how the mapping process functions within conceptual metaphor theory will aid their knowledge and usage of English.*)
- *Inspire* your students to go beyond the analysis stage to engage in the synthesis, design and production of language acquisition. This 'playing around with language' must be engaged in if robust and resilient learning is to take place. (*The hands-on exercises at the end of this chapter seek to address this essential requirement.*)

3 Structural conceptual metaphor

One of the main examples of a structural conceptual metaphor that Lakoff and Johnson use is LIFE IS A JOURNEY. Here, elements from the source domain (journey), such as distance, endurance and the negotiation of obstacles, are mapped back onto the target domain (life), which incorporates birth, adolescence, old age, etc. This is realized in many everyday English linguistic expressions such as 'I have got to get around this problem', 'he still has a long way to go', but it is also realized in fragments from many literary texts as we will see.

A basic cognitive structure at work in this metaphor is PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS and at a mapping level we can see how destinations are mapped onto purposes. Here we start to get a grasp of what Lakoff and Johnson mean when they say that metaphor is a basic pattern that underlies human thought. Consider the opening lines of Canto I from 'The Inferno' in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
ché la diritta via era smarrita
Midway upon the road of our life
I found myself within a dark forest,
For the straightforward pathway had been lost

The LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor here is alluded to in the first line: *del cammin di nostra vita*. Here the road represents the journey. The metaphor is also fleshed out in the PATH section of a SOURCE–PATH–GOAL image schematic structure by reference to the 'dark forest' that is located midway on that road.[2] These days we would perhaps refer to this impediment as some kind of mid-life crisis (spiritual, marital, mental, physical, etc.). In abstract cognitive terms, there is an obstacle that one has to overcome. In this case, the 'blockage' is not something entirely concrete or physical, but is a combination of darkness and a disorientating wood. So we could say that what is needed, in order to circumvent the 'hindrance', is a guide and some light.

Examples like the one above abound in literature. Take a look at the opening lines of Robert Frost's poem 'The Road Not Taken':

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both

Here, life is not just a single journey but a number of possible journeys – in this case, two. In the rest of the poem it becomes clear that there is on the one hand the well worn path, frequented by the many, and on the other the seldom trod trail taken by the few. The speaking persona in the poem eventually chooses the latter.

The examples we have seen so far have been at the micro, textual level. There are also well-known LIFE IS A JOURNEY stories that operate at a macro-textual level. A famous example in English literature is John Bunyan's late 17th-century tale *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The narrative in this work is simple. The protagonist, called Christian, has to journey from his home town, called 'the city of destruction' (representing earth), to 'the celestial city' (representing heaven). On this life's journey he is confronted by a number of obstacles, which he needs to deal with. For example, he has to pass through 'the slough of despond' on the way to 'the wicket gate', which will eventually lead back to the straight and narrow path. There are many other hindrances on this journey in the form of temptations that might lead him 'astray' including 'the delectable mountains' and the infamous 'vanity fair'.

The LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor is not limited to canonical literary texts; it also occurs in other creative texts. Consider, for example, the lyrics of Tom Buchanan's 1990s song 'Life is a Highway':

> Life's like a road that you travel on
>
> When there's one day here and the next day gone

From a formal, linguistic, point of view, this text has the structure of a simile; an explicit comparison. However, the underlying cognitive structure is still metaphorical. A much more complex account of the same metaphor can be found in the Beatles' hit song 'The Long and Winding Road'. In the opening verse to that song the speaking voice focuses on the destination, but suggests that she/he has successfully travelled this path before.

