Variations on Metaphor

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Edited by

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Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2021

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-7209-9
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-7209-6

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An edited volume cannot but be the result of a team effort. Hence, the people the editors of this collection are indebted to are many. First of all, we wish to thank all the contributors, for accepting to be part of this journey with us and doing so in a cooperative and enthusiastic fashion. Secondly, we thank the team at Cambridge Scholars Press for accepting our proposal and for supporting us throughout the whole process. Thirdly, we are thankful to all the colleagues from the Universities of Genoa, Turin and Cagliari involved in the research project *Nuove prospettive nella ricerca sulle metafore* / *New research perspectives on metaphors* this volume is an output of, for the many discussions about the topics included in this book, which have sparked our interest and helped us define the themes and scope of the collection. We thank the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research for funding said research project within the PRIN 2015 framework (grant no. 2015YHYWSH, P.I. Michele Prandi), which facilitated the formation and support of a national research network and the organisation of many stimulating events. We thank the University of Genoa and the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures of the same University for their assistance during the organisation of one such event in May 2019, the international conference titled *Researching Metaphor – Cognitive and Other / Autour de la métaphore – De la métaphore cognitive et d'autres approches*, as well as the administrative personnel and students who helped. Last but certainly not least, we thank all the participants in the conference for sharing the results of their research and turning the event into an opportunity for illuminating discussions which offered much food for thought, so much so many of the chapters collected in this volume stem from presentations originally given in that occasion. Finally, we are extremely thankful for the constant help, support and invaluable insights of esteemed colleagues and friends Michele Prandi and Micaela Rossi, who coordinated the research unit in Genoa for the whole duration of the project and have always found the time, in spite of their many other commitments, to share their thoughts with us and offer priceless feedback.

THEORETICAL, CULTURAL, DISCURSIVE, AND DIACHRONIC VARIATION IN METAPHOR RESEARCH: OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

ILARIA RIZZATO, FRANCESCA STRIK LIEVERS, ELISABETTA ZURRU

1. Aims and scope of the volume

Ever since the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), metaphor has emerged as a central topic in studies of language, thought, and communication. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), whose approach has benefitted from and contributed to the so-called "cognitive turn" in the humanities, has established a number of founding principles to which the whole discipline of Metaphor Studies is indebted. These include: the idea that metaphor is not a mere decorative element or an exclusively "local" rhetorical device; the shift in focus from literature and rhetoric to basic and generalised communicative settings; the emphasis on conventional uses of metaphor and their role as mind-shaping cognitive frameworks that are mainly unconsciously received and enacted; the value-laden nature of metaphor, revealing of the way we think; the founding relationship between source and target domain, where the source domain is mapped onto a target.

In other words, CMT has cast light on the fundamental and pervasive role of metaphors as mind-framing structures in thought, language, and communication. Metaphors have thus been described as a heritage of shared concepts underlying human thought, expression and action. This perspective has also emphasised the common sources of such concepts in human experience, especially bodily experience, and foregrounded their applicability across linguistic and cultural boundaries – although the English-speaking world has been central in the first stages of such inquiry both in terms of developing methods and analytic tools and as an object of analysis. The prominence assigned to "universal" and inherent aspects of

metaphors has also channelled attention towards conventional uses of metaphors and their unconscious, non-deliberate adoption in communication.

These pivotal notions have provided a vast and solid basis for intensive research on conceptual metaphors which lie behind human thought and action. Although these tenets have found applications in a number of different contexts, their main principles provide relatively homogeneous interpretative patterns within the cognitive tradition.

A number of eminent responses have been raised to widen, deepen and challenge aspects of CMT while remaining within its scope. Kövecses (2000, 2002), for example, has researched extensively into the role of embodiment in the conceptualisation of metaphors, and has shown the importance of cultural differences in the formation of Conceptual Metaphors (2005, 2015). The Pragglejaz Group (2007) has developed a procedure for the identification of metaphors, which has been subsequently refined and applied to different genres and languages (Steen et al. 2010; Nacey et al. 2019). Musolff (2004), Goatly (2007) and Charteris-Black (2011) have investigated the role of metaphor in the language of power. Gibbs (2011, 2014) has put the linguistic and psychological evidence supporting CMT under discussion, and has invoked a more open view of alternative explanations of conceptual metaphor origins and uses on the part of CMT.

Some approaches have been openly critical of specific aspects of the cognitive linguistic tradition. Steen (2008), for instance, has underlined "the paradox of metaphor" in CMT's nearly exclusive focus on conceptual framings that are not even experienced as metaphorical by users. This paradox is addressed by identifying deliberateness as a criterion for distinguishing what is actually used and processed as metaphor from what relegates its metaphorical nature to the realm of the conventional and the unconscious (Steen 2011). Based on these principles, Deliberate Metaphor Theory emphasises the importance of situational aspects in real-life communication, displaying a wide range of applications that interestingly include rhetoric and argumentation.

A reappraisal of the role of rhetoric is also central to the criticism moved to CMT in the volume edited by Chrzanowska-Kluczewska (2013). Critical views suggesting pathways aiming to go beyond CMT may also be found in Fludernik's collection (2014), including Busse, Forceville and Goatly proposing the integration of CMT with Fauconnier and Turner's theory of blending (2002), Douthwaite's emphasis on the role of pragmatics and context in conceptual metaphor, and Coenen, Biebuyck and Martens' use of narratology.

