Conceptual Metaphor - the Controversial Case of Embodied Thought

Vuković, Veljko

Veljko Vuković

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Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Sc. Marija Brala-Vukanović

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

Metaphor has long been a mesmerizing literary phenomenon that attracted attention of literary critics and brought joy and fulfillment to literary hedonists. It shows the writer's greatness of talent in presenting the ordinary in an extraordinary artistic fashion, of transforming the plain into the sublime, of overcoming the physical in favor of the transcendent. However, with the discovery of conceptual metaphor within Cognitive Linguistics, scientific community and ordinary people were baffled. It turned out that metaphor is not at all a novel linguistic and literary creation, but rather an omnipresent everyday occurrence. Furthermore, metaphor became a matter of thought rather than language, and this thought was characterized by being embodied in nature. The prime working principle commanding metaphor was said to be the same one that governs our cognitive constitution. Subsequently, the flood of cognitive research and neuroscientific investigation started to increase significantly in the hope to understand this intricate and peculiar phenomenon. The two major theoretical approaches to the study of conceptual metaphor that will be dealt with in this work are Conceptual Metaphor Theory, with George Lakoff and Mark Johnson as its most fierce proponents, and Blending Theory, established by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner. The aim of this work is the comparison between the two theories and the presentation of their wide scope of application within different aspects of human intellectual endeavor.

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1. Introduction

Pablo Picasso once said, *Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life*. This is a classic example of a novel linguistic expression that literary theorists call *metaphor*. Translating this quote into conventional, everyday language, we can say that the artist deems art to be an invigorating liquid, like water, reviving human soul the same way water does a biological organism, purifying our spirit as earth is cleansed after heavy rain. The meaning of a metaphor is prone to subjective experience, although it must be grounded in something universal and conceptually analogical, available to common human understanding, in order for the reader or listener to understand the idea and semantic implications behind the creative expression. However, metaphor is not at all a young literary figure. Since ancient times, philosophers recognized its importance. With regard to metaphor as a novel linguistic expression, Aristotle states: "metaphor is the application of an alien name by transference either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy, that is, proportion"[1].

Metaphor is often regarded as poetical and stylistic embroidery or as a rhetoric device that induces the kind of emotions in its hearers that are evocative of those expressed in the symbolic language of the metaphor itself. As the language of rhetoric, metaphor is most often used by philosophers and politicians as the means for analogical understanding of complex everyday issues with the aid of much simpler logical counterparts which only differ in their linguistic adornment. In literature, metaphor is one of the tropes or figures of speech that show the writer's ability to express what is ordinary in terms of out-of-the-ordinary stylistic expressions of natural language.

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[1] Ross (1959: 3339)

This work is not going to deal with the analysis of novel metaphorical expression, but its cognitive counterpart called *conceptual metaphor*. Although cognitive science abounds with theoretical approaches to conceptual metaphor, it took almost two thousand years to shatter the myth of distinction between literal and figurative language, their interrelatedness, use and application in everyday communication and experience of the world. This was achieved after the publication of Michael Reddy's paper *The Conduit Metaphor,* which served as the stepping-stone for the establishment of Cognitive Linguistics and the development of theories on conceptual metaphor which yielded a wide range of revolutionary scientific implications that shook up the whole scientific community and not just those field involved in linguistic and literary research.

1.1 Conceptual Metaphor

The groundbreaking 1980 work *Metaphors We Live By* was written by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who can be considered the architects of the conceptual metaphor research. This work should serve as the starting point for every study on the topic of conceptual metaphor because it gives primary and systematic insights into the characteristics and significance of conceptual metaphor, its construal, application and omnipresence. Just how much of our everyday language use is *infected* by conceptual metaphor seemed to go beyond our conscious comprehension and does so even today.

Conceptual metaphor is the object of investigation of different neurosciences, especially Cognitive Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, social sciences and anthropology. Cognitive Linguistics is one of the youngest sciences in the world. It took its swing in the late '70s and the early '80s of the past century, with Lakoff and Johnson as it most prominent proponents. What this

revolutionary tandem claimed is that, unlike novel metaphor, conceptual metaphor is not only a matter of language, but a matter of thought as well. Conceptual metaphor, as its name suggests, is largely grounded in conceptual reasoning, especially that of embodiment. In other words, it is drawn from our physical interaction with the outer world. Therefore, it should not perhaps be considered reasoning at all, but rather intuiting of a sort because it most often happens unconsciously.

However, it seems that a thesis on conceptual metaphor is not at all a young because Aristotle claimed that "[…] in defining contraries of every kind men have recourse to a *spatial metaphor* (italics mine), for they say that those things are contraries which, within the same class, are separated by the greatest possible distance"[2]. Lakoff would appreciate this statement, but his claims are much more far-reaching than that. He goes greater distances as to claim that even mathematics and logic which, up until that moment, were thought to be universally and eternally true, are also based on bodily experience just like everything in human cognizance and perception[3]. This claim dumbfounded scientific community to such extents that conceptual metaphor became the scope of investigation and interest of a wide range of sciences whose basic postulates fell into question after the theory on conceptual metaphor was established.