The GOAL part of the PATH metaphor can often refer to death in such metaphoric structures. In the opening lines of Dylan Thomas's famous poem we are encouraged not 'to go gentle into that good night' but rather to rage and rave on until the very end. Such metaphors are not limited to the literary domain. When someone dies in real life, we might say 'he has passed away', 'he has gone to the other side', 'he is in a better place'. All of these represent some kind of LIFE(/DEATH) IS A JOURNEY structural metaphor – or at least the GOAL part of it. Interestingly, cognitive patterns of thought tend to structure the way we discuss death. Even an odd-sounding expression like 'he has kicked the bucket' ties into the

CONTAINER schematic structure, whereby a container filled with liquid is knocked over and the liquid spills out, emptying the bucket. Think about it for a moment. If someone has died, would you be able to say something like: 'he's eaten the pastrami sandwich' or 'he's decorated the bedroom' or 'he's mopped the linoleum'? Probably not. The reason for this is that these utterances do not have a recognizable underlying conceptual image schematic structure.

4 Orientational conceptual metaphor

In the previous section we saw how one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another. Orientational conceptual metaphors do not do this. Instead they organize a system of concepts with regard to one another. They also represent non-arbitrary spatial relationships that have a basis in our physical cultural experience and in our bodies and how our bodies move in the space around us. In short, we can say that such metaphors have an experiential basis. Such experiences are expressed in abstract conceptualizations like IN–OUT, UP–DOWN, CENTRE–PERIPHERY. These metaphors give concepts spatial orientations such as GOOD IS UP/HAPPY IS UP and BAD IS DOWN/SAD IS DOWN, and in this sense they are closely linked to the notion of image schemas discussed earlier. We have to be a little careful here and say that although such metaphors hold for very many cultures around the world, they do not hold for all. For example, in the Western world the past is viewed as something behind one and the future and something in front of one. This, however, may not universally be the case.[3] Everyday expressions that underscore many of these orientational metaphors include:

GOOD/HAPPY/MORE IS UP

- She is on a high
- I got the thumbs up
- That victory really boosted my spirits
- The more, the merrier

BAD/SAD/LESS IS DOWN

- Failing exams depresses him
- She has come down with the flu
- Her mood sank when she heard the news
- My expectations fell on seeing my grades

There is also a literal physical basis for many of these expressions. When you are feeling good, parts of your body respond. Your eyes widen and

your eyebrows lift, as do the corners of your mouth to produce a smile. This extends beyond the face to the shoulders and your general posture that ‘perks up’. We literally ‘jump for joy’ when happy. Conversely, in states of sadness and depression our face and posture droop. When someone is ‘downcast’, their head is often literally angled downwards and they are looking at the ground.

Such oriental conceptual metaphors are abundant in literary language, too. In some of Shakespeare’s plays it has been convincingly shown that orientational metaphors structure much of the story.[4] For example, in the play ‘Macbeth’ the story appears to be structured with many PATH and CONTAINER metaphors. For instance, at the beginning of the play Lady Macbeth views herself and her husband as CONTAINERS. First she says of her husband:

> Yet I do fear thy nature;
> It is too full o’ th’ milk of human kindness
> To catch the nearest way. (I. v. 16–18)

In this attack on his masculinity, Macbeth’s body is the container and the milk (of human kindness) is the fluid in that receptacle. In the same section, Lady Macbeth sees her own body as a CONTAINER filled with a fortifying liquid that she wishes to pour out into her weak husband:

> Hie thee hither,
> That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
> And chastise with the valor of my tongue
> All that impedes thee from the golden round
> (I. v. 25–28)

This is further expanded on by Lady Macbeth with her famous declaration:

> Come, you spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
> And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
> Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood;
> Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
> That no compunctious visitings of nature
> Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
> The effect and it! (I. v. 40–47)

5 Ontological conceptual metaphor

Above we saw how spatial orientation provides a rich basis for understanding metaphors in experiential terms. However, our experience of physical objects and physical substances also gives us an extra dimension to understand metaphors that go beyond orientation. What we are trying to understand here is how our bodily interaction with an object or process provides us with a basis for ways of viewing activities, ideas, etc. Let us start by looking at one of the default ontological conceptual metaphors that Lakoff and Johnson provide us with: THE MIND IS A MACHINE. If we first stop and think what kind of qualities might be mapped from source to target, we might come up with things that represent both the positive and negative qualities of a machine. The former might include the notions of repetitiveness, productivity, stability and cost-efficiency, while the latter might include the need for regular human intervention/ maintenance and the danger that it might break down at any time. The metaphor finds form in everyday utterances such as:

THE MIND IS A MACHINE

- I am a little rusty today
- She has had a mental breakdown
- I am really cranking out the ideas

The human mind and/or brain can have other underlying ontological cognitive patterns. One that abounds in the contemporary intellectual and business world is encapsulated in the metaphor THE MIND IS A COMPUTER. In many ways this is the modern counterpart of the MIND IS A MACHINE metaphor. Another example that is decidedly different is THE MIND IS AN OCEAN. Here, we might expect that what will be mapped from the source (ocean) to the target (mind) could include the notions of fluidity, dynamism, rhythm, depth, profundity, unboundedness, etc. Consider the following everyday utterances.

THE MIND IS AN OCEAN

- Her thoughts drifted back to a time she wished she had forgotten
- My mind has been awash with memories all day
- Once it hit him, he sank into deep thought
- She trawled the depths of her memory but couldn't recall the incident

- He was plunged into profound reflection
- Jane found the discussion absorbing
- At once her mind was filled with memories of her childhood
- He could not fathom what he saw as her inverted logic

Several of these examples do indeed here have aspects of dynamism and rhythm, while others echo the notions of depth and profundity.

6 A conceptual metaphorical stylistic analysis of a poem

In the foregoing sections we have looked very briefly at how all three types of conceptual metaphor are used in literary and other texts. A cognitive stylistic analysis of one single text will now be conducted, focusing on conceptual metaphor as the main analytical tool. The analysis will be interspersed with hands-on learning activities. The text in question is a poem by William Blake called "Ah! Sun-Flower", from the book 'Songs of Experience' (Blake, 1977). William Blake was an English poet, painter and engraver who lived in London from 1757 to 1827. He was a forerunner of English Romanticism and the themes in his work are often religious. He was, and indeed still is, viewed as a kind of spiritual visionary.

Ah! Sun-Flower

Ah, Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done:
Where the youth pined away with desire
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.

Activity 1

Before starting the analysis in earnest, ask your students to identify the basic syntax of the poem. Questions you could pose include:

- How many sentences is this poem made up of?
- What is the main subject?
- What is the main verb?

Once your students have identified the main constituent parts, ask them to write the poem out as if it were prose discourse. This 'recasting' or 'transposing' is an exercise that goes back to the progymnasmata rhetorical schools of the ancient classical Roman world.[5] Such an exercise will offer your students an alternative view and also allow them to experience the poem in a different setting, which should stimulate their critical thinking capacities through their experience of a mild cognitive dissonance.

Activity 2

- Recast the poem as prose discourse.
- Does this prose presentation style make the text easier or more difficult to understand?
- Discuss this in groups and argue either for or against the prose version as the clearer of the two varieties of the text.
- Now recast the text as something modern: a blog post, a tweet, a text message, etc. What effect does this have?

Your students should have been able to work out that despite the poem being made up of two four-line stanzas, it is a single sentence with numerous sub-clauses. This makes it somewhat difficult to read and understand – even when recast in prose form. Your students will probably be a little confused by the text. They may be wondering whether it is semantically logical or not. To discover whether the text makes sense, ask your students to break it up into smaller units, based on the prose version, and then comment briefly on those units one by one. To show you what I mean, I have listed below how I divided the text and how I commented on them.