A model of figurative language considerably challenging CMT premises is that based on the notion of conceptual conflict devised by Prandi (2017). Conceptual conflict is what arises in complex meanings presenting conceptual relations inconsistent with our shared system of conceptual presuppositions about different kinds of being, or natural ontology (Prandi 2016). It characterises living metaphors as opposed to conventional ones, thus shifting attention to the former, which had been partly obscured by Lakoff and Johnson's focus on underlying, shared metaphorical concepts (Prandi 2012, 2017). Emphasis on conflictual metaphors highlights the individual act of creation behind them and is closely related to linguistic creativity and the construction of new perspectives in communication. In Prandi's view, this is the way conflictual metaphors look forward: they propose new and unique acts of creation, rather than just re-proposing already existing metaphorical concepts. Conventional metaphors, on the other hand, look backward in the sense that they draw on a system of already shared concepts belonging to consistent thought, of which polysemy is also part (Prandi 2017). Prandi's conceptual conflict model has played a pivotal role in the ideation and development of the project *Nuove prospettive nella ricerca sulle metafore* / *New research perspectives on metaphors*, which aimed at the investigation of alternative or underexplored pathways in Metaphor Studies and inspired some of the contributions in this volume.

To sum up, this volume sets out both to build on the results obtained by CMT and by the many pathways it has inspired, and to explore different approaches leading to new research areas. The keyword in this attempt is *variation*, since this book seeks to enlarge the perspective offered by CMT and discuss some alternative views on metaphor, as well as to explore research areas and methods which tend to attract less attention. Variation is expressed in this volume along four main lines of inquiry: a theoretical line, showing the advantages of integrating CMT with other perspectives; a cultural line, looking at comparatively less studied linguistic and cultural spheres; the line of specialised languages, focusing on sectorial conceptual mappings and terminology; and a diachronic line, identifying variation of metaphorical concepts over time and looking into metaphors back in time. These four lines of research are not mutually exclusive; rather, cross-fertilisation among them allows for consistency in variation.

2. Structure of the volume

As mentioned above, the ten chapters collected in this volume are organised into four sections and explore how the linguistic realizations of metaphor vary across languages, genres, cultures, and time. Collectively, they aim at investigating such variability by exploring metaphor through avenues that tend to be less travelled, either in terms of theoretical approach or of the nature of the linguistic data they analyse.

The first section of the volume includes contributions which adopt Prandi's notion of conceptual conflict as the key to a more encompassing perspective on metaphor, which allows to analyse not only conventional, but also non-conventional metaphors. From a theoretical point of view, the first three chapters in the volume show that the cognitive linguistic approach can usefully be integrated by other perspectives.

In Chapter 1 ("Conflictual metaphors and metaphorical swarms in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*") Daniele Borgogni relies on the notion of conceptual conflict to analyse Shakespeare's play *Cymbeline*, showing that this work represents an interesting case study to investigate the scope and function of metaphors in spite of its being generally considered a minor play by literary critics. Against a backdrop of mostly dull themes, character psychologies and plot, the play offers many examples of living, conflictual metaphors that produce a complex network of projections. The phenomenon of metaphorical swarms (Prandi 2012) is also highlighted, and illustrated by means of a careful analysis of many passages from the play.

In Chapter 2 Filippo Pecorari deals with anaphoric encapsulators, that is, noun phrases that refer to and resume a preceding portion of text. More specifically, Pecorari focuses on metaphoric and metonymic anaphoric encapsulators, proposing a formal and functional classification of such encapsulators based on examples taken from a corpus of Italian newspaper articles. In this chapter, conceptual conflict plays a crucial role in distinguishing between metaphoric and metonymic anaphoric encapsulators. Metaphor embraces the conflict, leading to a novel categorisation of the antecedent (e.g., in *Teachers went on strike. The battle has just begun*, teachers' strike is recategorized in terms of battle). Metonymy, on the contrary, dissolves the conflict by means of a consistent relationship between the encapsulator and the antecedent (e.g., in *Teachers went on strike. The news has been confirmed by the press*, teachers' strike is considered as the content of a speech act, which is consistently resumed by *the news*).

While Borgogni explores the applicability of the theory of conceptual conflict to the analysis of metaphors in literature, Ilaria Rizzato investigates the pragmatic applications of conceptual conflict to literary metaphor translation in Chapter 3 ("Conceptual conflicts in translation: a pragmatic perspective"). This contribution focuses on the translation of living metaphors from English into Italian and adopts a view of translation as a pragmatic activity, in which context, situational aspects and language- and culture-specific elements are fundamental, as underlined by some of the most authoritative scholars in Translation Studies (Baker 1992, House 1997, Snell-Hornby 1998). On this basis, Rizzato argues that Prandi's 2017 model provides a useful set of resources for metaphor translation. Unlike CMT, which puts an emphasis on universal aspects of metaphors and on their conventional uses, the theory of conceptual conflict – by differentiating between living and conventional metaphors and describing metaphors in more detail – is better suited to take into account the complexities of the messages, texts and situations in which they appear. This, in turn, allows to achieve a thorough interpretation of their meaning and facilitates translation.