Conceptual metaphor, universally found in almost all cultures, can be said to be an innate propensity of the human mind to simplify abstract mental concept and nature's intricate phenomena by conceptualization for the purposes of easier understanding. It has its spring in the primitive human inclination to rely on sensorimotor abilities, with such experiential processes, of

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[2] Ross (1959: 17)
[3] Tay (2014: 55)

which we are most often unaware, being linked with our neural framework[4]. Therefore, conceptual metaphor should rather be comprehended as the product of cognition and perception rather than language.

What is at play with conceptual metaphor are not merely words, but rather *ideas* or *concepts*, which are grounded in embodied experience. This is why, for instance, people understand the expression *to have an idea on one's mind* in terms of ideas being physical items or objects, and mind being comprehended as a physical platform upon which they can be placed. This example serves to prove that "processing metaphoric meaning involves some imaginative understanding of the body's role in structuring abstract concepts"[5].

1.2 The Scope of the Work

Since all natural languages take their spring in human experience, which is visible in both semantic aspects of single lexical units, combinations of several lexical units into complex semantic units (such as, idioms, collocations, metaphors, and so on) and grammatical constructs (such as tenses, prepositional phrases, spatial indicators, pronouns, and so on), this work is going to deal with the importance of conceptual, cognitive or embodied metaphor, providing the reader with the understanding of how such linguistic and conceptual construct patterns came into being and what their omnipresent use might indicate about the nature of its users.

Explaining the most important notions from the theories on conceptual metaphor, precisely, Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Blending Theory, discussing some substantial issues with regard to the two major opposing theoretical approaches to conceptual metaphor, giving

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[4] Gibbs (2005: 87 and 118)
[5] Gibbs (2005: 184)

further suggestions as to the path which researchers should pave for the development of the field, and offering some examples of conceptual metaphor from the South-Slavic languages will take up most of the word fund at the disposal for a B.A. thesis. That is why this work will be an overview of the most important issues within the conceptual metaphor research program, its applications and implications in other areas of research that deal with the significance and understanding of the wide theoretical and practical influences of conceptual metaphor, as well as the multidisciplinary course it might take in the future.

2. The Most Important Notions From the Conceptual Metaphor Theories

Theory on conceptual metaphor, as an endeavor within the Cognitive Linguistics research program, comprises many notions that make it not only a speculative theory but a true scientific theory with an empirical basis. This is achieved through the establishment of definitive notions which can be either denied or corroborated with empirical data. Therefore, when a theorist on conceptual metaphor claims that conceptual metaphor has embodiment as its primary condition for realization, such a stance is endorsed by offering ample instances of embodied linguistic constructs which prove that bodily experience is the crucial proviso for language construction and usage. In turn then, some cognitive linguists go even further as to claim that not only metaphor, but other linguistic expressions as well are grounded in bodily experience, including language itself as a systematic whole that shapes our thoughts.

However, since cognitive linguists who support theories on conceptual metaphor assert that conceptual metaphor, as part of our cognitive system, is an embodied phenomenon, then all human thought as well should be conceived of as being embodied. This is a far-reaching and radical claim, which many linguistic researchers reserve from being associated with, because it

leaves no room for the establishment of a theory on thought. Other significant notions that represent the stepping-stone for a theory on conceptual metaphor are cross-domain mapping and image schemas.

2.1 Embodiment

Embodiment, within the conceptual metaphor investigation program, is at the same time the most important matter and the most serious bone of contention, even between thinkers who share the belief that language has an embodied basis. Conceptual metaphor, also referred to as embodied metaphor, as its name suggests, is grounded in bodily experience.

One of the most often cited instances of conceptual metaphor is LOVE IS A JOURNEY. Therefore, when a person says, *I feel as if we have entered a blind street*, to its partner, the underlying concept behind the utterance is the idea that the emotion of love as an abstract concept has to be expressed with the aid of conceptual metaphor clothed in words in order for the speaker to convey the feeling and for the recipient of the message to understand how the other one feels. To understand the notion of embodiment better it would be good to cite the so-called *embodiment premise* and expound what it actually proposes. The premise states:

> "People's subjective, felt experiences of their bodies in action provide part of the fundamental grounding for language and thought. Cognition is what occurs when the body engages the physical, cultural world and must be studied in terms of the dynamical interactions between people and the environment. Human language and thought emerge from recurring patterns of embodied activity that constrain ongoing intelligent behavior. We must not assume cognition to be purely internal, symbolic, computational, and disembodied, but seek out the gross and detailed ways that language and thought are inextricably shaped by embodied action" (Gibbs 2005: 276).