- **Unit 1**: 'Ah, sun-flower, weary of time, who countest the steps of the sun;

In the first unit, above, we can see that the sunflower is the most important referential noun in the first half of the text. Here, the sunflower has become fatigued by time, seemingly through spending all day counting the steps of the sun. The expression 'weary of time' means more than simply being exhausted; it arguably means being tired of life itself. This becomes clear in the next textual unit:

- **Unit 2**: seeking after that sweet golden clime, where the traveller's journey is done:

Here we see how the sunflower is longing for that sweet place where there is no more travelling to be done. The word 'golden' arguably

suggests a sunset and thus a GOAL in the PATH structure. Indeed, in everyday discourse 'sunset years' is a euphemism for old age leading to death. The conceptual metaphor that starts to emerge here is LIFE IS A JOURNEY. It also appears to be a tiring, even monotonous, journey. It is as though the GOAL in this SOURCE–PATH–GOAL image schematic structure is hard to attain.

Activity 3

- Work in groups to determine what the characteristics and properties are that are mapped here from the source domain of 'life' to the target domain of a 'journey'.
- Compare what you have listed with other groups in your class. Is there any consensus? Debate with each other what you have found.
- Now do the same for the following four examples and also invent two of your own:
  - Life is box of chocolates
  - Life is a roller coaster
  - Life is a bowl of miso soup
  - Life is a manga comic
  - *Two of your own examples*
- Can you also think of three everyday utterances in English that might underlie the four conceptual metaphors listed above? (*Of course, it may not be possible for them all, as some are purposely somewhat far-fetched.*)

- **Unit 3**: where the youth pined away with desire and the pale virgin shrouded in snow, arise from their graves, and aspire where my sunflower wishes to go.

In the third textual unit, the main referential noun changes: it is no longer the sunflower, but the 'clime' that is now in focus. In effect, this is a shift from the traveller in the PATH schema to the GOAL. Here, we learn that in this place at the end of the journey, alluded to in the structural conceptual metaphor, a number of things have occurred. A youth has died of something akin to lovesickness and both the youth and a pale, snow-shrouded virgin apparently arise from their graves and aspire or desire to go to the same place that the sunflower longs to go to. This leaves us with a number of questions. Who is the youth? Who is the virgin? Might they be the same person? And, perhaps most importantly, does the story make really sense, semantically and grammatically?

The youth and the virgin referred to in the text probably have their origins in Greek mythology; for example, the following story recounted in a version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

The story of Clytië

The nymph Clytië was in love with the sun-god Helios, but he rejected her advances and took another lover, a girl called Leucothoë. Clytië then schemed against Leucothoë, which led to her death. As a result, Helios's attitude towards Clytië hardened. Clytië then took herself away from him and sat on the cold ground without food or water except for her own tears and the morning dew and spent her days watching Helios ride in his chariot across the sky, from sunrise in the east to sunset in the west. She looked at nothing else except the sun. After nine days of this pining, her limbs became rooted to the ground and her face slowly turned into a flower. And now when the sunflower follows the sun in its course across the sky, it is not merely some elegant yellow bloom that takes this daily path, but Clytië, still pining for her lost love, Helios.

If we take this as the basis for Blake's story, then the youth and the virgin both appear to refer to Clytië. But this is not possible in the poem, since the poet uses the word 'their' in the poem instead of 'her' in the line 'arise from *their* graves'. There is another problem. How can they be both aspiring to be at the end of the journey and, rising from their graves, there already? Added to this, we have the confusion that the word 'aspire' also means 'breathe' as in 'aspiration', meaning the act or process of drawing breath, from the Latin word *aspiratus*. The notions of breathing and death or afterlife somehow sit uncomfortably together. We have to conclude that there is a kind of 'hole' in the time framework and as a result a kind of 'fault' in the JOURNEY. Whether the grammar is flawed or whether the poet has consciously played with a sense of openness is something we cannot know. We can, however, conclude for the time being that although the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor has not been completely undermined by the inconsistencies in the text, it has been placed on somewhat shaky ground.[6] As a result of the above discussion, we can see another structural metaphor emerging, namely LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

Activity 4

- Can you think of three examples (short sentences) from everyday English that embody the above conceptual metaphor? Here is an example to get you going: *Their marriage had reached a dead end.*
- Now think of at least two everyday examples (short sentences) like this in your own language.
- Do the words used in the sentences fit well into either the source or target domains?
- Do the words representing 'journey' differ at all across your examples? If so, how?