The remaining seven chapters in the volume show that a cognitive linguistic approach can be applied to (re)trace metaphor variation through the careful analysis of the use of metaphors in texts of profoundly different natures. In particular, three dimensions of variation are taken into account: cultural/linguistic, genre-based, and diachronic variation.

Cultural and linguistic variation is investigated in the second section of the volume. The three chapters that make up this segment explore metaphor variation across cultures by offering fascinating perspectives into such cultural environments as China, Hungary, and India.

Tommaso Pellin investigates metaphors for linguistic concepts such as those referring to 'sentence' and its internal structure in the Chinese tradition in Chapter 4 ("The conceptualization of the sentence in traditional Chinese linguistics"). Among the semantic domains CMT has been applied to, the domain of language is the object of several studies. Against the background of this rich literature, Pellin's contribution examines the conceptual metaphors behind the linguistic notion of 'sentence' (*ju* 句) in the Chinese context. The chapter suggests that CONSTITUENTS ARE CONTENTS and ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE are the primary metaphors lying behind the most frequent grammar-related conceptual metaphors identified within the CMT literature (i.e., SENTENCE IS A CONTAINER, SENTENCE IS A BUILDING and SENTENCE IS A TREE). The investigation of the notion of *ju* 句 'sentence' in a Chinese linguistics text (*Wenxin diaolong*) published in the sixth century, that is, before any

contact with the Western linguistic tradition, reveals the presence of yet another primary metaphor, i.e. SENTENCE IS A VERTICAL PATH. The use of this metaphor in sixth century China, and its later obsolescence due to the influence of Western linguistics, may be seen as evidence of metaphors' cultural and diachronic variation.

Judit Baranyiné Kóczy focuses on emotion metaphors in folk songs in the Hungarian context in Chapter 5 ("Are folk-cultural metaphors congruent? The case of Hungarian folk songs"). The contribution investigates metaphor variation and its motivations from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian 2017), analysing various instantiations of the EMOTION IS A RIVER and LOVE IS A ROSE-TREE cultural metaphors in a corpus of Hungarian folk songs. Baranyiné Kóczy shows that such instantiations cannot be fully accounted for as a culturally specific realization "congruent" with a single generic-level conceptual metaphor. Rather, the notion of congruence has to be complemented by that of culturally salient image schemas, whose source is to be found in the cultural and environmental experience of the community. In other words, the emergence of folk cultural metaphors seems to be motivated by the community members' habitual exposure to certain culture-specific objects and events, more than by generic-level metaphors and schemas.

While Chapter 4 explores metaphors for the concept of 'language' in a Chinese panorama, Esterino Adami investigates the same issue in the context of Indian English in Chapter 6 ("Of monsters, deities and people: conceptualising English language in the postcolonial world"). By virtue of its being a global language, English is often conceptualised through cognitive metaphors such as ENGLISH IS AN OBJECT or ENGLISH IS A LIVING ENTITY. By adopting a methodology drawing from metaphor studies, cognitive stylistics and critical pedagogy, this chapter considers the role, function and power of English and its figurative expressions connected with MONSTERS and DEITIES, with a specific focus on the postcolonial Indian world. Here, English can be viewed as the Hydra, the mythological many-headed Greek monster, able to influence local contexts and languages, but it can also acquire a more culturally specific form, as when English is portrayed as the Dalit goddess. The contribution shows how the metaphoric conceptualisation of the English language varies based both on cultural context and on text genre (i.e., academic and informative materials), and discusses how figurative representations embed ideological values.

Variation across text genres is specifically addressed in the two chapters included in the third section of the collection, which is devoted to metaphors in specialised discourse.

The first of these contributions is offered by Claudio Grimaldi and John Humbley, who carry out an insightful analysis of the emergence of genre-specific metaphors in 18th century French botany texts in Chapter 7 ("The role of metaphor in the emergence of botanical terminology in the 18th century"). This chapter highlights the role of metaphors in scientific conceptualization, with special attention paid to botanical metaphors emerging and being used in French scientific discourse during the early Enlightenment, which contribute to the creation of modern botanical terminology. By applying the methodological framework of diachronic terminology to the analysis of a corpus of scientific journals, dictionaries, and encyclopaedias, this investigation reveals that animal anatomy functions as the main source of botanical metaphors, some of which are "recycled" from Latin ones and revitalised within the emerging scientific discourse of modern botany.

The second contribution of the third section is authored by Antonella Luporini, who offers a timely investigation of the way the new financial subfield of cryptocurrencies sees an abundance of metaphorical realisations in present-day English in Chapter 8 ("Hidden treasure or irrational beast? Metaphors for cryptocurrencies between social journalism and specialised press"). This chapter shares some initial findings of an ongoing research project on cryptocurrency-related metaphors in different media. Thanks to a theoretical approach which merges CMT and the notion of nominalisation as discussed within Grammatical Metaphor Theory (Halliday and Matthiessen 1999), this study applies both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore how cryptocurrencies are metaphorically framed in an *ad hoc* corpus of social journalism (*Medium*) and specialised press (*The Wall Street Journal*). The corpus includes texts published between September 2017 and February 2018, a time when the cryptocurrency Bitcoin experienced an important boom-bust event. The analysis, conducted by means of MIP and MIPVU metaphor identification procedures (Pragglejaz Group 2007; Steen et al. 2010), reveals that both *Medium* and *The Wall Street Journal* metaphorically refer to cryptocurrencies by relying on "revitalised" versions of source concepts commonly used for more traditional financial and economic products. However, conceptual metaphors and nominalisations in *The Wall Street Journal* tend to give a more negative representation of cryptocurrencies in comparison to *Medium*.