Adopting such a claim leads to believing in a dynamic interaction between our minds and our bodies which, up until the emergence of cognitive sciences, were seen as independent, disparate and non-overlapping aspects of human nature. Prior to that, philosophers, linguists and

psychologists only debated about the influence of thought on language and of language on thought. Little or no attention was paid to the influence of embodied experience on language and thought and the mutual influence of all of these phenomena on one another. That is why conceptual metaphor theories and their most important aspect, namely, embodiment, made a great revolution as to how we understand our nature and the nature of our cognitive apparatus.

One of the most intricate statements with regard to the embodiment hypothesis is the idea "that human physical, cognitive, and social embodiment ground our conceptual and linguistic systems"[6]. This assertion in itself is already controversial because it is circular. It aims to explain human cognitive and social endeavors by offering empirical data from those same starting points that are exactly in question. It is not a mistake to claim certain linguistic expressions as embodied, but when it comes to conceptual entities we should rather remain careful and less presumptuous as to what we label as being grounded in embodied experience.

One experiment, Basso's 1990 research[7] of a Western Apache Indian language in which parts of the automobile are correspondent to those of human body parts (resulting in the MOTOR VEHICLES ARE HUMAN BODIES conceptual metaphor), is supposed to serve as an example of how conceptual metaphor comes into being. My opinion is that this example is not a good one because Indian culture through its historical development did not bring about motor vehicles, so they did not have the need to have lexical items for automobiles and their parts. Instead, when they encountered the finished product, namely, the automobile, they used the already existent words, ascribing them to this new invention that needed to be named for the purposes of easier communication when automotive world became the topic of conversation. Based on such

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[6] Rohrer (2007: 27)
[7] Gibbs (2005: 79-80)

reasoning, we can say that due to the lack of lexical items, the easiest way to convey thoughts regarding motor vehicles was to use the analogy to human body and its parts. This way, the idea of conceptual metaphor slowly dissipates into linguistic economy and practicality.

Nevertheless, a number of other scientific studies and experiments conducted by cognitive linguists and other researchers interested in the development of conceptual metaphor theory give an abundance of empirical evidence which goes to show that embodied cognizance is indeed at play in understanding or constructing most of our abstract concepts. One of the most significant such experiments was conducted by Corriss' and Kose's in 1998[8] in which children observed an adult building a construction, pretending to be involved in the building process or imitating the task while looking at the picture of the configuration. More accuracy was achieved when the children either visualized or actually performed the construction of the buildings, than while observing the already assembled construction or the whole building process. This example goes to show that "imagination is an action-based process"[9].

2.2 Cross-domain Mapping

Alongside embodiment, which represents the most important characteristic of conceptual metaphor, another term arises, which is just alike crucially important for the establishment of a theory on conceptual metaphor. This is the notion of *cross-domain mapping*[10]. It is called cross-domain mapping because two domains are necessary for the conceptual metaphor to work its magic. These two domains are called the *source* and the *target* domain. On the one hand, source domain is the domain of the more accessible and understandable nature. The elements from the

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[8] Gibbs (2005: 237)
[9] Gibbs (2005: 237)
[10] Coulson (2008: 190)

source domain are usually those from the world which is possible to be experienced, namely, the world of the empirical. Therefore, the elements from the source domain are such entities and occurrences which can be accessed with our bodily senses. On the other hand, target domain is the domain of the abstract which is simplified with the aid of the source domain elements. Those elements are what cognitive linguists call *image schemas*, a term which will be explained in the following subsection.

To exemplify the whole idea of cross-domain mapping let us use the TIME IS MOTION conceptual metaphor. The sentence, *Eons will have passed when I stumble upon another chance like this,* clearly shows how humans grasp the concept of time. Since time is an abstract idea, people need to express its meaning with the aid of something more accessible and palpable, such as motion, which is an action that we perform even when we inhale and exhale – parts of our bodies and our organs contract and expand. Motion is therefore a bodily endeavor that we practice incessantly, representing the source domain element which is mapped onto the target domain of time.

But why do we understand time through the concept of motion is another question. In the following quote, Lakoff somewhat explains the issue: "the fact that time is understood metaphorically in terms of motion, entities, and locations accords with our biological knowledge. In our visual systems, we have detectors for motion and detectors for objects/locations. We do not have detectors for time […]. Thus, it makes good biological sense that time should be understood in terms of things and motion" (2007: 282).

