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Jakub Mácha

Masaryk University, Brno

Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Classical Theory: Affinities Rather than Divergences

> Like the poets, ordinary people refine language by means of metaphors.
> Johann Adam Hartung (1831)[1]

0. Introduction

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by George Lakoff and his collaborators[2] has proven to be a great success over recent decades. Its success is based upon a wide range of application in various fields. But a part of its attractiveness is that this theory, on the one hand breaks with previous classical theories of metaphor, on the other hand generalizes these theories for the major part of language. CMT makes strong claims against the so-called Classical Theory (CT) which has spanned the accounts of metaphors from Aristotle to Davidson.[3] In the first and the second part of this essay, the main tenets of these competing theories will be presented. The main aim of this essay is, however, to show that, given all the differences, the core of CMT, the so-called Invariance Principle, is in significant respects similar to the main principles of several CTs.[4] A mapping (i.e. an internal relation) is always expressed between two structures. These structural affinities will be examined in

1 Taken from Jäkel (1997: 10).

2 For sake of simplicity, I will refer to George Lakoff as the sole author of CMT, although he has developed the theory with numerous collaborators like Mark Johnson, Mark Turner, Zoltán Kövecses and others.

3 CMT is not the only contemporary original approach that aims to bring new directions to the study of metaphor. Relevance Theory is the other major response to the traditional approaches to metaphor. See Sperber and Wilson (2008) for a general overview and Wilson (2011) for a comparison of Relevance Theory and CMT.

4 These similarities were observed early in J. P. Thorne's review of *Metaphors We Live By*: "Lakoff and Johnson do not mention Black's book, despite the fact that there are certain quite striking similarities between their ideas and his (notably the idea that 'The essence of metaphor is understanding and expressing one kind of thing in terms of another'. Not, notice, comparing one thing with another). It is difficult to believe that they do not know Black's work but it is easy to understand why they should be anxious to avoid giving the impression that their work is in any way derivative" (1983: 246). This claim is, however, in sharp contrast to Black's (1981) review of the same book which is altogether critical. It is striking that Black does not mention any similarities to his own account.

the third part. In the fourth part, I will focus on the main difference between these theories which is the literal-metaphorical distinction. CMT claims that CT makes this distinction in a wrong way and this failure can be proven empirically. I will argue that the literal-metaphorical distinction marks out an a priori decision as to what the object of investigation is. As CT has it, most novel metaphorical utterances are usually trivially false. Having identified the set of metaphorical expressions in question, CT investigates the underlying mechanism. This investigation is, at least partly, of an empirical nature. By contrast, CMT stipulates a priori the metaphorical mechanism and then empirically investigates various realizations of this mechanism in language and other social practices. What we need in response to this divergence is a better classification of metaphors which will be provided in the fifth section of this essay. It appears that the mechanism of conceptual metaphor covers much of everyday language in the first place. CMT, thus, focusses primarily on conventional metaphors and struggles to extend its mechanism to novel metaphors, whereas CTs focus on novel metaphors and struggle to extend their mechanisms to conventional metaphors. In the final part of this essay, I will indicate that all these extensions are unsatisfactory. The main reason is that all these theories study metaphors from the synchronic point of view and they are unable to take into account any semantic change. They are unable to explain how a novel metaphor acquires a conventional meaning and thus becomes a part of our conceptual system, i.e. a conceptual metaphor. What we need is rather a diachronic perspective which would allow us to explain the role of metaphor in semantic change and the development of language in general.

1. Classical Theory

Let me start by figuring out the aspects of CT that CMT might be breaking with. Here are some characteristics of CT derived from Lakoff (1993):

(1) Ordinary language is conventional and all everyday conventional language is literal and none is metaphorical. CT is thus based on the literal-metaphorical distinction.
(2) Metaphor is defined as a novel or poetic expression used outside its conventional realm of use to express other *similar* concept.
(3) Only literal language can be contingently true or false.
(4) All definitions given in a lexicon are literal, and not metaphorical.