Metaphor variation over time is the focus of the fourth and final section of the volume, which provides insights on the use of metaphors in ancient Indo-European languages, and their diachronic evolution.

Chiara Fedriani and Francesca Strik Lievers investigate how the metaphorical meanings of the Latin word *color* have evolved and changed over time, up to present-day Italian *colore*, in Chapter 9 ("When discourse is a painting: *color* metaphors from Latin to Italian"). On the basis of lexicographic and corpus data, this chapter explores the rise, diachronic persistence and/or decay of figurative meanings of the lexeme under scrutiny. The metaphorical developments identified by the authors, which include the increase in the degree of evaluativity of recent metaphorical senses of *colore* (vs. Latin *color*), are consistent with a well-known semantic pathway of change, whereby subjective meanings tend to evolve from non-subjective ones. The chapter also highlights the importance of taking into account cultural motivations and discourse traditions when analysing the diachronic evolution of specific metaphors.

Finally, Riccardo Ginevra examines the use of metaphors and metonymies in an Ancient Greek text, also considering comparative data from other Indo-European poetic traditions, in Chapter 10 ("Metaphor, metonymy, and myth: Persephone's death-like journey in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* in the light of Greek phraseology, Indo-European poetics, and Cognitive Linguistics"). The case study selected for scrutiny in this contribution is an epic poem composed during the first half of the 1st millennium BCE, which is the main source for the myth of the goddess Persephone's abduction by the death-god Hades. This chapter adopts a combined approach to the interpretation of this text that takes into account both Ancient Greek parallels, comparative data from other Indo-European poetic traditions, and the findings of contemporary Cognitive Linguistics. Based on this theoretical and methodological premise, Ginevra argues that, although Persephone is an immortal goddess, her journey is conceptualized in terms of life and death, reflecting conceptual metaphors and metonymies that are widely expressed not only in Ancient Greek but more generally in historical Indo-European languages.

Overall, the volume aims at showcasing how metaphor can be fruitfully explored from different theoretical perspectives and investigated across languages, cultures, text genres, and time. Thanks to the ten contributions it includes, it sets out to provide the reader with an overview of current linguistic research on metaphor variation that is at the same time diversified and coherent.

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PART ONE

METAPHORS AND CONCEPTUAL CONFLICTS

CHAPTER ONE

CONFLICTUAL METAPHORS AND METAPHORICAL SWARMS IN SHAKESPEARE'S *CYMBELINE*

DANIELE BORGOGNI

The article discusses the use and function of metaphors in *Cymbeline*, a late play of Shakespeare's which has been regularly stigmatized as an egregious failure. Despite its almost universal critical condemnation, *Cymbeline* offers interesting materials to study the scope and function of metaphors: the play's very dullness as to themes, character psychology or plot sets off its sophisticated handling of figurative language, making it an interesting case study to discuss the use and function of various kinds of metaphors. In particular, the article focuses on the use of living, conflictual metaphors in the wake of Prandi's comprehensive study on metaphors and figurative language, which revives Black's and Ricœur's emphasis on the projective dimension of metaphors and their importance in creating a new cognitive framework. The article analyses selected excerpts from the play to discuss how different metaphors are deployed by the characters, devoting special attention to the creative use of metaphors and their valorisation in producing a complex network of projections. The article also tries to highlight the phenomenology of conflictual metaphors in the form of metaphorical swarms, and their capacity to arouse expectations of truthfulness that are only apparently satisfied, or which mask false truths as relevant, trustworthy communication.

1. Introduction

One of the last plays written by Shakespeare (it was probably represented in 1611), *Cymbeline* belongs to the so-called tragicomedies or romances and has been regularly stigmatized as an egregious failure: in Johnson's opinion, to remark the absurdity and implausibility of the play would amount to "waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation" (Johnson 1756, 162);

in 1896, Shaw insisted that *Cymbeline* was "for the most part stagey trash of the lowest melodramatic order, in parts abominably written, throughout intellectually vulgar, and, … foolish, offensive, indecent, and exasperating beyond all tolerance" (Shaw 1922, 51).

More recently, puzzled critics and scholars have tried to rescue the play, considering it as an anatomy of human relationships and emphasizing the moral quality of the main character, Princess Innogen, thus reading the play as a moral parable in which she embodies the highest spiritual virtues.[1] As for the disappointing features of the play, they have been recognized but quickly disposed of with embarrassment rather than adequately analysed in their meaning potential; at best, they have been pigeonholed under the rather generic label of experimental characteristics.[2] This article will try to revise some of these assumptions, in the belief that *Cymbeline*'s dullness as to themes, character psychology or plot sets off and upholds a sophisticated handling of figurative language,[3] making it an interesting case study to discuss the use and function of various kinds of metaphors in early modern textuality. In particular, the article will focus on the use and function of conflictual metaphors which feature prominently in the text and tend to proliferate in specific scenes. Seen from this perspective, *Cymbeline* does not appear as the baffling accomplishment of a playwright on the wane; on the contrary, its awkward nature can be considered as a deliberate attempt to open up new paths and scopes for the Elizabethan theatre, already superseded by the new Jacobean sensibility.