However, this is not entirely true. When we look at the sky we can see that the sun and the moon are interchanging on it, making us think that time indeed is motive, since the objects of

time (the sun and the moon) do exist in space and that they take certain locations in the sky, clearly delineating different temporal aspects of the day. Therefore, time can most definitely be understood as motion through space, but then the conceptual metaphor regarding time dissolves into its literal form of the human understanding of the phenomenon. When alike conceptual metaphors are understood on their most basic level we arrive at a conclusion that in such cases there is no unconscious working of conceptual metaphor in the background but rather of our direct experience with the phenomenon of time. Still, this does not belittle the importance of conceptual metaphor per se, only suggests that we should be more careful in analyzing conceptual metaphors, which will show whether one is really at play or not.

Nevertheless, let us look at another example of cross-domain mapping. In ordinary language we often explain the concept of death in terms of the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS A (GRIM) REAPER. This is visible in the following example: *Being sick, he feared death would come for the harvest*. Since death is a natural event and a biological occurrence which, once experienced, prevents us from having post-experiential personal impressions, we have to resort only to superficial understanding of the phenomenon.

Why death is understood as a reaper might come from our direct experience with the physical world. When a plant dies, it loses its vigor and droops as if being reaped. Also, when a man reaps a plant it means that it is mature enough and that its developmental period has come to an end. This is exactly what happens when a human being dies – hopefully, through life-long physical, intellectual, mental and spiritual growth, we reach the end of the cycle, when we are 'ready to be harvested and stored' just like man does to crops. However, having a long literary and mythological history, this concrete conceptual metaphor makes it hard to conclude whether

we can talk of it being truly conceptual or perhaps of it being a *dead* novel metaphor which, through historical advancement of culture, simply lost its status of being metaphoric in nature.

2.2.1 The Invariance Principle

An important law that governs the application of cross-domain mapping is what some authors named the *invariance principle*. It is the claim "that the mapping from the source cannot violate the image-schematic structure of the target"[11]. For example, if one says, *He is a sneaky snake*, people of the western culture are more likely to ascribe the 'psychological' characteristics of the snake to the person, with the former being very sly and evil in a spiteful way, rather than ascribing to the person the way the snake moves or hisses. This is so because in our culture snake is the archetype of evilness due to the widespread Christian religion in which snake is the embodiment of the devil. Therefore, although snakes do not have a psyche, its archetypical characteristics bring about associations with the devil, which anthropomorphize the animal, giving it certain personality traits that we recognize in our fellow humans. In this example it is visible how conceptual metaphor works its magic in both directions. Not only is a human being understood in terms of an animal, but that same animal is understood in terms of having human characteristics. Only the selected characteristics from the source domain of the human psyche are mapped onto the target domain of the snake behavior, while likewise, only selected characteristics from the source domain of the snake 'psyche' are mapped onto the target domain of the human psyche. This is a clear-cut epitome of how the idea of conceptual metaphor has a long history and application, with us most of the time being unaware that such cognitive and creative endeavor takes place at all.

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[11] Oakley (2007: 223)

2.3 Image Schema

Cross-domain mapping would not be able to be performed either, if there were not for another cognitive tool which helps its realization – it is called *image schema*. It can be said that image schema stands for "dynamic analog representations of spatial relations and movements in space. Although image schemas are derived from perceptual and motor processes, they are not themselves sensorimotor processes"[12]. In fact, as Johnson put it, image schemas are "primary means by which we construct or constitute order and are not mere passive receptacles into which experience is poured"[13].

Some of the most prominent and universal examples of image schemas, as proposed by Johnson, are: CONTAINER, BLOCKAGE, BALANCE, COUNTERFORCE, RESTRAINT REMOVAL, ENABLEMENT, PATH, CENTER-PERIPHERY, CYCLE, NEAR-FAR, PART-WHOLE, MERGING, SPLITTING, FULL-EMPTY[14]. The phenomenon of image schema is not only marginally useful but also extremely evolutionary advantageous for our everyday tasks because it represents "the basis for organizing knowledge and reasoning about the world"[15]. Every image schema is a conceptual projection of a physical object, natural force or our interaction with it.

Let us now take a look at an example of a conceptual metaphor which will explain the idea of image schema in more detail. In saying, *He sang a gay song to keep our spirits up*, being happy and cheerful almost necessitates standing upright, as if the joy makes our body stand tall

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[12] Gibbs (2005: 90-91)
[13] Johnson (1987: 30)
[14] Johnson (1987:126)
[15] Oakley (2007: 215)

and straight. That is why the image schema of VERTICALITY behind the HAPPINESS IS UP conceptual metaphor is indeed the one collected from embodied experience.

Yet another example comes from the DIFFICULTIES ARE BURDENS conceptual metaphor field. In saying, *The racial issue still weighs down on all of us,* takes the idea that problems, especially those of psychological and social nature, make us behave in the same fashion as when lifting heavy physical objects. When someone is faced with an issue that cannot be easily solved, they get frustrated, sometimes even depressed, making the person walk crouched, with their head looking down. In the sentence example, image schemas of DISABLEMENT and COUNTERFORCE are at play. Such embodied experience is then transferred, or rather mapped onto the more abstract entities, in this case difficulties, which belong to the same realm of the non-physical as emotions, thus being understood almost exclusively in terms of sensorimotor experience.

3. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The starting point for Conceptual Metaphor Theory (hereinafter CMT) is the postulate that the structure and functioning of language mirrors the structure and functioning of our minds[16]. This claim is by some still considered controversial, and rightfully so, because such inferences are made purely on the basis of how we use our natural languages and understand the world around us through the language prism. However, we do not have access to our thoughts directly, only through the medium of natural languages, leaving us with no language-independent conclusions with regard to our thoughts. Consequently, it means that once language is acquired it *infects* and affects the constitution and contents of the mind in such a fashion that thought and

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[16] Tay (2014: 52)

language start influencing each other with no clear delineation where one ends and the other one starts. Still, this issue is too great to be dealt with within the boundaries of this work. CMT, whose main proponents are the world-renowned George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, can best be explained as being based on three arguments, as proposed by Dennis Tay (2014: 52-53).

a) Conventionality Argument

Metaphor is not just a matter of poetic language. It is instead an omnipresent linguistic practice of which we are rarely conscious. Its occurrence shall most probably be found in all natural languages. That is why we can claim that it is a conventional everyday linguistic expression and not an example of a 'literary linguistic deviance'. An example of this claim is the verb *grasp*, used to refer to human understanding of what has previously been unexplained. We *grasp the meaning of metaphorical expressions* without realizing that the verb used is actually itself of metaphoric nature. Another example is the conceptual metaphor KNOWING IS SEEING. *I see where you are going with your arguments,* clearly shows that understanding or cognizing something is equal to perceiving that which is prone to be empirically experienced or sensed. The application of such verbs in everyday communication shows the conventionality of conceptual metaphors.

b) Conceptual Structure Argument

Metaphor is not just a product of the linguistic structure, it is also a product of the cognitive structure. Following this claim, we can say that as language is motivated by our embodied experience which is lexicalized metaphorically, so our mental concepts must have the same metaphorical structure as well. If experience shapes language and language shapes thought, it might be the case that the process occurs in the opposite direction as well, with our thoughts

influencing language and our sensorimotor experience of the world. To exemplify, let us consider the following instance of the STATES ARE LOCATIONS and SEEING IS TOUCHING conceptual metaphors: *He fell in love, being swept off his feet, as soon as he laid his eyes on her*. In this case, an emotion is a kind of container one falls in, or a location that one enters. Love is thus conceptualized as locations and containers are, attracting the same sort of characteristics the latter possess, while visual perception is conceptualized as the act of touching. That is why we can set or lay our vision onto the object of perception, just like we can lay our hand onto physical objects.

c) Embodiment Argument

Almost exclusively are all concepts from the source domain those available to our bodily senses, having their origin in the world of possible physical experience. With their help, through the process of mapping, we arrive at the understanding of more abstract and idealized concepts from the target domain. This is the only way for us to understand ideas, emotions and non-embodied occurrences which, by their nature, are not available to us in the empirical world. It seems that only by the metaphorical application of embodied experience onto such concepts can we grasp their meaning, nature and significance.

An example from the SIMILARITY IS CLOSENESS and CATEGORIES ARE CONTAINERS conceptual metaphors fields might help understand the argument more meticulously. In saying, *Their ideas are not exclusive of one another; rather, they closely relate in having equal implications*, two ideas belong to the same *class* of thought, therefore they are not *exclusive*, but rather *complementary*. As a matter of fact, they can be *placed* into the same *category*, which acts as a *container* does in the physical world, with the assumption that closely

related things belong to the same *set*. Their relatedness or *similarity* manifests itself in their being *close* to each other, as similar object are physically near in the experiential world (certain plants from the same family can be found close to each other in nature). This experiential basis acts as a framework for all abstract entities, in this case theoretical ideas, naturally expanding over the whole range of non-physical idealized entities.

To support the CMT framework, let us consider several instances of conceptual metaphors from the South-Slavic languages. In saying, *Nabiti nekome rogove*, a vexed person is represented as an animal with horns, which are usually considered stubborn and nervous, exuding anger upon those who provoke them. Someone who *para nosom oblake*, contains the idea that being prideful is being gigantic, standing erect and tall to the point where one's head reaches clouds. Similarly, *Biti glavom u oblacima*, embodies the idea that profound thinking is vertical elevation. Contrary to that, *Pustiti mozak na ispašu*, exemplifies the idea that being careless and thoughtless is walking cattle on pasture, where thoughts are represented as sheep or some other animal. When a person from the Balkans *stane nekome na rep*, incorporates the idea that making enemies is provoking an animal, especially the wild one which will defend itself by counterattacking.

