

## Conceptual/Cognitive Metaphor Theory: Some Insights into Metaphorical Conceptual Mappings in Poetry

Jinan F. B. Al-Hajaj

The study of conceptual/cognitive metaphor has flourished during the recent years as insights into the operating inner mechanisms of thought and cognition are growing more complicated and intriguing. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory launches its argument on the ground that linguistic metaphors are surface realizations of deep-structure mappings that are cognition-oriented. This study explores the use of conceptual/cognitive metaphors which underlie and shape metaphorical expressions in poetry. Wordsworth's *My Heart Leaps Up* and Philip Larkin's *Toads* are investigated in search of the cognitive bases of metaphors and their mappings.

### Introduction

Metaphor is one of the operating and pervasive mechanisms in poetry, but also in everyday language. In the former, it gives shape to vision, embodies and enriches imagination. In the latter, it is said to underlie most, if not all linguistic communication. Metaphors have been classically used as a means of expression that is marked by its aesthetic value as well as rhetorical input. Rhetorical and literary contexts and poetry in particular have constantly resorted to metaphorical language as their best vehicle of expression. Everyday language can not dispense with metaphorical elements to the extent that the frequent use of some metaphors in everyday, common language has been dubbed as archaic or even dead.

The study of figurative language relies heavily, almost solely on the analysis of linguistic metaphors which all language manifestations not only poetry team with. The metaphorical use of language which pivots on the non-literal meanings subsumes such a variety of figurative devices as personifications, similes, metonymy, symbols, and allegory all packed up together as metaphors and studied by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. This theory plumbs metaphorical constructions deeper to investigate realms of thought and cognition that lurk behind the linguistic manifestations of metaphors. It tries to uncover and comment on how

metaphors come to exist and the raw materials from which they are formulated. The theory, further, assists in accounting for and explaining the way metaphor operates beyond the linguistic level in that it traces metaphorical structurings to their launching point that lodges in cognition and thought.

In the current study, not only metaphorical conceptualizations are sought out, uncovered and analyzed, but also their conceptual mappings in the text which bind the metaphorical expressions and ensure their smooth flow within. Further, the study assumes that in poetry, conceptual metaphors may underlie linguistic expressions whose surface structure does not necessarily look metaphorical.

### **Linguistic Metaphor versus Conceptual Metaphor**

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 4) draw the attention to the typical view and practice that treated metaphor as a purely and solely language characteristic and ‘a matter of words rather than thought or action.’ Arguments regarding metaphor vary along a continuum from Aristotle’s view that the mastery of metaphor is ‘a gift of genius and cannot be taught,’ to Shelley’s declaration that language is ‘vitally metaphorical’ (Ricoeur, 1975: 92).

To dismantle the deficient classical view, a metaphor is seen as language plus some stuff that lodges in thought and action or more candidly language and conceptual systems. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 7) go as far as asserting that ‘metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in a person’s conceptual system.’ Lakoff (1993: 203) discards the classical theory of metaphor altogether in favour of one in which ‘the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another.’

Knowles and Moon (2006:1) begin their discussion of metaphor rather metaphorically by declaring that ‘metaphor is not just a kind of artistic embellishment, at the rarefied end of linguistic usage, divorced and isolated from everyday communication. It is instead a basic phenomenon that occurs throughout the whole range of language activity.’ Thus, metaphors are axiomatically linked to language use and are defined accordingly. To quote Knowles and Moon again with a slight twist, one may assume that metaphor can not be *divorced and isolated* from language.

From a purely linguistic perspective, metaphor is ‘the use of language to refer to something other than what it was originally applied to, or what it ‘literally’ means, in order to suggest some resemblance or make a connection between the two things’ (Knowles and Moon, 2006: 2). Language is largely metaphorical. The use of metaphor abounds whether in the form of a single word or phrase, or even entire stretches of text. Metaphor is found to be, as well, essential to language where it serves the latter at least in two ways. First, metaphor enriches language as it ‘is a basic process in the formation of words and word meanings. Second, metaphor is important to discourse as it performs ‘explaining, clarifying, describing, expressing, evaluating, entertaining’ functions. Concepts and meanings are **lexicalized**, or expressed in words, through metaphor.’ Metaphor creates multi-sense words that can have different meanings (Knowles and Moon, 2006: 3).

However, a linguistic metaphor is not the same as what is termed conceptual or cognitive metaphor. Although, metaphors involve language, they are viewed as ‘a kind of *thinking* or conceptualization, not limited to language; however, language provides a convenient way to observe how metaphor works’ (Knowles and Moon, 2006: 24). It is observed that linguistic metaphors, whether creative/novel or conventional, are often described in I.A. Richards’ terms of *tenor* (or more recently *topic*) and *vehicle*, (Avis, 1999: 83), where ‘the tenor being the conceptual meaning and the vehicle being the concrete comparison.’ Avis (1999: 83) expresses his scruples in regard to the tenor-vehicle division which could be reversed. He prefers to discuss the metaphor in terms of ‘the ‘occasion’ of the metaphor and the ‘image’ through which the occasion is viewed. Together they comprise the total event of metaphor.’ Accordingly, Avis (1999: 83) remarks that a metaphor ‘joins together two perceptions, an immediate or primary perception and a borrowed or secondary perception,’ hence conceptuality is allowed into its framework.

Linguistic metaphors are said to realize conceptual metaphors, i.e., a conceptual metaphor, often denoted in small capitals, underlies the linguistic metaphor. The vehicle is the meaning that the word has in its source domain, or its literal meaning whereas the topic is the meaning that the word has in the target domain, or its metaphorical meaning (Deignan, 2005:14). Generally, linguistic metaphors are very frequently used though their use is not necessarily always conscious. Their relatively high frequency is assumed by conceptual metaphor theorists as significant since they ‘form the background to our conceptual systems rather than the foreground, and are thus of great importance’ (Deignan, 2005:15).