2. Conflictual metaphors as poetic truths

Conceptual Metaphor Theory is the obvious theoretical standpoint for this article, with its idea that metaphors are pervasive in human communication and provide a common cognitive model in which abstract concepts are structured and understood through models projected from concrete source domains.[4] Conceptual Metaphor Theory, however, cannot fully explain

[1] See the classic studies by Tillyard (1938) and Knight (1947).

[2] For example, Drabble (2013) drew attention to the Pirandellian atmosphere in the play.

[3] In this article I will use the term "figurative language" as a broad cover when addressing a variety of phenomena in this field, following Prandi's contention that there are of course different types of metaphors while the cognitivist tradition has traditionally flattened and overlooked these differences, as if figures and metaphors all belonged to a single typology.

[4] The bibliography on Conceptual Metaphor Theory is unmanageably broad. Apart from such fundamental classics as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff and

how the mappings between domains can produce new, richer constructs from a semantic point of view, because cognitivist studies tend to consider metaphors as instruments to attenuate and ultimately overcome conceptual conflicts. That is why it is important to supplement that theory with a more interactive vision of metaphor, in the wake of such scholars as Black (1954) or Ricœur (2003), who stressed the projective dimension of metaphors and their importance in creating a cognitive framework, or Prandi (2017), who pinpointed conflictual concept as the quintessential feature of creative metaphors. In this way it is possible to achieve a more unitary vision and a closer integration between the idea of shared metaphorical concepts, advanced by the cognitive tradition, and the idea of conceptual creativity.

As Prandi stresses, the creative use of metaphors is strictly tied to the structure of projection, which is the basic form of conceptual interaction in conflictual metaphors:[5] the tendency of metaphors to transfer a concept into an alien domain means that "the conflict is kept open and valorised as an instrument of conceptual interaction and creation" (Prandi 2017, 94). More specifically, conflictual metaphors, which often aggregate in swarms of interconnected metaphorical expressions,[6] are the outcome of contingent interpretations of expressions which are inconsistent at a conceptual level, though usually following a predictable, formal scaffolding at a syntactical level.[7] This means that they do not feature a structural property which produces the conflict, but trigger a network of relations at the conceptual level that do not match with any consistent and shared conceptual model

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Turner (1989), most ideas and theoretical issues are usefully summarized by Kövecses (2015).

[5] According to Prandi (2012, 153), "Conceptual interaction is the direct consequence of conceptual transfer, which in turn is the specific feature of metaphor". Moreover, "Any metaphor, be it consistent or conflictual, stems from the transfer of a concept into a strange domain" (Prandi 2017, 114).

[6] Since "a whole network of projections can be brought back to a single conflictual metaphorical concept" (Prandi 2012, 157) conflictual metaphors "are ready to give birth to more or less dense swarms of interconnected metaphorical expressions" (149). See also Prandi (2017, 142 ff.).

[7] An inconsistent sentence "violates no formal distributional restriction. On the contrary, it is precisely its formal scaffolding, which is insensitive to the pressure of the connected concepts, that gives a sentence the strength to put together atomic concepts in a creative way" (Prandi 2017, 56). Carston (2002 and 2010), among others, stressed the local, pragmatic adjustment of the encoded lexical meaning in metaphors, resulting in an "ad hoc" concept.

and thereby depend upon the interpreter's hermeneutic answer.[8] In other words, conflictual meanings are perceived as such because their "normal" linguistic form is used to convey new meanings which question and thereby modify the reader's vision of the world.

This tensional nature of conflictual metaphors is highly characteristic, since, as Ricœur clarified, the "tendency towards further development distinguishes metaphor from the other tropes, which are exhausted in their immediate expression" (Ricœur 2003, 224). Carston (2010, 299), too, duly reminded that "Grice, Searle and Sperber-Wilson … all acknowledge the rich open-endedness of metaphoric interpretation, the indeterminacy of the speaker's intention in this connection and the indefinite range of the implications that might be recovered".

This implies a radical subversion and rearrangement of our vision of reality, but also a radical reinterpretation of the concepts and realities inherent in the tenor, not to mention the conflict between literal and metaphorical interpretation, and the relational function of the copula between identity and difference:

> When the poet says that 'nature is a temple where living columns . . .' the verb to be does not just connect the predicate temple to the subject nature along the lines of the threefold tension outlined above. The copula is not only relational. It implies besides, by means of the predicative relationship, that what is is redescribed; it says that things really are this way. (Ricœur 2003, 292)

In other words, through metaphors, language divests itself of its function of direct, referential description to achieve a more heuristic and creative function. A similar idea had been proposed by Burckhardt (1956: 280-81), who underscored the dissociative quality of creative poetic devices, whose task is to "drive a wedge between words and their meanings, and lessen as much as possible their designatory force". Metaphors get their force from the extension of knowledge they produce, from the "sacrifice" of the customary meaning of a term (see Foss 1949: 60) which produces a tensional interplay between contingent interpretations, destroying language in its referential dimension in order to open it to new, unconventional truths.