Okaljati nekome obraz refers to the idea that being honorable means having clean body, which only accounts for carnal misbehavior, clearly disregarding other types of immoral misdeeds. *Uzeti nekoga na zub* instantiates the kind of reasoning which implies that to have it in with someone is to viciously hunt prey as a predator does a catch. The last, but not the least, *Živjeti pod staklenim zvonom*, contains the idea that excessive security and safety are conceptualized as living under a glass dome, which recalls the embodied idea of earth being covered with the atmospheric 'gas dome'.

Just to show the inconsistency between the Anglo-Saxon and South-Slavic cultures, let us take a look at the English proverb, *People who live in glass houses should not throw stones*. Obviously, the former culture considers glass as a fragile material, embodying weakness, helplessness and frailty, while the latter, for some reason, perceives a glass construction as the one offering a safe haven.

3.1 Primary Metaphors

Within the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, there is a more fundamental theoretical subcategory called *primary metaphor,* as developed by Joseph Grady. With regard to the definiton of primary metaphors he claims that they are "simple patterns, like Lakoff and Johnson's MORE IS UP, which map fundamental perceptual concepts onto equally fundamental but not directly perceptual ones"[17]. With the finding of primary metaphor, Lakoff's and Johnson's conceptual metaphor turned out to be complex, or rather possible to be deconstructed into more *primitive* constituent elements.

Therefore, a complex conceptual metaphor like THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS can be further broken down into two more basic conceptual constituents, namely, ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE and PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT[18]. This finding provoked cognitive linguists to apply themselves more meticulously to the analysis of conceptual frameworks and their basic elements. Primary metaphors are "thought to be universally acquired prior to language as a natural function of the way the human body interacts with the material

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[17] Grady (2007: 192)
[18] Steen (2014: 121)

environment"[19] and, unlike complex conceptual metaphors, all are experience-based, and as such result from "correlations between sensorimotor concepts and subjective experience"[20].

The following list represents a set of some of the corresponding source-target concepts that belong to the scope of primary metaphors, which serve as basic constituent elements for all complex conceptual metaphors: UP-DOMINANT, DOWN-SAD, HEAVY-DIFFICULT, BRIGHT-HAPPY, FORWARD-SUCCESS, BACKWARD-THE PAST, SWEET-APPEALING, FORCE-COMPULSION[21]. Lakoff and Johnson not only accepted Grady's criticism but they also incorporated his contributive findings into their CMT framework, which resulted in the more *primitive* CMT which became more stable and resistant against the attacks from other theoretical headquarters. Still, some authors imply that primary metaphors might actually be metonymic, thus placing the weight of proof on its proponents.

3.1.1 Unidirectionality

Unlike complex conceptual metaphors, primary metaphors affirm the claim that they work on the principle of *unidirectionality*[22]. This principle states that the elements mapped from the source domain onto the target domain cannot become the elements of the target domain in that same conceptual metaphor chain without arriving at, if not a nonsensical, than at least a nonconventional metaphoric expression. For example, based on the THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS conceptual metaphor, it is completely common to say, *The two researchers have laid a firm stepping stone for the future upgrade of their scientific theory*. However, it would be most unusual to say, *The building's basic principles stand resistant against the challenge of*

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[19] Lakoff (2007: 264)
[20] Steen (2014: 124)
[21] Grady (2007: 192-193)
[22] Grady (2007: 193)

architectural arguments. From this example it is visible why certain complex conceptual metaphors work only in one direction but not in the opposite.

But Lakoff and Johnson claimed unidirectionality even for their complex conceptual metaphor which proved not to be the case. One example of *bidirectionalilty* with regard to conceptual metaphor includes the following example. It would be absolutely natural to say both, *She is the lioness in her line of work*, as well as, *The lion showed such strength of character in resisting its prey that eventually it freed it from its claws*. On the one hand, the person in the former example acquired characteristics of a lion, being fierce and brave in facing competition in her working environment. On the other hand, the lion in the latter example acquired the characteristics of a person, exuding the power of will and mercy, which are usually reserved only for sentient and morally conscious beings. This example shows the violation of the principle of unidirectionality, which means that certain conceptual metaphors can further be broken down into more elementary conceptual units.

4. Blending Theory

Blending Theory (hereinafter BT), by some critics considered CMT's nemesis, while by others its complement, is another approach to the study of conceptual metaphor and cognitive concepts in general. Developed by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, conceptual blending represents dynamic interaction between embodied concepts, or rather conceptualized physical objects, and disembodied abstract ideas originating from our working memory, which are prone to be stored in our long-term memory.