We see here clearly how LOVERS ARE TRAVELLERS embarked on the same journey. They have shared goals, namely a destination to be reached and goals to be achieved on that journey. They travel together, as one, using an unspecified mode of locomotion, but there are all kinds of impediments lying in wait that may bring the journey to a halt. Reflecting on this, we see that our particular LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor involving Clytië and Helios in the text is not the default kind, since there are a number of inconsistencies. For example, although our two individuals in the poem do indeed travel at the same speed and along the same trajectory, from east to west, they do not travel in proximity but distally. Other discrepancies include (i) the love is not mutual, (ii) the journey is repeated on a daily basis, and (iii) the goals are not shared. We can therefore conclude that although the metaphor is most certainly activated at the conceptual level it is not fully sustained in the language of the text.

It is helpful at this stage to step back and reflect on the fact that the conceptual metaphorical notion that the movement of the sun in a day can represent a life is not a modern or contemporary idea. The lines below are written by the first-century Roman poet Catullus:

> Let us live, my Lesbia, let us love,
> And all the gossip of the crabbed old men
> We'll overvalue at a single farthing.
> Although the sun can set and rise again;
> For us when once our short-lived light has set,
> There follows one unending night of sleep.[7]

This poetic fragment, originally in Latin, with its key reference to the sun setting and rising again, shows us the diachronic nature of conceptual metaphors in poetry and in doing so supports the cogent argument of underlying their embodied nature.

Let us return to the journey of our sunflower. There is a paradox in this passage: although the sunflower takes part in the travelling, from SOURCE along the PATH to GOAL, it is only her head that moves. Her 'feet' remain rooted to the ground (literally) and in this sense there is no movement and arguably no real journey, since journeying involves locomotion, not simply looking. In literary texts, however, and in other everyday imaginative texts, creative licence is often taken, consciously or otherwise, and, as a result, unusually foregrounded noun–verb juxtapositions can occur. Of course, such juxtapositions are not limited to these two parts of speech, but can involve adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions,

etc. The lines below are from Jack London's short story 'A Day's Lodging'. They illustrate how the boundaries between two concepts, in this case 'vision' and 'locomotion', can be purposely blurred.

> Again her eyes travelled around the room, and the terror in them leaped up at sight of the other bunk

Here it is the eyes that do the travelling, not the legs – just as, in our poem, it is the head of the flower that is in motion. But let us put our investigation into this structural conceptual metaphor on hold for a moment and explore some of the main orientational conceptual metaphors in the text.

It will be recalled how GOOD IS UP and BAD IS DOWN are central embodied phenomena in the way situations are envisioned and also realized through linguistic expressions, especially in the West. The poet has to maintain a strong sense of hope at the end of the poem, but he is faced with a challenge, since the sun in its daily cycle does not only rise, but also descends. Hence, that 'sweet golden clime, where the traveller's journey is done' can only be arrived at after a descent. In short, the end point in the journey is the joint lowest point in the journey. As we have seen, BAD IS DOWN, and if Blake were to have made literal mention of this descent in the poem, he would surely have challenged the natural embodied view of the world that his readers possess. So how does Blake get around this obstacle? Well, he appears to use two linguistic devices. Consider again the lines below.

> Ah, Sun-flower! weary of time,
>
> Who countest the steps of the Sun,
>
> Seeking after that sweet golden clime
>
> Where the traveller's journey is done. (Blake, 1977)

In these opening lines we learn from the poem's speaker – who must be close to the bloom or some pictorial representation of it in view of the use of the interjection 'ah!' – that the sunflower is weary of time. If it is weary, then it is probably starting to droop and if it is drooping, then its body language is communicating to its viewer in paralinguistic terms the BAD IS DOWN orientational metaphor. But there is an inconsistency here as the head of the sunflower must remain erect and follow the sun. Perhaps then it is the stalk and leaves that show signs of fatigue? Whatever the reason, this *Weltschmerz* appears to be a direct result of the head of the sunflower counting the steps of the sun.