This projective and quintessentially disruptive power of metaphors also implies that they have a strong solidarity with Husserl's concept of *epoché* or phenomenological "bracketing", through which one is able to suspend judgment and any general philosophical belief in the existence of the

[8] As Prandi (2017, 42) clarifies, "a conflict is not a structural property of the expression, but the outcome of a choice made by the interpreter".

external world. This does not imply the negation of the world or the affirmation of a skeptical ontological doubt, but simply a suspension of any naïve or direct cognitive attitude: conflictual metaphors allow readers to see phenomena as they are originally given to consciousness as opposed to the known of sensory experience, thus suspending any expectation of a merely representational function in language and accepting the new insights produced by the tension between identification and predication.[9]

One last aspect to take into consideration is the typical capacity of conflictual metaphors to blend the cognitive, imaginative, and affective aspects of language. According to Ricœur (2003, 224), "If metaphor adds nothing to the description of the world, at least it adds to the ways in which we perceive … metaphor extends the power of double meaning from the cognitive realm to the affective" and this insight was revived by Carston (2010, 298), who claimed that "what a metaphor does is bring to our attention aspects of the topic that we might not otherwise notice, by provoking us or nudging us to 'see' the topic in a new or unusual way."[10]

This means that, whether we stress the "tensive vibrancy" and "tensive character" of metaphors (Wheelwright 1962, 74 and 116) or the "new and strange insight" deriving from the sacrifice of the terms (Foss 1949, 60), or the gain in meaning it brings about thanks to the "predicative assimilation" (Ricœur 2003, 350), what emerges is the capacity of metaphor to force language to transcend itself and its logical, referential dimension: metaphors' productive and projective nature borders on the perceptual immediacy of intuitive understanding and goes beyond purely rational persuasion, stimulating also a sort of affective assent which, as Stambovsky (1988, 90) avers, "renders perceived relationships, or (less abstractly) thoughts and feelings, in a symbolic, presentationally immediate form".

In conclusion, by imposing *epoché,* the tensional character of conflictual metaphors valorises what cannot be reduced to merely rational formulas and requires a different, more active approach from their interpreters, because it stresses the necessity of overcoming the usual polarization between rational and affective arguments. In fact, such metaphors become, as it were, poetic truths which displace lexical meanings, blur the distinction between interior and exterior, radically shake standard intellectual expectations as well as customary emotional self-complacency, and, by conflating them, boost the reader's hermeneutic response.

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[9] On these aspects see Ricœur's idea that "what can be generalized in metaphor is not its substitutive essence but its predicative essence" (Ricœur 2003, 234) but also Strawson's analysis of subject and predicate (1959, 137 ff.).

[10] On these aspects see also Carston and Wearing (2011) and Carston (2018).

3. Conflictual metaphors in *Cymbeline*

When analysed from the perspective of conflictual metaphors discussed above, *Cymbeline* becomes a particularly rewarding text, built around the ability of some characters to transcend the mere ornamental function of figurative language and produce complex, multilayered meanings. Their skill in the creation of living metaphors stems from their talent for imposing an indirect form of communication; in this way, such characters are able to trigger a contingent interpretative process in which the inferential content is activated by open-ended projections and transfers, thereby radically influencing their interlocutor's vision and interpretation of the world.

The play opens with an external description by two minor characters who comment on the situation at the British court: contrary to his father's will, King Cymbeline, Innogen married the lowborn gentleman Posthumus, who is then banished and flies to Italy, while Innogen herself has to rebuff the pursues of Cymbeline's violent and loathsome stepson, Cloten. This first scene sets the tone and, in a way, has the function of what psychologists call priming: it creates a background which can powerfully prejudice subsequent observations. The scene repeatedly stresses that HUMANS ARE OBJECTS, a metaphorical concept which is valorised as conflictual to provide a disturbing, but faithful, description of the British court, where people are considered inanimate things: the First Gentleman defines Cloten "a thing / Too bad for bad report" (I, 1, 16);[11] a little later king Cymbeline will call the recently banned Posthumus "basest thing" (I, 1, 126) and even address his beloved daughter Innogen as "a disloyal thing" (I, 1, 132) and a "foolish thing" (I, 1, 151) because she married Posthumus. This CM is so internalized by all the characters that Innogen herself says that her only consolation during Posthumus's exile will be to know that "there is this jewel in the world / That I may see again" (I, 1, 92-93). She even describes herself in economic terms, bringing up the fact that Posthumus "over-buys me / Almost the sum he pays" (I, 1, 147-48).

It is highly significant, moreover, that, when she talks to her loyal servant Pisanio, who witnessed Posthumus's departure by ship, Innogen wishes he "grew'st unto the shores o'th' haven / And questionedst every sail" (I, 3, 1-2). The emotional confusion of her mind is wonderfully expressed by the ambiguity of her desire, which blurs what she really implies by her inconsistent figurative language: should Pisanio become a

[11] All quotations are from Shakespeare (2005), which has convincingly argued for some spelling adjustments in the name of some characters, most importantly Innogen (formerly Imogen) and Giacomo (formerly Iachimo).

sea plant? Or should he remain a human statue perpetually on the shore without leaving the haven? In both cases, Innogen expects an inhuman transformation of his servant, which is made stronger by the inconsistent recommendation of questioning every sail arriving in the haven.