The blending process is governed by the so-called *vital relations* which include: analogy, disanalogy, similarity, space, time, identity, change, cause-effect, part-whole, property, category

and so on[23]. These notions, which could be understood as Aristotelian categories in the sphere of conceptual metaphor research system, seem to explain by themselves how the process of metaphoric conceptualization takes place, which is something CMT lacks. Yet, the following quote serves to show the real difference between the two opposing approaches: "whereas CMT has been primarily concerned with identifying regular, conventional patterns of metaphorical conceptualization […], BT has often explicitly addressed itself to novel and unique examples which do not arise from entrenched cross-domain relationships" (Grady, Oakley & Coulson 2007: 424).

Based on this claim, we can say that the true advantage of BT over CMT is that it involves real-time on-line conceptual processing, with the latter approach simply being inferior in this aspect. Blending theorists thus claim that real-time conceptual blends are not, although can become, *entrenched*, as it is the case with the elements involved in cross-domain mapping. Instead, they arise and are created spontaneously. If they are evolutionary advantageous or used conventionally within the boundaries of a collective, they naturally become entrenched, as it is the case with grammatical constructs. However, for an immediate on-line conceptual blend to spring up, there has to exist at least a basic correlating mapping, in which the blend is grounded.

There is yet another difference between BT and CMT, and that is directionality. While BT has a bidirectional or multidirectional nature, CMT is only unidirectional. This means that the interaction between mental spaces, unlike conceptual domains, is less constrained and fixed, and more free and dynamic, which results in creation of novel metaphorical and conceptual

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[23] Turner (2007: 381)

constructs on the spot, in all forms of human endeavor, including commercials, jests, non-verbal communication and behavior[24].

However, conceptual blending is not "a compositional algorithmic process", which is a characteristic sometimes ascribed to cross-domain mapping in the CMT framework, and "cannot be modeled", making interaction between blends unpredictable, unless we observe the process "solely from the structure of the inputs"[25]. In this sense, blends "comply with competing optimality constraints […], and with locally relevant functional goals", which means that "the most suitable analog for conceptual integration is not chemical composition but biological evolution"[26]. Perhaps this is the best argument speaking in favor of the BT's theoretical and practical framework over the CMT's.

4.1 Mental spaces

While the CMT program requires only two domains between which the process of conceptual mapping occurs unidirectionally from the source to the target domain, with them having *locked*, permanent relations, BT has two more domains, actually called *mental spaces,* which are present context-dependent and -activated, and which have more dynamic interrelations. Authors define mental space as "a partial and temporary representational structure which speakers construct when thinking or talking about a perceived, imagined, past, present, or future situation"[27]. Mental spaces should not be equated with conceptual domains; instead, they "represent particular scenarios which are structured by given domains"[28].

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[24] Birdsell (2014: 72)
[25] Fauconnier & Turner (2007: 362)
[26] Fauconnier & Turner (2007: 362)
[27] Grady, Oakley & Coulson (2007: 421)
[28] Grady, Oakley & Coulson (2007: 421)

As Fauconnier proposes, mental spaces, which are connected semantically, conceptually and experientially, are organized in *frames*[29]. Therefore, the concepts of *fight*, *battle*, *weapon*, *uniform*, *headquarters* and *soldier* belong to the collective frame of *war*. The spectrum of mental spaces consists of "two 'input' spaces (which, in a metaphorical case, are associated with the source and target of CMT), plus a 'generic' space, representing conceptual structure that is shared by both inputs, and the 'blend' space, where material from the inputs combines and interacts" (Grady, Oakley & Coulson 2007: 421).

Therefore, when one says, *She is a true working bee in her department*, the activation of mental spaces can be explained in the following fashion. The source input space invokes the elements of the bee behavior; the target input space contains the elements of human personality and psyche; the generic space creates conceptual patterns based on the person and bees sharing the hard-working nature, having bustling working environment, being passionately applied to their working tasks; and finally, the blend space *meshes* certain personality traits of a human being with the characteristics of the bee behavior, resulting in a human woman's personality being conceptualized by behavioral patterns of a bee.

However, as can be seen from the analysis of the aforementioned example, conceptual blending is not a simple process. It involves four steps; namely, composition, completion and elaboration, plus projection of structure from the blended space to the inputs[30]. If we are led by the principle of Ockham's razor, which states that a theory with less postulates is the one more probable or apt to be true, then BT is indeed inferior to CMT because it has four mental spaces, unlike the latter which only has two domains between which the process of mapping occurs.

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[29] Fauconnier (2007: 352)
[30] Grady, Oakley & Coulson (2007: 425 and 437)

But simplicity and economy are not always to be the main criteria for a successful theory; it should rather be its implications and applications. Therefore, what BT has as an advantage to CMT is its ability to account for a wider scope of 'linguistic anomalies', such as novel metaphors which emerge from a conceptual process involved in creating newly-coined literary metaphorical expressions, proverbs, and metaphysical discourse constructs, such as counterfactuals and conditionals.