## **Conceptual Metaphor Theory: an Overview**

In 1980, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson published their seminal study *Metaphors We Live By*, a work that is credited with launching a novel approach to the study of metaphor (Knowles and Moon, 2006: 24). Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 4) assert: 'that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action' and that 'our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.' More recently, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory is supplemented by the findings of neurology in what Lakoff (2008:17) terms as the Neural Theory of Metaphor. Despite the fundamental updates (which are, indeed, worthy of an independent investigation), the essentials of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory remain more or less intact.

Kövecses (2002: 4) defines a conceptual metaphor from a cognitive linguistic perspective as 'as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain.' She gives such illustrative examples as 'when we talk and think about life in terms of journeys, about arguments in terms of war, about love also in terms of journeys, about theories in terms of buildings, about ideas in terms of food, about social organizations in terms of plants, and many others.'

Conceptual/cognitive metaphor theory bases its argument on rejecting the classical 'notion that metaphor is a decorative device, peripheral to language and thought' (Deignan, 2005:13). Alternatively, metaphor is treated as central to thought and therefore to language. The theory spells out a number of tenets that identify metaphor in relation to language and as follows:

### **–Metaphors structure thinking**

Lakoff and his followers argue that human beings know and absorb many of such abstract topics central to their existence as birth, love and death 'entirely and largely through metaphors' (Deignan, 2005:14). Accordingly, there exist conceptual metaphors which represent the links between ideas. Thus, a conceptual metaphor connects two semantic areas or domains; one domain is concrete (a thing, person, animal, object, direction, etc) while the other is abstract (thought, emotion, notion etc). The second domain which is talked about metaphorically is termed as *target domain* while the first domain that provides the metaphors is the *source domain* (Kövecses, 2002: 4). These two domains are linked together so that the 'ideas and knowledge from the source domain are *mapped* onto the target domain by the conceptual metaphor' (Deignan, 2005:14). The process of mapping relies on

the existence of ‘a set of systematic **correspondences** between the source and the target in the sense that constituent conceptual elements of b correspond to constituent elements of a’ (Kövecses, 2002: 6).

#### – **Metaphors structure knowledge**

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 20) insist that metaphors are not operating in isolation of experience ‘*in actuality we feel that no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis*’ (italics original). Metaphors do not only contribute to the background of human conceptual systems, but also structure ‘existing and developing knowledge about the world’ (Deignan, 2005:15). According to Allbritton (in Deignan, 2005:15-6), there exist two types of knowledge: ‘specialized, sometimes academic knowledge, which may not be accessible to all members of a society, and secondly, our more widely shared knowledge of the topics that touch on every human being’s experience.’ The internet metaphors such as World Wide Web (www.) are examples of specialized knowledge which facilitates understanding among non-specialists. By realizing the connection to spider’s web, the inexperienced users develop a sort of crude knowledge from the point of view of specialists, but that knowledge is sufficient and adequate for their use.

#### – **Metaphor is central to abstract language**

Danaher (2003; 442) observes ‘via the power of metaphor, abstractions (concepts, like truth and falsehood, or mental processes, such as reasoning) prove to be grounded in our (physical) experience of the world.’ Deignan justifies the frequent use of metaphor in terms of the lack of the word that literally expresses the idea that the metaphor delineates obliquely. This is why the conceptual metaphor theorists argue that ‘not only that linguistic metaphors are very frequent, but that some abstract subjects cannot be talked about without them’ (2005:18). Numerous studies (Lakoff and Turner, Deignan, and Sweetser) show that many of our ways of talking about understanding involve linguistic metaphors that literally refer to the physical act of taking hold of an object. Sweetser draws the attention to such expressions as ‘*grasp an idea* and ‘*get a handle on something*, that realize the conceptual metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS SEIZING’ (Deignan, 2005:18).

#### – **Metaphor is grounded in physical experience**

Since conceptual metaphors map the concrete domain onto the abstract one, they ‘enable us to quantify, visualize and generalize about the abstract, because they make use of relationships within source domains that we know well from our concrete experience’ (Deignan, 2005:19). Accordingly, most central metaphors are

grounded in the human physical experience. Tapia (2006: 138) affirms this observation where 'the cognitive linguistic view traces the elements comprising metaphor to embodied and/or culturally based experiences.' Sweetser (in Deignan, 2005: 19) points to the employment of physical perceptions to refer to mental processes through the use of metaphors that are motivated by bodily experience. This is evident in the metaphor of UNDERSTANDING IS SEIZING mentioned above. The same is found to apply to the expression of emotion metaphors which are often tied to physical experience and more specifically bodily sensations. Deignan (2005: 19-20) refers to Gibbs' examination of 'the linguistic metaphors used to talk about anger, and claims that many of these are motivated by the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER.' Temperature is also found to be used in relation not only to anger but other emotions like lust.

#### – Metaphor is ideological

Deignan (2005: 23) recapitulates the notion of the ideological potentiality of conceptual metaphor, a belief promoted by many researchers in the field. Metaphors are used 'to present a particular interpretation of situations and events.' To illustrate, Deignan cites Lakoff and Johnson's claims concerning the metaphor of THE SEARCH FOR ENERGY IS WAR, which is promulgated by the United States. This war metaphor influenced thought and created different inferences resulting in for instance hostility towards a foreign enemy, Arabs as cartoonist some times hinted. This is why Lakoff suggests that 'metaphors can kill.' The interpretations of situations and events via metaphor are found to be 'only partial, and therefore flawed' since 'a metaphor by its nature suggests an equation between the metaphorical and literal meanings that does not actually exist.' Deignan (2005: 23) affirms Low's explanation of how metaphor maps two meanings in that despite the resemblance the two meanings bear to 'each other at one or more points, they are not identical: if they were, we would not see a metaphor and its literal counterpart, but a word with a single meaning.' In consequence, Lakoff suggests, a metaphor falls short of communicating a full and accurate picture as it tends to highlight certain aspects at the expense of others. A metaphor could also distort and oversimplify as in the UNDERSTANDING IS SEIZING where the complexity of mental process is ignored.