Now ask yourself the following question: when you first read these lines earlier in this chapter did you comprehend those steps as being counted (a) upwards, (b) downwards, or (c) upwards and then downwards? Perhaps, like me, when I first read the poem several years ago, you chose option (a), namely 'steps go up'. As a result of our embodied cognitive view of the world, a word such as 'steps' or 'stairs' triggers the orientational metaphor GOOD IS UP in the majority of readers. Blake, however, must be referring to option (c) if he is remaining true to the movement of the sun across the sky in its daily pattern. However, he appears to have cleverly evoked the GOOD IS UP metaphor in us by limiting the information we are given, i.e. he makes no explicit mention of the descent of the sun. The second linguistic device Blake uses to help us to experience the GOOD IS UP metaphor is in his use of the word 'clime', a poetic word, meaning region or place. Phonologically, the word 'clime' and the word 'climb' (meaning 'to ascend') are homophones. This means that they have the same sound when spoken aloud. It is arguably this that persuades us to read the steps, referred to in the previous line, as going upwards, not up and then down. This is plausibly how a modern reader will experience it.[8]

Let us now reflect on the main points of this cognitive stylistic analysis. We have thus far encountered a number of inconsistencies that appear to question the validity of our overriding LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor. Through the intervention of competing alternatives at the linguistic level, the notion of LIFE IS A JOURNEY, and its contextualized parallel metaphors A DAY IS A HUMAN LIFE and/or THE DAILY MOVEMENT OF A SUNFLOWER IS A HUMAN LIFE CYCLE, somehow becomes jarred. This partial blockage allows a complementary, rather than competing, structural conceptual metaphor to emerge, namely LIFE IS A CIRCLE. This idea of circularly is supported by the textual evidence, not least by the idea that the youth and the virgin are paradoxically born from the grave.

So, to sum up this analysis, unfortunately for the sunflower, the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor – with the kind of delimited SOURCE–PATH–GOAL structure that applies to us all – has become a LIFE IS A CIRCLE experience. This is backed up literally in the opening line with the reference to being 'weary of time' and indeed the very utterance 'Ah!', which is not merely the opening word in the opening line of the poem, but also the opening word in the poem's title as well. LIFE IS A CIRCLE can be a curse, a living hell – as Prometheus knew all too well, and as did the protagonist played by Bill Murray in the film 'Groundhog Day'. Clytië, our sunflower girl, appears to be caught in this pattern. However, it can in a way also be a blessing. The notion of renewal and rebirth is the basis of some of the major religions of the world, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. It is also

a comforting theme, which many literary texts embody and project. A fine example can be found in the poem 'The Trees' by Phillip Larkin, which relates to the way trees accumulate hidden rings as evidence of their power of rebirth. Such evidence of renewal stirs the speaking voice in the final line of the poem to demand of his listeners and readers, in an emotive rhetorical style, to begin life 'afresh, afresh, afresh'.

7 Conceptual metaphor activities

7.1 Unpacking conceptual metaphor in song lyrics

Based on what you have learned try unpacking the conceptual metaphors in the song 'The Long and Winding Road' by the Beatles mentioned earlier in the chapter. Explore all the possibilities of what is mapped when, to where, and why. You might extend this into a full stylistic analysis.

7.2 Unpacking conceptual metaphor in drama

Putting your students into groups of three or four, ask them to analyse the text fragment below from Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*. First, have them identify the main conceptual metaphors underpinning the text. Then ask them which of the three categories they think they belong to: structural, orientational or ontological. Also have them reflect on the extent to which the notion '*carpe diem*' resonates in their own culture. Repeat the exercise with a text from a play written originally in your own native language.