Of course it is possible to defuse the conflict and interpret the whole sentence as a hyperbole ("be unremittingly present at the port as a plant growing on the shore") and/or a metonymy (the sails are a synecdoche for ship, which in turn is a metonymy for the sailors), but if we read it as a complex conflictual metaphor we get the confirmation of a mechanistic vision of the world in which people are objects, or are transformed into inanimate things, and gather information asking inanimate objects like the sails. Emblematically, Innogen's dialogue with Pisanio ends with a complex but conventional metaphorical concept which stresses the objectification of people at court: lovers are flowers while Cymbeline is a chill wind which "like the tyrannous breathing of the north, / Shakes all our buds from growing" (I, 3, 37-38).

Sometimes, when metaphors and other figurative expressions interact with textual and contextual elements, they become relevant because they produce elaborate figurative patterns which reverberate through the play. For example, when Posthumus promises to read Innogen's letters ("with mine eyes I'll drink the words you send / Though ink be made of gall", I, 1, 101-102), the inconsistent concept (drink the words) is enriched by a revitalised idiomatic expression, whose subsidiary subject – in this case *gall* − becomes relevant at textual level, although it is not relevant for the idiom. As the play will show, the gullible Posthumus will really swallow Giacomo's lies concerning Innogen's fidelity and the gall (traditionally used to make standard ink) will really become a bitter substance for Pisanio when he receives a written order from his master to kill Innogen.

The valorisation of this elaborate figurative pattern, enriched by the biblical allusion to the well-known image of the bitter book eaten in *Revelation* 10, 9-10, is even clearer when one considers the difficulties it entails for translation: in Italian, for example, "gall" does not belong to the same idiomatic expression as the original and can only indicate either one or the other subsidiary subject (*inchiostro* 'ink' or *fiele* 'bile'), thus eliminating the ambivalence of the English term or obliging the translator to resort to a different metaphor (in Italian, ink can be black or dark, but not bitter).

Wicked Giacomo's arrogant and derogatory attitude to people is, in a way, the perfect paradigm of this mechanistic universe, which finds its figural counterpart in the stock images and trite prejudices which are turned into traditional, non-conflictual metaphors. When Posthumus is

introduced for the first time to Giacomo, the Italian gentleman tells he already met Posthumus before, when the latter was "of a crescent note" (I, 4, 2), but he assures he was not impressed by him even if "the catalogue of his endowments had been tabled by his side and I to peruse him by items" (5-6). If qualities are natural gifts that can be examined one by one, it does not come as a surprise that Posthumus is described by his Italian host, Filario, as a piece of furniture which was less furnished in the past (I, 4, 7), or again by Giacomo as something "that must be weighed rather by her value than his own" (I, 4, 14-15). His debasement is complete when Giacomo disparagingly characterizes his actions through a conflictual metaphorical concept (he asks Filario "But how comes it he is to sojourn with you? How creeps acquaintance?", I, 4, 22-23). As is typical in living metaphors, in this case it is the tenor and not the vehicle to be put under pressure, thus presenting Posthumus as a parasitic insect or worm.

As to women, they are conquered country: most of the play revolves around the wager between Giacomo and Posthumus on women's fidelity, and while Posthumus boasts of Innogen's faithfulness to him, Giacomo scornfully reviles her judgement as "a fortress which else an easy battery might lay flat", I, 4, 20-21, boasting that "With five times so much conversation I should effortlessly get ground of her your fair mistress", I, 4, 101-2). Interestingly, Innogen is also proleptically compared to a jewel ("she your jewel, this your jewel, and my gold are yours", I, 4, 150-51) and this association is particularly important, because the metaphorical concept it conveys (WOMEN ARE JEWELS) implies that the princess can be considered a thing, and so Giacomo will be able to demonstrate Innogen's infidelity not in reality, but just showing a token.

In fact, when Giacomo arrives in Britain, he immediately realizes that his plans to seduce Innogen will fail, but instead of dropping his plan he hides secretly in her bedroom, creeps out while she is asleep, records the details of the room, notes a mole under her left breast, and steals a bracelet from her arm. In this way, he will be able to return to Italy triumphantly, producing the bracelet and intimate details about Innogen's body and bedchamber. Giacomo's cunning trick, in other words, is not only a face-saving deception to win the wager; it also accomplishes the symbolical inversion between people and things, sanctioned by two conflictual images before and after his British journey: the wager itself is presented as a living thing ("lest the bargain should catch cold and starve", I, 4, 163-64); the bracelet is compared to a living creature who needs to breathe and to be married:

> Then, if you can
> Be pale, I beg but leave to air this jewel. See!

He shows the bracelet
And now 'tis up again; it must be married
To that your diamond. I'll keep them. (II, 4, 95-99)

The force of the metaphor is made greater by the fact that an object, described as a living being, literally takes life away from Posthumus, and, married to a ring, means the separation between Posthumus and his wife.