#### Typical Conceptual Metaphors

Though metaphors are far too numerous and various to list and tabulate, typical instances abound in the literature available on Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff and Turner (1989), Kövecses (2002, 2004 & 2005) and Deignan (2005), among many others, provide lists of potential conceptual metaphors that underlie the conscious or unconscious everyday human communication:

1. HAPPY IS UP (He is feeling on top of the world, the news boosted his spirits.)
2. AN ARGUMENT IS WAR (Your claims are *indefensible*.)
3. LIFE IS A JOURNEY (start out in life, choose a path,...)
4. UNDERSTANDING IS SEIZING (She grasps an idea, I got your meaning.)
5. ANGER IS A HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER (She got all *steamed up*, I was *fuming*)
6. TIME IS MONEY (*I saved some time*.)
7. LOVE IS MAGIC (*He is under her spell*.)
8. THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS. (The theory needs more *support*.)
9. IDEAS ARE FOOD (All this paper has in it are *raw* facts)
10. FEAR IS AN ENEMY: (Fear slowly *crept up on* him.)
11. CAUSES ARE FORCES: (You're *driving* me crazy)
12. EVENTS ARE MOTIONS: (What's *going on* here?)
13. PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS: (She's *reached her goal*)
14. DIFFICULTIES ARE IMPEDIMENTS: (Let's try to *get around* this problem)

### **Novel Metaphors**

Not all metaphors can be easily segmented into their conceptual components. Occasionally, conceptualizations are so disguised that they need plenty of digging and polishing. Stanford (in Avis, 1999: 82) points to what he describes as '*a fine metaphor*,' which is 'one of the hardest things in the world to *rationalize*' (italics added). Such metaphors are referred to as innovative metaphors by Deignan (2005: 40) who affirms that they are of interest mainly to researchers in literature. Lakoff (1993: 237) uses the term *novel metaphors* which he classifies into three categories: 'extensions of conventional metaphors; Generic-level metaphors; Image-metaphors.' Later, Lakoff (2008: 27) discusses what he calls *complex metaphors* 'that are extensions of existing primary metaphors' and hence easy to understand and learn in addition to totally new conceptual metaphors that 'involve new binding and other connecting circuitry over existing conceptual metaphors.' Novel metaphors, it is accordingly assumed, have their roots after all buried deep in the human subconscious conceptual system.

Extensions make use of conventional conceptual mappings in that one metaphor may invoke two or more of them. Once, one captures the basic conceptualization, the metaphor unfolds and is rationalized. Generic-level metaphors handle the cases of personification and proverbs where analogy operates (Lakoff, 1993: 231). Novel metaphors pivot on images where 'one conventional mental image', not a conceptual domain, is mapped 'onto another' ... Image-metaphors, by contrast, are 'one-shot' metaphors: they map only one image onto one other image (Lakoff, 1993: 229). Such novel metaphors are expected to abound in poetical language though not exclusively so. To understand novel metaphors, one should constantly and maximally resort to his/her 'every day metaphor system' (Lakoff, 1993: 229) since 'poetic metaphor is, for the most part, an extension [or a complication] of our everyday, conventional system of metaphorical thought (Lakoff, 1993: 246).

### **Conceptual metaphors in Poetry**

#### **Wordsworth's *My Heart Leaps Up***

In poetry, metaphors are vehicles of thought and emotion. A metaphor in a poem is overcharged at times with meanings that do not necessarily come in the line with basic human world knowledge. This is why; Kövecses (2009: 182) admits the notion of context to help fish for the conceptual metaphors in poetry. However, assuming that all metaphors can unfold into some conceptual essence, a poem may encompass metaphors that lend themselves to typical conceptualizations. For instance the conceptual metaphor (HAPPY IS UP) can be clearly pinned down in the first line of Wordsworth's famous poem *My Heart Leaps Up*:

My heart *leaps up*  
When I behold a rainbow in the sky.

This is an example of what Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 15) term orientational metaphors where a spatial direction (up) operates as the concrete source that defines the abstract target (happy). In consequence, *My heart leaps up* is the metaphorical expression that subsumes the cognitive rendition (HAPPY IS UP), which conforms to the human conventional conceptual system or (ECSTASY IS UP) with the slight extension embraced.

Likewise, though the linguistic expressions involved are analytically non-metaphorical, the next lines in the poem can be said to realize the common



conceptual metaphors (LIFE IS A JOURNEY) and (DEATH IS THE END OF THE JOURNEY), or in conformation with the human conceptual system (DEATH IS DEPARTURE) and (DEATH IS THE FINAL DESTINATION):

So was it when *I was a child*  
 So is it now *I am a man*  
 So be it when *I shall grow old*  
 Or *let me die!*

The speaker talks about his life in terms of happy or ecstatic stages or phases, which end in death, hence he obeys the common conceptual formula which spells out life in terms of journeys. This metaphor is thematically relevant to the previous metaphor in that just like (HAPPY IS UP) and accordingly (SAD IS DOWN), (LIFE IS UP) and (DEATH IS DOWN). The last is the intended meaning in such an expression as (he fell to his death). As such, the cognitions generated by the opening metaphor (HAPPY IS UP) are mapped reversely onto the ensuing metaphors and help break them into their context-appropriate components.