As one would expect there is no single classical theory of metaphor, but rather theories that more or less meet these specifications. According to Lakoff (1993) and Johnson (2008), the major representatives of CT are Grice (1975), Searle (1979), Davidson (1978), and Rorty (1987). These are indeed the most significant theories of metaphor in analytic philosophy. I will add to this list the classical theories by Richards (1936) and especially those by Black (1955, 1979) who also wrote a highly critical review of *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). The question

now is: To what extent do these theories meet the specifications (1)–(4)? The answer is that they basically do, although with minor modifications. They are indeed based on the literal-metaphorical distinction. Ordinary language is, for the most part, conventional and literal. Metaphor is a novel or poetic expression. No metaphor is conventional. What metaphor accomplishes, however, is a matter of disagreement. According to Richards, Black, Grice and Searle, it expresses another concept that is *somehow* related to the original concept. This relation does not need to be similarity, it can be an analogy, extension, narrowing, loosening or a subordinated metaphorical or metonymical transfer. According to Davidson and Rorty, metaphor does not express anything beyond its literal meaning. What it accomplishes is a perlocutionary effect that cannot be captured as a metaphorical meaning. Accordingly, only Davidson and Rorty, but not Black, Grice and Searle would accept (3) that only literal language can be contingently true or false. The last claim is, I think, generally accepted among all these theories, for it follows on from (1) and (2).

Lakoff's characterization of CT as endorsed in these analytic philosophers is basically correct. What is missing though in his description is the characterization of a mechanism on which our understanding of metaphor is based. Here is an outline summarizing the theories by Richards and Black. In order to cope with the enormous complexity of natural languages, they restrict their investigation to subject-predicate sentences of the form "A is B". The basic idea is that if such an utterance is intended or/and recognized as a metaphor then the literal meaning of "A" *interacts* with the literal meaning of "B" resulting into a *metaphorical* meaning of "B" which is hereby being predicated of "A". So Richards: "Principle of metaphor: when we use a metaphor we have two *thoughts*[5] of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose *meaning* is a resultant of their *interaction*" (1936: 94, my emphasis).

Black's main aim is basically an explicit characterization of these complexes and an explication of how two meanings can inter-act. They do indirectly through so-called *implication-complexes* or associated implications. An implication-complex is a set of implications predicable to a term. An implication complex A is a set of implications in the form of 'A implies A_i' and an implication-complex B is a set of implications in the form 'B implies B_i'. These implications do not need to be true. They only have to be considered to be true in a given context (they may consist of "commonplaces" about the secondary implication complex B, background and encyclopedic knowledge, deviant or *ad hoc* implication induced by the author or by the context (Black 1955: 291)). The very interaction has processual and reciprocal character:

> (a) the presence of the primary subject incites the hearer to select some of the secondary subject's properties; and (b) invites him to construct a parallel implication-complex

5 It is noteworthy to highlight that Richards calls the entities that are interacting *thoughts*. From the very same sentence it is clear that thoughts are meanings (of words). I will in the same vein interpret Lakoff's use of the expression "thought".

> that can fit the primary subject; and (c) reciprocally induces parallel changes in the secondary subject. (Black 1979: 29)

The core of the interaction consists of pairing members of these complexes $[A_i,B_i]$. The meaning B_i is transformed by a function f_i so that it is predicable of A instead of B. The function f_i may stand for an "(a) identity, (b) extension, typically ad hoc, (c) similarity, (d) analogy, or (e) what might be called a metaphorical coupling, (where, as often happens, the original metaphor implicates subordinated metaphors)" (Black 1979: 31). In the final step, parallel changes are induced in the secondary subject. That is, some of the A_i implications are reversely transformed and predicated about B even though the surface grammatical form "A is B" does not make any commitment that A ought to be predicated of B.

Let me illustrate this method with an example of Thomas Hobbes' metaphor "Consequence is a train" (of thoughts).[6] The implication-complexes, which depend on the context of utterance or reception, might be:[7]

Thomas Hobbes: Consequence is train (of thoughts)			
Primary subject: consequence	Secondary subject: train (of thoughts)		
Implications	**Implications**	**Pairing**	**Way of pairing**
consequence is a succession	train implies movement	[succession, movement]	extension
consequence is a link connecting thoughts	train is a link connecting places	[link, link], [places, thoughts]	identity
consequence is a causal connection	train connection is mechanic	[causal, mechanic]	extension
consequence is difficult to avoid	train is difficult to stop	[difficult to avoid, difficult to stop]	analogy
Additional implications			
consequences follow logical laws	trains follow timetables	[follows logical laws, follows timetable]	metaphorical coupling

6 "By 'consequence', or 'train', of thoughts I understand that succession of one thought to another which is called, to distinguish it from discourse in words, 'mental discourse'.
When a man thinketh on anything whatever, his next thought after is not altogether so casual as it seems to be. Not every thought to every thought succeeds indifferently" (Hobbes 2012: Ch. III, p. 11).