To endorse the BT framework, let us resort to some examples from the South-Slavic languages, which I believe, cannot be accounted for by the CMT approach. In saying, *Pala mi je ideja na pamet*, we are conceptualizing ideas in terms of shooting stars falling from the skies upon our mind, which plays the role of the earth. This is very reminiscent of Plato's idea that concepts, of which earthly entities are mere *faulty* counterparts, reside perfect and idealized in the 'celestial realm of ideas'. But the CMT framework, unlike its theoretical foe, cannot account for this because there is no embodied basis in experiencing ideas, only the history of its cultural and practical metaphorical use, upon which BT is grounding its postulates.

Another example speaking in favor of the BT approach is the talk of possible worlds which CMT regards as being non-metaphorical. When one says, *Da nije bilo potresa, zgrada se ne bi urušila*, we are talking about a 'possible world' or a state of affairs which is not, but could have been the case. Possible worlds can be understood as conceptualized or idealized metaphorical 'dummies' of the real world, with the propensities of its objects marking possible scenarios which are already 'contained' in the existent world, but which are not, although can be, instantiated or realized in it.

Additionally, a number of conceptual metaphors based on 'bird life' have arisen in the South-Slavic languages. When we want to express the feeling of safety, of someone watching over us, or of us being someone's protégé, we will say, *Uzeo me je pod svoje krilo* or *Živim pod okriljem svog zaštitnika*. The old folk saying, *Svaka ptica svome jatu leti*, is another such example. In this proverb an organization or a group of people with the same worldviews are represented as a flock of birds. If an individual identifies with them, this means that he or she has such mentality and stances on life which drew them to the flock. But the psychological motivation behind this example is not embodied, thus not being able to be accounted for by CMT. For people who live their lives under a ruthless motto, a South-Slavic person would say, *On živi pod krilaticom 'cilj opravdava sredstva'*.

Shy and self-sufficient people *žive u svojoj ljusci*. When explaining to a child how children are born, people from the Balkans would say, *Donijela ga je roda*. All of these examples have their roots in oral tradition. Mythology of the Balkans claims that a great bird had spawned an egg from which the world hatched. This goes to show that certain conceptual metaphors from South-Slavic languages, which are motivated by bird life, are not really embodied, or at least not exclusively. They are instead inspired by and rooted in the mythological tradition.

Lastly, in the 2.2.1 section, we have seen an instance of a conceptual metaphor which could have hardly emerged solely based on embodied experience, unless we take into consideration the psychological motivation behind it as well, and BT does exactly that. Why is an animal like snake the embodiment of the devil in our culture? There are hundreds of vicious animals in nature that could have become the conceptual item representing the devil and evil, but snake somehow took that role predominantly. In the time of rising religions, Christianity had to

have an enemy to oppose, and the Eastern religions, some of which regard snake as a godly animal, made a great candidate. This conceptual metaphor should thus be understood from the anthropological, cultural and psychological perspectives, which are the fields of investigation of the BT researchers, rather than solely being based on embodiment.

5. Conclusions

Conceptual metaphor, as could be seen throughout this work, is a theoretical framework within the scope of Cognitive Linguistics, which prompted a revolution in linguistics, literature, different neurosciences and psychology. With the establishment of a theory on conceptual metaphor, literary metaphor lost its status as a novel linguistic, literary expression, and became an everyday cognitive occurrence, with all people as its unconscious creators. Conceptual metaphor likewise brought about the revolution in how we perceive, comprehend and conceptualize ourselves as cognitive sentient beings, the world around us, but also the world within us, namely, the world of abstractions.

Although CMT engendered other theoretical and scientific approaches to the research of this important cognitive phenomenon, it seems, as shown in the 4.1 section, that the dynamic BT has a more versatile application, being involved not only in the investigation of novel metaphorical expressions, which CMT is disregarding in favor of recurrent everyday patterns of conceptual metaphor, but also in the talk of possible worlds which represents an everyday understanding of our realities. BT's wide variety of interest in a whole range of research fields, especially those of culture, literature, anthropology and other subfields of social sciences and humanities, makes it an inexhaustible mine of precious scientific development.

BT researchers, like Lakoff and Johnson did in the 1980s, are thinking out of the box. If we are to dive into the recurrent patterns of metaphorical conceptualization in myths, legends, fairytales, proverbs, religion, arts, literature, philosophy and psychology, perhaps we would be able to find a universal neural language that we all share completely unaware of it, while it permeates all of our cognitive, creative and behavioral endeavors. It seems that the BT researchers are on the right track to achieve that.

However, some authors deem BT to be just a complement to the CMT theoretical framework. If that is the case, then only a fusion of these two theories can yield deeper insights into the nature of our cognitive apparatus and the phenomenon of natural language which, after centuries of scientific strains, is still seizing our attention and efforts in trying to probe into its core, origins and meaning. By discovering universal conceptual patterns in all lines of human intellectual endeavor we might accomplish even more than that.

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