In the next metaphor (the child is father of the man), the conceptual metaphor is identical to (THE CHILD IS A FUTURE FATHER). Again, this rendition runs parallel to common world knowledge and it only restructures conceptual experience more vividly not to mention poetically. This metaphor relates to the (LIFE IS A JOURNEY) metaphor in that it is the life journey and the progress of its stages that would take the human being from childhood to fatherhood. The notion of time coexists with that of space in the (LIFE IS A JOURNEY) metaphor; the former, time, is the linchpin of (THE CHILD IS A FUTURE FATHER). Again, Wordsworth's metaphors both relate to each other and to common experience despite diversity and variety.

Alternatively, a poem may choose to deviate from the common stream and formulate novel metaphors that may superficially depart from common world knowledge or experience shared by humans. The superficiality is triggered by the innovation and non-conformity which the metaphor may lead the reader to presume. If one looks at the final line of the same poem quoted here for illustration, one lands on a challenging metaphor:

And I could wish *my days*  
*To be bound each to each by natural piety*

The metaphor here is highly intriguing in that it does not lend itself to direct, one-to-one conceptualizations. As a metaphorical extension, it holds connection, nevertheless, with the antecedent life-journey metaphor. LIFE IS A JOURNEY seems to capture some but not all its shades. However, some primary option can be investigated:

- EACH DAY OF LIFE IS A RING IN A CHAIN

This conceptualization does not seem to deviate from the norm where life is understood to be a series of phases or stages into which human beings journey. However, the speaker alludes to a different version of life overwhelmed by and submerged in religion, namely, pantheism. So, while the above structuring fits into the life-journey or life-series formulas, it does not survive if *natural piety* is accounted for. Thus, a more sophisticated and faithful conceptualization must be offered to render the linguistically expressed metaphor more accurately:

- PIOUS LIFE IS A ROSARY

Compared with the first rendition, this one does not conform to conceptualizations common in conceptual metaphor literature. It may look forced or even far-fetched due to the uniqueness of its structuring. Yet, it better fathoms out the metaphor as implemented in the poem let alone that it agrees with common world knowledge where saying the rosary is part of the world religious rituals. In poetry, it is occasionally expected to meet such uncommon metaphors which depart from common and available conceptual equations and blaze their own trails under what is termed innovative or novel metaphors.

### **Larkin's *Toads***

Larkin's much studied poem *Toad* is basically metaphorical from its very title down to its closure. The poet bases the entire argument of the poem on the *toad metaphor*, which acts as the starting point releasing the rest of the poem's metaphors. Thus, the toad metaphor embodies the basic metaphorical node from which many subsidiary, but equally intriguing sub-metaphors evolve.

Conceptual Metaphor theorists maintain that the conceptual basis of the metaphor is to subsume a source domain that should be concrete in nature to illustrate the target domain which happens to be abstract and hence in need of

substantiation, so to speak. This abstract/concrete equation is present in some of the metaphors in the poem more overtly and clearly than others. To begin with, the poem spells out its basic metaphor in the first two lines:

Why should I let the toad *work*  
Squat on my life?

Work is, obviously, compared to a toad squatting on one's life; it is, hence, a novel, image metaphor. Unfortunately, Larkin gives the reader no challenge to arrive at the metaphor for he does not disguise but directly identifies it through 'work', which follows right on the heels of 'toad'. To rephrase the toad metaphor conceptually, work is the target domain that is linked to and illustrated by toad the source domain. Interpretively, one may venture to suggest the following cognitive renditions of the toad metaphor taking into consideration Lakoff's observation (2008: 24) 'many different linguistic expressions can express some aspect of the same metaphor':

1. Work is boring and uncreative. (work is toad)
2. Work is gross and unpleasant. (work is toad)

More alternative renderings can be suggested here but they will not, however, diverge from the mainstream that seems to pour into the one essential notion of having to carry on a dull, uncreative, monotonous, enslaving job. Upon observation, representations 1 and 2 violate the main principle of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory where the source is not concrete enough. Adjectival phrases replace the concrete nouns though the adjectives are clear enough albeit abstract in nature. However, a third option may be suggested:

3. WORK IS A TRAP. (work is inescapable)

Number 3 adheres to the conceptual recipe with *trap*, a concrete object to balance the equation. However, these representations borrow from and are oriented by logic and world knowledge concerning the metaphorical ambience of toad as an animal. Conceptually, these renditions are all deficient if individually viewed. A more exhaustive representation should subsume all the above and even more. On top, it should not deviate far from the basic concrete source, which happens to be identical both linguistically and conceptually. Thus, substitute renditions are offered in 4 and 5:

4. WORK IS A TOAD

5. WORK IS AN ANIMAL.

The source domain, toad/animal, is thematically selected to deepen the sense of coercion, the absence of free choice, the ensnaring, binding nature, and the ugliness and glutinous, even disgusting ambience that this animal conjures up in the mind of the reader. To compare work, not any work of course (one is prone to speculate) but the boring, uncreative, and compulsory, to a toad uncovers the extreme state of boredom, impatience, complaint, and intolerance on the part of the speaker. Conceptualization 4 is identical with the linguistic metaphorical expression except for its grammatical clause structure; number 5 has a more universal appeal.

The speaker feels that his life has come to a halt, been stunted, at least, withheld by the toad work, hence the ensuing squatting metaphor in line 2, which is another image metaphor that can be conceptually broken into:

1. Work is heavy.
2. Work is a discomfort.
3. Work is awkward.

These embodiments come readily to the mind of the reader assisted and triggered by the verb *squat* which is semantically relevant to a bodily posture of discomfort and uneasiness. Again, the adjectival phrases fall short of a complete and one-to-one representation of this metaphorical extension. Taking into consideration the conceptual metaphor (BEING CONTROLLED IS BEING KEPT DOWN) in (Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 149) that belongs to the human conceptual system, two more renditions are opted for in pursuit of clarity and concreteness:

4. WORK IS A BURDEN/ HEAVY WEIGHT
5. WORK IS AN IMPEDIMENT

The onset of the poem turns the spotlight on a person who finds himself regrettably committed or rather unwillingly harnessed to a job by virtue of sheer need or probably habit or even social status. He contemplates breaking from its ongoing routine and questions the possibility of walking out and the consequences such departure, if any, entails. The toad work overwhelms and suffocates the powerless speaker and it is such a huge challenge to liberate oneself of its tentacles.