7 This table is taken from Kobíková and Mácha (2015) where a detailed interpretation is to be found.

The outcome of the interaction might be the following properties predicated of the concept of logical consequence: A kind of causal connection connecting thoughts, which is difficult to avoid. This listing is open-ended; we are always able to add additional implications. Besides, there are subordinated metaphors "Logical laws are (like) timetables", "Thoughts are places in space". We can now recursively apply the same method onto these metaphors. Furthermore, train movements can be seen more like organic processes in human bodies, which are expressed, for example, in the biological metaphor "The Railway network is a nervous system" or when we speak about "backbone tracks".[8]

The weak spot in this schema is how to determine which implications from this potentially endless list are included in the metaphorical meaning of the original metaphor. We can restate this point as a problem of commitment: To which implications is the speaker committed? Either they are committed to (1) all, or (2) some, or (3) none of them. The first option is quite implausible. We cannot take Hobbes to be committed to the claim that the railway network is a nervous system. There will always be implications that were not intended by the speaker as propositional content, but that will be only alluded with lower resonance (to be defined below). The other options seem to be more plausible. We can take Hobbes to be committed, for instance, to the implication that consequence is a kind of causal connection. But we can do so only because Hobbes stated this implication in the sentence following the original metaphor. The implication is, thus, asserted in the context of the utterance, but not in the utterance itself. The question is how we can distinguish those implications that are asserted from those that are merely alluded or connoted. This distinction must be lexically encoded in the metaphor itself or in some of its lexical units. But then the metaphorical meaning would be given conventionally. This, however, contradicts the *a priori* definition of metaphor as a novel, i.e. non-conventional use of language.

We are at crossroads now. This is a serious objection which we can face in two ways: One can insist on the classical definition of metaphor, or one can abandon the classical definition. The former option, taken by Davidson and Rorty, leads to the conclusion that there is no metaphorical meaning. All these implications are only alluded to and the speaker is not committed to any of these. The latter option leads us to the conclusion that metaphor can be conventional. This is the way of Lakoff and his CMT. I would like to stress that this *decision* is one of whether to keep or to extend the definition of metaphor. It is a decision as to which theoretical terminology is preferable.

Is there, however, anything these that theories from Richards to Davidson have in common, that we can speak roughly of *as a* Classical Theory? All these classical theories share the literal-metaphorical distinction. All classical theories have it that in a metaphor, there is an expression used metaphorically (primary subject, focus,

8 For a detailed overview of biological metaphors in the perception of railways, see an illuminating essay by R. Harrington (1999).

tenor) and an expression used literally (secondary subject, frame, vehicle). The essence of metaphor is that the primary subject is *understood in terms of* or *seen as* the secondary subject. In the metaphor "A is B" the concept A is seen/understood as the concept B.

I have argued in my book Mácha (2010) and elsewhere that in these analytic theories that which is essential in the metaphor "A is B" is an *internal relation* between the concept A and the concept B. This relation may be expressed as a metaphorical meaning (in Richards and Black), as a pragmatic inference (in Grice and Searle), as a perlocutionary, psychological or as a causal effect (in Davidson and Rorty). An internal relation is a relation between the *structures* of the concepts (i.e. the meanings of the words) that are involved. In order to make and understand metaphors, we have to share an ability to construct metaphorical meanings/pragmatic inferences/perlocutionary effects at once. That is the ability to find an internal relation between concepts used literary and concepts used metaphorically. These concepts are usually given conventionally and they may be further enriched from the context of the utterance and by a shared background knowledge and experience.

To anticipate things further, my claim is that Lakoff's CMT makes this distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical language quite differently, but the mechanism of how metaphor works bears striking similarities to CT.

2. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Let me now try to summarize the main tenets of CMT, or rather my understanding of them. It must be noted at the outset that I strip CMT from its cognitive science image (and its cognates like cognitive linguistic, neuro science etc.).[9] It is my conviction for which I cannot argue in detail here that to mantle a linguistic theory with a cognitive science terminology or to proclaim its alignment with cognitive science is often a rhetorical device that makes the theory appear more fashionable and up to date. The main claim Lakoff makes in this respect is that metaphors are a matter not only of *language*, but of *thought* in the first place. Metaphorical expressions in language are a manifestation of our thinking which is fundamentally metaphorical. Metaphor is not a mere stylistic or rhetorical figure, but "a major and indispensable part of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualizing the world" (Lakoff 1993: 204). I take this to mean that metaphors are not a stylistic feature of language, because some metaphors are indispensable for language and thinking. It is hard to imagine what the competing views are here. Are they ancient theories of metaphor such as found in Aristotle, Cicero or Quintilian? But only an uncharitable reading of these philosophers would yield the view that metaphors are a mere stylistic figure fully dispensable from language. The point is that none of the above mentioned

9 Hereby I follow Read (2016), but this idea is hinted at in Max Black's review of *Metaphors We Live By*: "their reiterated psychological or mentalistic emphasis, does no effective work" (1981: 209).

analytic philosophers makes such a claim. They claim, in contrast, that metaphor is a matter of meaning, of concepts, and also, especially in Rorty, a matter of causal psychological processes. Moreover, if we look at Lakoff's method, what he actually does, for the most part, is analyzing linguistic expressions and figuring out what they signify. His method is basically an analysis of linguistic meaning. A genuine reference to our thinking processes (jargon which includes "activations of neurons", "brain centers", "neural bindings", "firings" etc.) came later, esp. in Lakoff (2008), but the main tenets of CMT have remained unchanged.[10]

CMT defines metaphor as a cross-domain mapping across conceptual domains: "The word *metaphor* has come to mean 'a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system'" (Lakoff 1993: 203). This is also Lakoff's definition of metaphor (and, thus, it is not an empirical claim). It states that one domain of our experience can be understood in terms of another domain. In *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 170), "domain" means just "kinds of things". Later on CMT started to prefer the terms "mental space"[11] and "cognitive domain" which should highlight the fact that metaphor is about thoughts, not just words. By stripping away the cog. sci. gown, we can take this to mean that one part of our language can be understood in terms of another part. A typical example is the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY. Actually LOVE IS A JOURNEY is the name of a mapping between entities from the domain of journeys and entities from the domain of love:

> Travelers are mapped onto lovers.
> Vehicles are mapped onto love relationships.
> A journey is mapped onto the events in a relationship.
> Destinations of the journey are mapped onto the goals of the relationship.
> Decisions about direction are mapped onto the choices about what to do.

This list of *ontological* correspondences between our conceptualization of journey and love is not exhaustive. It is important, however, that this mapping is an abstract structure ("cognitive structure" in Lakoff's terms) that may be expressed in surface language in various ways, e.g., in

> "Our relationship has hit a dead-end street."
> "We're stuck."
> "Where does our relationship lead?"
> etc. etc.

10 The view that even non-conceptual mental states like feelings and affections are genuinely metaphorical has some historical grounding in Herder (1772) and Nietzsche (1873).

11 Fauconnier and Turner define mental spaces as "small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for the purposes of local understanding and action. They are very partial assemblies containing elements, structured by frames and cognitive models" (2002: 120).

It is not necessary, for the existence of this conceptual metaphor, that the expression "Love is a journey" occurs in an actual utterance. It is a mere name of the mapping (and that is why it is capitalized) and also this mapping does not occur in any actual utterance as such, but is only realized through metaphorical expressions as indicated in the list.

If the core of this metaphor (i.e. this mapping) does not exist in language, where does it exist then? Lakoff's answer is that metaphor is a matter of *thought* which is, one may presume, in the realm of concepts.[12] This answer suggests however, that there are two distinct realms: the realm of language and the ream of thought. The former lies on the surface and can be investigated with the methods of classical linguistics. The latter, the realm of thought, is prima facie something deep, a deep structure which manifests itself in language. The realm of thought can be investigated directly by the methods of cognitive science (and, of course, indirectly through its manifestation in language). I would now like to oppose this line of argument. Linguistics and the philosophy of language do not study only language at its surface form (i.e. they are not restricted to syntax). They are inquiries into *meaning*, into what words actually signify. If the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY maps vehicles to love relationships, this can be taken to mean that "vehicle" (or "car") can be substituted for "love relationship" in appropriate contexts. This means that the meaning of "vehicle" is identical (more or less) with the meaning of "love relationship". It is a case of local synonymy, i.e. the identity of meanings that are restricted to a certain context (aka "domain"). The correspondence between "bachelor" and "unmarried man" is basically the same kind of mapping like the one between vehicles and love relationships. The only difference is that synonymy is less context sensitive (context dependent) than conceptual metaphor. If there is no need to postulate the deeper realm of thought for explaining synonymy, we do not need it for explaining conceptual metaphor either.