The success of Giacomo's lie obviously depends upon Posthumus's credulity but also on the former's careful rhetorical manipulation of his listener: Giacomo's allusive reticence ("She writes so to you, doth she?" II, 4, 105) is reinforced by his studied ambivalence which Posthumous interprets unequivocally:

GIACOMO
By Jupiter, I had it from her arm.
POSTHUMUS
Hark you, he swears, by Jupiter he swears.
'Tis true, nay, keep the ring, 'tis true. I am sure
she would not lose it. (II, 4, 121-124)

until he ultimately yields to his 'confirmation bias' and interprets Giacomo's words as evidence of his own deepest fears:

If you will swear you have not done't, you lie,
And I will kill thee if thou dost deny
Thou'st made me cuckold. (II, 4, 144-146)

Not only is Posthumus spurred to a hasty conclusion and a simple verdict by Giacomo; he also complies with his rhetorical rules and ideological prejudices: he compares his wife Innogen to the sea, but he uses a metaphor ("if you make your voyage upon her", I, 4, 155-56) with clear sexual overtones which, once again, put pressure on the tenor challenging and reshaping its conceptual profile, eventually resulting in Innogen's defamation.

Giacomo manages to convince Posthumus so effectively that the latter conforms to his inverted logic: the ring which Innogen gave Posthumus as a parting gift will become alive as a mythical animal giving death ("It is a basilisk unto mine eye, / Kills me to look on't", II, 4, 107-108). Consequently, Posthumus eventually describes his wife as a prostitute ("She hath bought the name of whore thus dearly", II, 4, 128) relying on a conflictual figure which reverses the traditional role of prostitutes: instead of selling her body and willy-nilly getting the name of whore, here

Innogen buys her infamy expensively, though in reality she never yielded to Giacomo.

What is noteworthy is that, in this complex and rich interplay of figurative language, Giacomo deceives people and gets his evil schemes done not because his words are creatively metaphorical, but because his figurative language is not particularly original. Of course, he makes the most of the fact that the meaning of a metaphor, as Fludernik (2010, 7) points out, "does not need to be spelled out, since it is left open … and what the results of this projection will be remains negotiable", but on the whole his words mainly rely on trite poetic expressions and metaphorical concepts:

> Had I this cheek
> To bathe my lips upon; this hand whose touch,
> Whose every touch, would force the feeler's soul
> To th'oath of loyalty; this object which
> Takes prisoner the wild motion of mine eye,
> Firing it only here: (I, 6, 100-05)
>
> Rubies unparagoned,
> …'Tis her breathing that
> Perfumes the chamber thus.
> …th'enclosèd lights, now canopied
> Under these windows, white and azure-laced
> With blue of heaven's own tinct. (II, 2, 17-23)
>
> The treasure of her honour (II, 2, 42)

Of course, the fact that Giacomo relies on traditional figurative language does not mean that his words are commonplace and ineffective: even consistent metaphorical concepts, as Prandi (2012) makes clear, are based on active projection, thus demonstrating that "what is conventional and fixed need not be dead" (Gibbs 1994, 277). After all, as discussed above, by simply showing the bracelet he stole from Innogen's arm he is able to get Posthumus to give a precise meaning to all his allusive words, and through their conventionality his metaphors get the normative value of a certainty.

In other words, metaphoric predication capitalizes on its prerogative of "driving a wedge between words and their meanings" and subverts the semantic content of the bracelet, triggering a new contingent interpretation. In this way, the cognitive incertitude stemming from the denial of the representational function of language induces a moment of unrestrained

epoché in Posthumus, stimulates his affective answer and ultimately gives free rein to his misinterpretation and repressed anxieties.

As to Giacomo's use of entrenched conceptual metaphors, it demonstrates that he is not an eccentric, wicked figure whose indirect and figurative language is a negative exception within a positive social context characterized by a reliable and referential language. On the contrary, his language is rather conventional because it shares the heritage of concepts and thoughts featuring prominently in a precise social milieu. In other words, since "Consistent metaphors are linguistic manifestations of underlying metaphorical concepts" (Prandi 2012, 158), he is a perfectly integrated exponent of a corrupted community whose negativity is demonstrated by the metaphors it lives by.

A particularly important scene is III, 4, after Innogen and Pisanio have reached Milford Haven. Innogen has left for this Welsh port hoping to meet Posthumus there, while Posthumus himself has sent a letter to Pisanio asking him to murder Innogen for her supposed infidelity. The faithful Pisanio does not believe Innogen is guilty and, visibly distressed, shows her Posthumus's letter, describing the princess' desperation first resorting to an inconsistent figure (the letter as a murderous knife) and then to a typical blending to describe slander as a sort of mythological monster with sharp edges, venomous tongue and mendacious breath:

> …The paper
> Hath cut her throat already. No, 'tis slander,
> Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
> Outvenoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath
> Rides on the posting winds and doth belie
> All corners of the world. (III, 4, 32-37)

Innogen's words, on the contrary, revolve around a "constellation of metaphorical expressions" (Prandi 2017, 144) combined in a metaphorical swarm, in which the scope of the conflictual concept PEOPLE ARE CLOTHES is widened by a series of projections that construct a network of metaphoric associations and inconsistent expressions all connected to this central conflictual image:

> …Some jay of Italy,
> Whose mother was her painting, hath betrayed him.
> Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion,
> And for I am richer than to hang by th' walls
> I must be ripped. To pieces with me! O,
> Men's vows are women's traitors. All good seeming,
> By thy revolt, O husband, shall be thought