The toad metaphor of lines 1 and 2 is shortly supplemented with another metaphor that sheds the light on the speaker's predicament:

Can't I use my wit as a pitchfork  
And drive the brute off?

Again with wit and pitchfork as the target and source domains of the metaphor consecutively, the conceptual metaphor may be rendered:

1. WIT/INTELLIGENCE IS A SHARP TOOL (wit is a pitchfork)
2. INTELLIGENCE IS FREEDOM

The pitchfork metaphor correlates with and fits perfectly well into the *squat* metaphor in the antecedent line. If work rests heavily and uncomfortably on the speaker in a way that jerks him down, all he can do is use his mind to device and figure out strategies to outsmart and counteract the toad, set himself free, and relieve himself off the burden once and for all. Thus, the conceptual basis would possibly run into the concrete and more direct form in 3:

3. INTELLIGENCE IS A WEAPON

In the present context, the ugly, clinging nature of the so-called toad summons up and necessitates the use of a sharp tool to pick it up prior to tossing it aside. The toad, being so adamant, would not easily release its prey once under its control, but resist and glue itself with unrelenting tenacity. Once human beings get in the rut which often happens, they find it strenuous if not impossible to have the routine relax its grip to allow them to break fresh ground, experiment with different alternatives and explore new territories. They seem to be stuck in the groove and

perhaps, in the course of time, learn to relish the sham security a permanent, stable job bestows upon them. Intelligence is the defensive weapon suggested to liberate oneself of the toad influences. This image metaphor, whose linguistic expression looks novel and uncommon, does not depart from the human conceptual system where the mind is constantly set in contrast to muscles.

Likewise, with *brute* as the source and of course *toad* and in the long run *work* as target the conceptual skeleton of this, again, image metaphor in the following line may be broken down into:

1. WORK IS A BEAST/ ANIMAL (work is inhuman)

Of course, the first conceptualization relies heavily on the assumption that humans wholly or partially agree to what the concept of *beast* stands for. The metaphor also allows for animal to be the source domain of the conceptualization as in the toad work metaphor analyzed earlier. However, the use of *brute* entails stretching further the representation to encompass the semantic shades that the word *brute* conjures up. Thus a third option is proposed in:

2. WORK IS STUPIDITY

This formalization seems to be at the first glance far-fetched not to mention that it flouts the concreteness principle. However, if one ventures to view the brute metaphor in the light of the one preceding it 'pitchfork-wit', the pieces seem to fall in place. What the speaker in the poem proposes is to implement intelligence to maneuver and beat the toad off since the toad is a brainless, gullible, witless, dumb creature that should not be too difficult for a human to put to rout. Hence, *brute* is better and more adequately equated to stupid than monstrous or bestial though both streaks are simultaneously present. Notwithstanding, option 2 violates the basic abstract-concrete equation in that it turns it topsy-turvy though not completely discarding it. *Work* is the concrete target to which an abstract source is applied. Such a case is not essentially a challenge to the conceptual metaphor theory since wit-pitch provides evidence of its validity. In a piece of discourse like a poem, metaphors are at times contextually linked in that one metaphor may comment on the neighbouring metaphors or even establish bridges with spatially distant

metaphors as in pitchfork-wit and brute-stupidity metaphors above mentioned which are both novel.

Next, another facet of the toad work is explored as the speaker metaphorically describes the negative effects of the enslaving job in terms of dirt, sickness and poison:

Six days of the week it soils  
With its sickening poison–

It is a two-fold extended metaphor with soil on the one hand and sickening poison on the other. The conceptual launching levels may be traced as follows:

1. WORK IS AN IMPEDIMENT/ PRISON (Six days of the week)
2. TOAD WORK IS FILTH (it soils)
3. TOAD WORK IS ILLNESS (its sickening)
4. TOAD WORK IS POISON (poison)

And in sum:

5. TOAD WORK IS DEATH

The notions of restriction, dirtiness, sickness, and poison are omnipresent along with ugliness and grossness mentioned earlier. In essence, the manipulation of the toad as the central metaphor in the poem sums up all the above images. Ferber (2007: 82) comments on the literary symbolism of toads which ‘are distinctively ugly, venomous, and evil’ compared to frogs which ‘are raucous and benign.’ The small animal of the frog family but with ‘a drier and lumpier skin’ brings in all negative and unpleasant associations. No wonder is that *toad* is commonly, and of course metaphorically, used to designate an extremely unpleasant person with an extremely unattractive appearance (Cambridge advanced Learner’s Dictionary). All in all, the speaker complains against his unpleasant, uninspiring job. It consumes precious time and effort that he could put in elsewhere to achieve better and higher aspirations. Instead, he is stuck in the toad work that he dislikes, even abhors but

above all despises and hence disparages. The six days per week equation operates as a metaphor that applies to the entire human life which the toad work impedes and mutilates and which is, in the long run, prone to perish under its impact. It is another non-metaphorical expression on the linguistic level, but underlies, nevertheless, a metaphorical conceptualization (prison, restriction and impediment). The dull job has soiled and sabotaged the speaker's being and left off indelible marks of ruin, presiding on the largest portion of his life. He has traded his entire existence and freedom to a relentless master for something as base and despicable as *paying a few bills!* The witless barter, the next line suggests, seems completely out of joint. The awkwardness and preposterousness of the exchange stupefy the speaker himself who can not help but exclaim *That's out of proportion.* This orientational metaphor, which is idiomatic in essence, revolves around such size conceptualizations as (MORE IS UP & LESS IS DOWN) analyzed by Lakoff and Turner (1989: 83). However, the metaphor *That's out of proportion* may be conceptualized more accurately in terms of (MORE IS OUT & LESS IS IN). (MORE IS OUT) copies the speaker's intolerance and outrage at a situation blown larger than he can handle. Alternatively, the seemingly non-metaphorical expression *paying a few bills* encompass a conceptual metaphor whose primary mappings may subsume:

1. Life has a price
2. Living is costly/expensive

But in a nutshell:

- LIVING/LIFE IS MONEY

The speaker is all too aware of his dilemma and seems to have contemplated possible solutions, which what the argument in the following stanza 3 proposes:

Lots of folk live on their wits:  
Lecturers, lispers,  
Losels, loblolly-men, louts—  
They don't end as paupers;



Despite its confused and unruly nature, the stanza proceeds clearly and directly, except for the first line where wit is metaphorically employed. The conceptual layering of the wit metaphor may be arranged as follows:

- INTELLIGENCE IS MONEY

It is claimed that intelligent people manage to survive without having to yoke themselves to a job; they do not need a regular, six-day-a-week job to keep afloat. Indeed, unemployment is one of the major and crucial conundrums in the modern world which seems to elude all cures and treatments. Nevertheless, paupers do not seem to die of poverty or, at least, so remarks the arguing speaker. However, the supporting arguments to follow seem to have very little to do with the wit-proposition that the onset of the poem launches and then this stanza recapitulates. The poet basically argues in favour of simplicity, austerity, even homelessness, a life version that is hardly convincing if the wit metaphor, used earlier, is kept in mind. While the speaker's debate hinges on the possibility of quitting the toad work without necessarily ending up in poverty, he makes no effort whatsoever to reinforce this claim in the ensuing lines. Further, the way the speaker brings lecturers, a supposedly highly-esteemed category, with the gutter stereotypes (lispers, losels, loblolly-men and louts) is hardly flattering. Thus, he talks about the ostensible potentiality of scraping a living without having to be tied to a conventional, regular job, but fails at giving convincing evidence. The toad work is the sole guarantee, available to commoners, of a respectable and comfortable life. Otherwise, streets team with paupers or at least so the poet observes in stanzas 4 and 5 which elaborate on the living conditions of those who reject work slavery and assumingly live on their wit:

Lots of folk live up lanes  
With fires in a bucket,  
Eat windfalls and tinned sardines—  
They seem to like it.

Another conceptual metaphor presides on the above lines with *live up lanes*, *fires in a bucket* and *eat windfalls and tinned sardines*. These expressions are barely metaphorical; linguistically, they are literal descriptions of a vagabond life. Together they build up a conceptual basis that can be spelt out as follows:

1. Workless people are homeless, cold and hungry.
2. Workless people have nothing.
3. Workless people are free to move.
4. Workless people are content and happy.

And in conclusion:

5. WORKLESS PEOPLE ARE TRAMPS

The first pair entail the next two in that homelessness and abject poverty ensure freedom and a care-free existence. In other words, while the first two abound in negativity, the last pair seem to redress the situation and even the scales for the skeptics including the arguing speaker. Life amenities, it seems, should be sacrificed on the altar of freedom, which is, in its turn, the prerequisite for contentment. However, if one gropes for a cognitive basis that agrees to the existing conceptual system, 5 seems to be more convenient than the others in spite of its forwardness.

The tramps do not starve albeit poverty and homelessness. Despite their skinny wives and barefooted children, they seem to like it. The skinny wives-whippets simile in, *Their unspeakable wives/Are skinny as whippets*, is a rather direct metaphorical structure that is self-explanatory. It is a novel image metaphor and its conceptual bases may be couched in the following renderings:

1. Tramps' wives are hungry and thin
2. Tramps' wives live like stray dogs.

And to sum up:

3. TRAMPS' WIVES ARE STARVED.

The last is made plausible, perhaps even inevitable, as it is triggered by the whippets simile itself. The speaker botches up a lame scenario of the often-called underprivileged world that is neither based on first-hand knowledge nor recognizes the feeling the vagrants regard their world with. Further, the version of the poor

life, which the poem conjures up, neither compliments the poem hypothesis of rejecting the toad work nor invites or encourages the readers to embark on testing that hypothesis for themselves. Living hand to mouth seems arduous and unattractive; it is ultimately tarnished even though the poem endeavours to polish and pass it off as an enticing alternative. The poem reduces the argument against the toad work to two essential strands. Poor people do not actually starve to death and that they like their life, quite unlike the speaker in the poem who has all the amenities poor people are deprived of, but still finds no pleasure let alone pride in them. Because of the toad work, the world holds no joy to the enslaved civil servant.