Metaphorical mappings are not arbitrary. There is a principle that determines the structure of these mappings. Lakoff calls it the *Invariance Principle*: "The image-schema structure of the source domain is projected onto the target domain in a way that is consistent with the inherent target domain structure" (Lakoff 1993: 245). This principle consists of two main claims: Firstly, that metaphorical mapping is not an arbitrary set of separate correspondences. A cognitive structure of the source domain is preserved in the target domain. We can employ various devises to determine the cognitive structure of the domain: it can be an image-schema topology (interiors, exteriors, containers, paths, boundaries, trajectories etc.), we can use the device of

12 Black (1981: 209) complains that Lakoff uses the term "concept" very loosely in the sense of an "idea" or "notion". I would like to add that we can take "concept" to mean "meaning" without invoking any cog. sci. framework. Let us recall that in the quotation above Richards (1936) understands "thoughts" as being "meanings" that are supposed to interact in metaphor.

sematic frames[13] in order to include background or encyclopedic knowledge into this structure (Sullivan 2006; Lakoff 2008: 34–37). Secondly, only those structures that are mapped onto the target domain are consistent with it. In other words, the structure of the target domain cannot be violated. This means, however, that the structure of the target domain remains always intact. A metaphor maps always the source domain onto the target domain, but not the other way around. Metaphorical mappings are thus asymmetrical and partial.

3. The method of interaction and the invariance principle in comparison

In this section I compare the mechanisms of CT and CMT which have been just introduced. First let us look at their resemblances. There are always two structures and a relation between them. The first of these two structures is called the "primary subject", "primary system of associated commonplaces", "primary implication complex" (Black), the "target domain" (Lakoff), "blended mental space" (Fauconnier and Turner). The other structure is called the "secondary subject", "secondary system of associated commonplaces", "secondary implication complex", "source domain", "input/generic mental space". Some of these structurers are conceived to be rather static (esp. in Lakoff), some primarily conventional (in Black), other highly fluid (in Fauconnier). By their construction, CT usually begins with the conventional conceptual system which may be further enriched from the (linguistic as well as extralinguistic) context of the utterance and by a shared background knowledge (not necessarily true) and (possibly subjective) experience. On the other hand, CMT and other cognitive theories like Blending Theory begin with our experience which is primarily conceptual, though not restricted to language. To be sure, these structures are not identical. There are various aspects, various emphases and various grades of stability. But, by a charitable interpretation, the overall structure is the same.

Between these two structures there exists, or is constructed, a relation. The nature and complexity of this relation differs across the theories in question, but we can find common ground there. At the bottom, elements of the source structure are mapped onto the target structure so that the topology of the source structure is preserved in the target structure. In other words, the mapping is an isomorphism – which may be partial, i.e. not every part of the source structure must be mapped onto the target structure. The invariance principle is valid also in CT. This principle says nothing more than that there is an internal relation between the two structures.

There is, however, disagreement over the dynamic character of this relation or this mapping. Lakoff claims that his mapping is static and conventional: "Conventional mappings are static correspondences, and are not, in themselves, algorithmic in nature" (1993: 245). These mappings are "fixed correspondences that can

13 Frames are "structured understandings of the way aspects of the world function" (Fauconnier and Sweetser 1996: 5).

be activated, rather than algorithmic processes that take inputs and give outputs" (Lakoff 1993: 218). For Lakoff, the source and the target domain are static, and so is the mapping between them. Comprehending a conceptual metaphor is no more algorithmic than comprehending a non-metaphorical language. There is no *additional* thought process in the case of metaphorical language. So, for instance, we understand the following instance of a conceptual metaphor "Our relationship is off the track" in the same way as the non-metaphorical statement "There is something wrong with our relationship". there is no additional processing of the focal phrase "of the track". There is some justification for this attitude. Lakoff's main focus is on everyday language and why it is structured in this or that way. If conceptual metaphors structure everyday language, they cannot bring any additional processing (if they did however, they would not make up the core structure of everyday language).