> There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bounded in shallows and in miseries.
> On such a full sea we are now afloat,
> And we must take the current when it serves
> Or lose our ventures. (Act 4, scene 3, 218–224)

7.3 Creating and testing new conceptual metaphors

Consider the following conceptual metaphor, 'as mad as cheese' (which formally speaking is a simile), which I have just made up. In conceptual metaphorical terms it is MADNESS IS CHEESE and could be used in a sentence like 'My English linguistics professor is as mad as cheese'. Ask yourself: does this metaphor have some conceptual metaphorical potential and, if so, how culturally determined is it? Try jotting down what might be mapped from source to target. This can be done on the whiteboard by a

group of two or three students and then the whole class can comment, adding and subtracting properties. A lively critical debate among your students is what you should be aiming for. Now ask them (a) to do the same for the three invented conceptual metaphors below, and (b) to come up with three of their own (or cite them from a poem or piece of prose). This can be set for homework but should be discussed in class the week after within the framework of a critical dialogue.

(a) LIFE IS A PIECE OF SANDPAPER

(b) BRAINS ARE PORRIDGE

(c) WAR IS SUDOKU

8 Conclusion

Much excellent pedagogical work has been conducted in the domains of (conceptual) metaphor and (literary) stylistics. In this chapter, I have attempted to blend the two approaches. My aim has not been simply to suggest strategies to extend the vocabulary of L2 English learners but also to encourage and to foster a deeper level of learning in students. This has been done by asking learners to consider the nature of underlying conceptual metaphor in literature and other creative texts and crucially by getting them to unpack and consciously process the properties that are mapped from source domains to target domains and then to discuss these choices. Such a critical discussion will lead to a deeper level of learning, resulting in better levels of encoding, storage and recall. It is hoped that L2 and EFL researchers might be inspired to explore further the educational potential of conceptual metaphor within the framework of (cognitive) stylistics analysis, for there is a fruitful pedagogical journey awaiting us in this domain that has scarcely begun.

Notes

1. It has been observed that these ideas pertaining to conceptual metaphor theory are not as new as Lakoff and Johnson thought and that many writers and philosophers before them, including Bacon, Vico and Nietzsche, had made similar arguments (see Wales' discussion of 'conceptual metaphor theory' (2011: 65) for more on this).
2. Image schemas are recurring structures within our cognitive processes that establish patterns of understanding and reasoning. They are formed from our bodily interactions (from linguistic experience) and from historical context (see Johnson, 1987). Categories include 'force', 'spatial motion' and 'balance'. The 'spatial motion' group contains such schemas as 'containment', 'path', 'blockage', 'centre–periphery', 'cycle', 'cyclic climax' and 'source–path–goal'.

3. For example, in Aymara, which is an Amerindian language spoken in the Andean highlands of Bolivia, Peru and Chile, the word for front (eye/sight) is used to express past time and the word for back (eye/sight) expresses future time (Núñez and Sweetser 2006). More commonly, 'time' in some major East Asian languages like Korean, Mandarin and Japanese is expressed vertically rather than horizontally. So something from the past is above rather than behind and something in the future is below rather than ahead. This leads to expressions like 'up-week' (for 'last week') and 'down-week' (for 'next week)'. (Radden 2011).
4. See Freeman (1993; 1995).
5. For more on the pedagogical learning methods of the ancient rhetorical progymnasmata see Kennedy (2003). For a related modern take on this see Pope (1994).
6. Interestingly, from an etymological point for view, the word 'journey' (related to the French *jour*) is similar to the word 'daily' in that it used to mean 'a day's work' or 'a day's travel'. This second notion ties in neatly with the daily progression of the sun and the sunflower in the Greek myth on which the poem is based. Hence, 'love is a journey' becomes 'love is the travelling/progression done in a single day'.
7. Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,
   rumoresque senum severiorum
   omnes unius aestimemus assis.
   soles occidere et redire possunt:
   nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
   nox est perpetua una dormienda.
8. Whether or not these lexical and phonological criteria counted for the late-18th-century reader is something that would require detailed diachronic reader-reception research, which you are encouraged to explore further.

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