The above contemplations prepare for the next argument in stanza 6, where the speaker hypothesizes about the possibility of handing in his resignation:

Ah, were I courageous enough  
To shout *Stuff your pension!*  
But I know, all too well, that's the stuff  
That dreams are made on:

What is of interest here is the metaphor in the second line: To shout *Stuff your pension*. This arresting metaphor can be stripped down to a conceptual core that runs like this:

1. Courage is rebellion.
2. Courage is to resign/quit.
3. Courage is freedom.

But essentially:

4. COURAGE IS A SHOUT/LOUD SPEECH  $\approx$  COURAGE IS UP
5. COWARDICE IS SILENCE  $\approx$  COWARDICE IS DOWN

The elementary renderings are various and numerous, but they are mainly embellishments and hence dispensable. The essence of the metaphor is a self-interrogative argument to assess the presence or else lack of courage. Likewise the

second metaphor: *that's the stuff/That dreams are made on*, may be conceptualized as:

- COURAGE IS ONLY A DREAM

The dream- metaphor poses a challenge. Its metaphorical nature is a bit more elusive and less yielding. Though, 'stuff' retains a relation through pun to the 'Stuff' in: *Stuff your pension*, they are not identical semantically. Thus, the second *stuff* remains indefinable and hence polemical. The asserted attitude is that of cowardice but also illusion. The speaker could rebel and turn things upside down in his dreams only. Reality has quite different dictates and he has to bow down to them. Thus, it is very difficult to take the speaker for his word even if one believes in his ardour and credibility. He himself suggests in the next lines that he does not expect himself to live up to his ideals. His ambitions remain buried deep in wishful thinking. Despite the illusionary vigour, the speaker is fully and acutely aware of his mediocre calibre:

For something sufficiently toad-like  
Squats in me, too;  
Its hunkers are heavy as hard luck,  
And cold as snow,

Two metaphors concur in the stanza with the first presiding over the other. The speaker confesses apologetically that it is not only that he is tied up to a toad job in the physical world, but that he is hindered and pinned down spiritually and psychologically by a virtual toad-like master, his lack of courage. Taking into consideration that this metaphorical extension is devised to reinforce the courage argument in the previous stanza, the metaphor has the tentative following conceptual representation:

1. COWRDICE IS AN IMPEDIMENT

The speaker laments his lack of courage which could have ushered him into liberty and, in the long run, happiness. He lacks in the adventurous, risk-seeking nature which he inwardly craves but is too afraid to embrace. If he were to choose, he would have opted for security through a safe job rather than an unknown fate no matter how glamorous and rewarding that fate promises to be. This is why, his

toad-like nature prevails and triumphs over any attempt at alteration, hence the next hankers-(image) metaphor whose conceptualization may look like:

1. COWRDICE IS AN ANIMAL
2. COWRDICE IS A BURDEN/HEAVY WEIGHT
3. COWRDICE IS A JINX/BAD LUCK

And ultimately:

4. COWRDICE IS DEATH

The last is triggered by ‘cold as snow’ where *cold* and *snow* are set in contrast to warmth and fire, hence life and vitality. The speaker then unveils the demons he is struggling against; the toad that leaves him motionless and hapless is none other than his own fear, reluctance and timorousness. His cowardice, he suspects, is octopus-like or hydra-like with tentacles that nail him down. So, the slimy toad, if any, lives and rules inside and the toad job is only a manifestation of that haunting inner toad. Therefore, the next argument seems to cling onto the toad as a spiritual rather than physical image to the extent that the toad is no longer the uncreative, killing job that he has to do to ward off hunger, but something far more complex and elusive.

And will never allow me to blarney  
My way to getting  
The fame and the girl and the money  
All at one sitting

In the above lines, a metaphor is implemented in ‘to blarney my way’ which is a variation of the (LIFE IS A JOURNEY) metaphor frequently referred to in conceptual metaphor literature, only with a slight modification to encompass (REACHING A LIFE GOAL IS A JOURNEY). The next metaphor resides in the seemingly non-metaphorical expression ‘the fame and the girl and the money’ that looks literal. The speaker reveals his fiction-like ambitions of adventure and romance; hence, it is his wishful thinking again that may conceptually emerge like:

1. LIFE IS A ROMANCE
2. LIFE IS AN ADVENTURE

Or even:

### 3. LIFE IS A WESTERN (MOVIE)

It is in the romances and Western pictures where the idolized, dashing hero wins it all: applause, love and wealth. Such a metaphor proves, on the one hand, the shallowness of the speaker who and relapses into dreaminess and almost stoops to puerile aspirations. It echoes, on the other, the incorrigible human nature that does not cease to want what is beyond reach. The ensuing metaphor 'All at one sitting' completes the scene. This metaphor is rather intricate though by no means novel. Looked up in the dictionary, the idiom is equivalent to 'during one continuous period when you are sitting in a chair' (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English). The explanation does not seem to encompass the meaning the line implies. *All at one sitting* is used here to indicate completeness and totality rather than continuity. The speaker talks about winning the whole package, a dream all people entertain, but very few realize. Winning normally suggests gaming and sitting hints at card games, perhaps gambling. Variations of this metaphor are available in the human conceptual system, for instance, in the verb *reshuffle* and such expressions as (play the strongest card; have the winning card, etc). Hence the metaphor may be tentatively conceptualized into:

- LIFE IS A CARD GAME.

Everybody's ambition is to be the winner that has the upper hand in the game and hits the jackpot. Of course, the hapless speaker laments that his life is not a winning game and he is not that winner who takes it all. The antecedent metaphor and the occurrence of the verb *lose* in the next stanza 'But I do say it's hard to lose either' offer further evidence that lends validity to this conceptualization.

The last two metaphors which the poem closes with are ones that come in the line with body-metaphors that seem to be on top of the commonest conceptual representations. Racova (2009: 19) relates the basis of Conceptual Metaphor Theory to the philosophical position of 'experientialism' which pivots around the old question 'of how experience relates to the genesis of concepts and the organization of conceptual structure.' According to experientialism, the role of

human body is acknowledged as central to concept formation and the notion of ‘embodiment.’

I don't say, one bodies the other  
One's spiritual truth;  
But I do say it's hard to lose either  
When you have both.