CT and also Blending Theory (which can be seen as a recent development of CMT) tend to see this mapping as algorithmic or dynamic in nature. In Black's Interaction Theory, the implication complexes are constructed by selection, yet they are based on conventional knowledge. There, real dynamics come with the *interaction* between these complexes. Their members are being paired and the nature of each particular pairing of two members may be different. As already mentioned, this may be identity, extension, similarity, analogy, or a subordinated metaphor. There may also occur different ways of pairing within a particular metaphor which may be "a 'mixed lot' of projective relations" (Black 1979: 31).[14] Some of these pairs may again be figurative or metaphorical, in which case the method of construction of the interaction complexes and their interaction has to be executed recursively.

Searle's (1979) theory of metaphor is another good example of the pragmatic and algorithmic character of understanding of metaphor. He considers the following general situation: In a metaphorical utterance, "A speaker says S is P but means metaphorically that S is R" (Searle 1979: 122). The metaphorical meaning R is arrived at by going through the literal meaning "S is P". The relation between the literal and the metaphorical meaning is systematic. This fact implies that there must be some, at least implicit, principles that govern their relation. The main task of his theory is to state these principles. Searle adds that there is no single principle at work here. Among the main principles are:

> "Things which are P are by definition R."
> "Things which are P are contingently R."
> "Things which are P are often said or believed to be R"
> …
>
> (Searle 1979: 116ff)

An example of the first principle is that "Sam is a giant." which means "Sam is big.". An example of the second principle is that "Sam is a pig." meaning "Sam is filthy.".

14 That the metaphor "consequence is a train of thought" is also a mixed lot is indicated in the last column of the table above.

And finally, an instance of the third principle is that "Sam is a gorilla." means that "Sam is mean and nasty.". We see that the literal meaning is always being transformed, usually extended by picking up a salient property that is transferred onto a new domain. These principles are stated rather loosely (they are, in fact, indeterminate). But the same is also true of the principles of Black's Interaction Theory. There is, therefore, not much disagreement.

Something similar is going on in Blending Theory. First, there is established a mapping between a generic space and each of the input spaces which contains what the inputs have in common (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 41). Then there emerges a cross-space mapping between the input spaces. Finally, there will be developed a blended space which is an "emergent structure that is not in the inputs" (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 42). There is a three-step process of achieving this: composition (of the elements from the inputs), completion (bringing additional structure to the blend), and elaboration (running the blend, modifying it imaginatively). In addition to this, there is a backward projection, i.e., "anything fused in the blend projects back to the counterparts in the input spaces" (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 44). Within Blending Theory, as similarly within Black's Interaction Theory, the mapping is bidirectional, i.e. not only from source to target, but also from target to source. This stands in contrast to Lakoff's version of CMT (cf. Mitchel 2015: 24).

The main point of agreement between CT and CMT is that they both assume an isomorphic mapping (or mappings) between two structures. These structures are usually given conventionally and possibly extended. The mapping is either given conventionally, or it emerges in the metaphorical processing. The final product may be a metaphorical meaning or a blend.

4. The literal-metaphorical distinction

We can now turn to the literal-metaphorical[15] distinction which presents the main point of disagreement between CMT and CT. Given the mechanism of cross-domain mappings outlined above one can ask where or in which parts of language this mechanism is at work. In other words, how can we recognize such expressions which are understood via cross-domain mappings (i.e., conceptual metaphors)? This is apparently an empirical question. Lakoff argues that almost all parts of our language are metaphorical. The only exception is the realm of concrete physical experience (Lakoff 1993: 205). It is interesting to look at the evidence that Lakoff brings forward to support this claim. The evidence he mentions is of the following types: Generalizations governing polysemy, inference patters, novel metaphorical language, patterns of semantic change and psycholinguistic experiments (Lakoff

15 For the present discussion I will disregard the fact that metaphorical language is only one kind of figurative language. All points can be extended onto other figures like metonymy or irony.

1993: 205). All of these types of evidence, except the last one, can be studied by the tools of classical linguistics with no need to invoke the cog. sci. framework.

CMT delimits the literal-metaphorical distinction differently than CT, and moreover Lakoff claims that this CT makes a false assumption in this respect (Lakoff 1993: 204). But there is a great deal of conceptual confusion lurking here. For CT, the literal-metaphorical distinction is defined *a priori*, viz. as a novel use of language which shows a contextual abnormality (most metaphorical utterances are usually trivially false or otherwise contextually inappropriate). By this definition, CT delimits its scope of investigation. Having identified the set of metaphorical expressions in question, CT then investigates *what* the underlying semantic or pragmatic mechanism is. This investigation is, at least partly, of an empirical nature. By, contrast CMT stipulates *a priori* the metaphorical mechanism, i.e. the cross-domain mappings, and then empirically investigates the various realizations of this mechanism in language and other social practices. It appears that the mechanism of conceptual metaphor covers not only poetic expressions, but also much of ordinary everyday language. There is, thus, apparent disagreement among these theories that stems from their different assumptions. Lakoff basically says that CT is wrong because its assumption about the literal-metaphorical distinction is at odds with his empirical account of this distinction. But from the standpoint of CT we could raise the objection that CMT is wrong because it assumes a mechanism that is too broad, for it covers not only novel uses of language, but also a great portion of conventional language.[16]

Why to prefer the conceptual approach over the classical one which Lakoff terms the "Literal Meaning Theory"? In Lakoff's understanding, the Literal Meaning Theory says that the major part of language is literal and metaphorical utterances are exceptional. Given the literal-metaphorical distinction from CT, this claim is true by definition. But given this distinction from CMT, this claim is empirically false. Hence, every argument against the Literal Meaning Theory that refers to some kind of empirical evidence misses the point.

Lakoff brings forward two objections against the Literal Meaning Theory: Because "conventional language and our conventional conceptual system are fundamentally and ineradicably metaphoric" (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 116), conventional language is not semantically autonomous (the so-called Autonomy Claim) and not capable of making reference to objective reality (the so-called Objectivist Claim), hence "the concept of 'literal meaning' as it has traditionally been used is not appropriate to the discussion of real natural language" (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 116). But Lakoff's argument is a straw man. CT makes no such assumption about the nature of conventional and ordinary language. Regardless of whether conventional language is not semantically autonomous, or whether is capable of making reference

16 Black actually raises this objection when he says that Lakoff's "stipulated equation of 'metaphor' with 'metaphorical concept' would either make nonsense of many of the things we normally want to say about metaphors, or would demand clumsy and unilluminating paraphrases" (Black 1981: 209).

to objective reality or not, regardless of the precise meanings of these terms, the literal-metaphorical distinction within CT makes sense and we can study metaphors as novel uses of language.[17]

CMT's main concern is, to be sure, everyday conventional language and how it is structured. Lakoff and his collaborators emphasize that within everyday language there are certain regions (target domains) that are structured as other regions (source domains). The structural relations between these domains bear a striking similarity to the metaphorical relation in CT. Moreover, we can use such structural relations or mappings in comprehending certain (typically abstract) realms of experience. I consider this to be the main merit of CMT. There are, as indicated above, important dissimilarities between these relations. Within CT this relation is never conventional, while within CMT it is (almost always) conventional. Lakoff seems to accuse CT of taking literal language to be not metaphorical at all. This is, however, not quite true. CT admits that literal language is full of so-called *dead* metaphors. I do not want to equate dead metaphors within CT with conceptual metaphors within CMT, but they both aim to explain the same linguistic phenomena.

What needs to be explained – within CT as well as within CMT – is how these two phenomena hang together. CT needs to explain in which way the mechanism for explaining novel metaphors is active or present in conventional language – in other words, what dead metaphors have to do with novel metaphors. CMT needs explain how the mechanism of conceptual metaphors can be extended onto novel metaphors. We see at these formulations that for CT "metaphor" means primarily "novel metaphor" and for CMT "metaphor" means primarily "conceptual metaphor". Before going back to the metaphorical mechanism, a synoptic classification of the different kinds of metaphors would be helpful.[18]

5. Towards a better classification of metaphors

Many of the advocates of CT simply distinguish only between literal language and metaphorical language with the implicit presupposition that some parts of literal language are dead metaphors. This simplistic classification does not bring us further. Black provides a more detailed elaboration by distinguishing "extinct", "dormant" and "active" metaphors (Black 1979: 26f). These classes are defined in terms of two characteristics: *emphasis* and *resonance*. Emphatic metaphors are not decorative or

17 Johnson makes even a stronger claim against the Literal Meaning Theory: "The underlying issue is whether 'reality' is objectively given, so that, as knowers, we can only stand apart and comment on it, or whether we have a 'world' only by virtue of having a language and system of value-laden concepts that make experience possible for us" (Johnson 1981: 78). Even though such a direct realism is endorsed in Searle, it is not a general view shared by all advocates of CT (like Black or Davidson).