In ‘one bodies the other’, the speaker either talks about the fame, money and girl of the previous stanza which all epitomize the incorrigible romantic, idyllic human ambition. Or he talks about the two toads that squat on his life: work and cowardice explored earlier. Whichever meant, the body-metaphor remains unchanged; the speaker exposes the urgency and force with which an idea, desire, or dream drives:

- AN IDEA IS A BODY

Hence, one idea may replace or assume the shape of another. In ‘spiritual truth’ metaphor, the physicality is reversed and opted out in favour of insubstantiality:

1. Truth is spiritual.
2. Truth is intangible.

And thus:

3. TRUTH IS A GHOST/SPIRIT

Truth is spiritual and thus minus of physical and bodily existence. Truth eludes the speaker due to its phantom-like nature especially if it relates to one's own truth which is too slippery to pin down in a concrete tangible form. (See the diagram below which sketches (20) conceptual metaphors in *Toads*).

## Coda

Upon the investigation of Wordsworth's *My Heart Leaps Up* and Larkin's *Toads* in terms of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, it is found that it is possible to search for and uncover conceptual formulas that underlie metaphorical realizations despite obscurity and complexity. However, while some conceptual renditions run parallel to conceptualizations available in literature, others seem to set their own conceptual



bases apart from the mainstream. Novel metaphors are meant to simulate their inventors' mental as well as individualistic conceptual experiences which are, Tapia ((2006: 138) suggests, highly 'subjective.'

Further, while conceptual metaphor theorists insist on the concreteness of the other pole of the conceptual metaphor equation, in few instances, this equation is tampered with so that the concreteness of the source would not be as handy or candid. In other instances, the whole equation is overthrown and abstraction is resorted to couch in the source domain if the representation is intended to be faithful and adequate.

The examination of metaphors employed in a single poem shows that metaphors are conceptually related so as to form a mosaic-like mapping. A poem may contain a node metaphor, for instance, toad which help create and generate relevant metaphorical analogical renderings. Even if the metaphors look distant and detached from each other, the central node organizes and channels their progress in one unified direction. Thus, Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides insights into how metaphorical references are thematically mapped in a poem.

Conceptual metaphors may have one-to-one agreement with their linguistic realizations. It is again the personal choice of the poet and the dictates of the themes that occasionally hail candour and frown at obscurity. This is why perhaps, Larkin did not disguise (WORK IS A TOAD) nor Wordsworth mystifies his (THE CHILD IS A FUTURE FATHER) conceptualization. More importantly, there are conceptual metaphors that are found to underlie even the literal or non-metaphorical surface realizations. As such, conceptual metaphors seem to root themselves deep into the subconscious where they reshape human conscious and unconscious language use.



**Diagram: Metaphors, their Conceptual Bases and Types in *Toads***

Linguistic Metaphor	Conceptual metaphor	Type
the toad <i>work</i>	WORK IS AN ANIMAL	Image
Squat on my life	WORK IS A BURDEN/ AN IMPEDIMENT	Novel
my wit as a pitchfork	INTELLIGENCE IS A WEAPON	Image
the brute	WORK IS STUPIDITY	Image
Six days of the week	WORK IS AN IMPEDIMENT/ PRISON	Extension
It soils with its sickening poison	TOAD WORK IS DEATH	Novel
That's out of proportion!	MORE IS OUT	Orientational
paying a few bills!	LIVING/LIFE IS MONEY	Extension
Lots of folk live on their wits	INTELLIGENCE IS MONEY	Conventional*
Lots of folk live up lanes/ With fires in a bucket .....	WORKLESS PEOPLE ARE TRAMPS	Extension
<i>wives/Are skinny as whippets</i>	TRAMPS' WIVES ARE STARVED	Image
<i>Stuff your pension!</i>	COURAGE IS A SHOUT/LOUD SPEECH	Conventional
<i>that's the stuff/That dreams ....</i>	COURAGE IS ONLY A DREAM	Extension
... toad-like/ Squats in me	COWRDICE IS AN IMPEDIMENT	Image
Its hunkers are heavy as hard luck	COWRDICE IS A BURDEN	Image
to blarney/My way to getting	REACHING A LIFE GOAL IS A JOURNEY	Extension
The fame and the girl and the money	LIFE IS A ROMANCE/ADVENTURE/ WESTERN MOVIE	Conventional
All at one sitting	LIFE IS A CARD GAME	Extension
one bodies the other	AN IDEA IS A BODY	Conventional

\* Conventional here indicates that the conceptual metaphor is (or likely to be) recognized in Conceptual Metaphor theory literature.

One's spiritual truth	TRUTH IS A GHOST/SPIRIT	Extension
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## نظرية المجاز المفهومي / الادراكي في الشعر: دراسة البنية المفهومية للمجاز في الشعر

### الانجليزي

### الخلاصة

منذ ان نشر كل من جورج لاكوف و مارك جونسون كتابهما الشهير المجاز الذي نعيش به (Metaphors We Live By) عام 1980، ازدهرت الدراسات التي انطوت تحت نظرية المجاز المفهومي او الادراكي. تنطلق هذه النظرية من الاعتقاد ان كل استخ دامنا اليومي للغة هو في الاساس مجازي و ان لم ندرك ذلك و بالتالي ثمة قاعدة مفهومية/ ادراكية تكمن وراء كل تعبير مجازي. ركزت الدراسة الحالية على البحث عن و تحليل المجاز وفقا ل نظرية المجاز المفهومي او الادراكي في قصيدتين هما قلبي يقفز عاليا" لوليم وردزورث و الضفادع لفيليب لاركن. جائت النتائج لتوضح ان ثمة قاعدة انطلاق مفهومية لكل تعبير مجازي في قصيدتي الدراسة و ان اختلفت بعض تلك القواعد المفهومية عن تلك الرائجة في مجال الدراسات الادراكية للمجاز، الامر الي يمكن تبريره نسبة الى حقيقة اختلاف لغة الشعر و تفرداها عن لغة الاستخدام اليومي فضلا عن الخصوصية و التفرد التي يتمتع بها الشعراء على اختلافهم.