18 Cf. Romero and Soria (2005: 3): "The terminological distinctions used by cognitive metaphor theorists are not the traditional ones; these theorists introduced a terminological shift that should be clarified at avoid misunderstandings".

ornamental, they allow no variation upon the words used. Resonance means a degree of implicative elaboration. The more resonant a metaphor is, the more implications are transferred into the metaphorical meaning. A metaphor is dead or extinct if only one single implication makes up its meaning which is then called the literal meaning. Other implications are only alluded to which is, very roughly, how literal language works. This single implication must be, then, determined conventionally, for literal meaning is – let us assume – determined this way. As we saw above when we were discussing Davidson's objection to Black's Interaction Theory, this convention is the only way of determining what is meant, literally or metaphorically, as opposed to what is merely alluded. The classification of metaphors within CMT is more fine-grained:

(1) Firstly, there are *non-metaphorical* concepts which are related to our experiences with concrete physical objects (e.g., "The balloon went up.").
(2) Secondly, there are *marginal metaphorical concepts* which are conceptual metaphor though, but they are "idiosyncratic, unsystematic, and isolated" (e.g., "a foot of a mountain") (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 56).
(3) Thirdly, there are *literal conventional metaphors* which are conceptual metaphors as described above.

The following species of metaphors go beyond the conventional system, they are labeled as "non-literal" or "imaginative".

(4) The fourth class in made up by *extensions* of the used part of a literal metaphor (e.g., "These facts are the bricks and mortar of my theory.").
(5) The fifth class are instances of the *unused* part of a literal metaphor (e.g., "His theory has thousands of little rooms and long, winding corridors.").
(6) Sixthly and finally, there are *novel* metaphors which are not based on our conventional conceptual system.

This classification and all the examples are taken from *Metaphors We Live By*. Later Lakoff came up with the notion of image metaphors.

(7) *Image metaphors* "map one conventional mental image onto another" (Lakoff 1993: 229); the mapping itself is not conventional, but a "one-shot". These metaphors do not involve conceptual domains, but rather structured mental images. Their aim is to create or adjust a rich image in the target domain (which is usually more abstract) rather than to create an inferential structure. So, for instance, when Kant says that understanding is the land of truth which is an island surrounded by an ocean of illusion, we are prompted to perform a mapping of the image of an island amid an ocean onto the target domain of our mind's understanding and create an abstract image there.

Classes (1)–(3) cover those labeled by Black as "extinct" and "dormant". Lakoff's class of imaginative metaphors (4)–(7) correspond to Black's "active" metaphors.

6. Novel metaphors and open-endedness

To recap, CT is focused on novel metaphors. Most of its advocates provide only a rudimentary explanation how a novel metaphor stabilizes its meaning and becomes a part of conventional language, i.e. becomes a dead metaphor. We saw above that Black gives just such a sketchy account. In general, it would be difficult to provide a complete explanation of such a meaning change in a synchronic approach for the majority of CTs.

CMT proceeds the other way around. It is mainly focused on conventional language and on conventional metaphors. CMT aims, however, at explaining novel metaphors as well, and moreover by using the same mechanism of domain mappings – or so are we told. Novel, or imaginative, metaphors are of the classes (4)–(7). Metaphors of type (4) and (5) are extensions of conventional metaphors. Lakoff points out indeed that "the older research on novel metaphor […] completely missed the major contribution played by the conventional system" (Lakoff 1993: 237). But, as we have seen, the conventional system plays an important role within CT. In Black's Interaction Theory, the metaphorical meaning is the result of the interaction of two conventional meaning-complexes.

The question is still how can the conventional system produce novelty? The idea is the following one: The source domain is never fully isomorphic with the target domain. An isomorphic mapping between them is, thus, always partial. It may happen, then, that some conventional items from the source domain are mapped onto items from the target domain that are not conventional. What is conventional in the source domain does not need to be conventional in the target domain. A conventional part of the source domain may be activated in the target domain in order to go beyond the conventional system and create novelty. Lakoff claims, on the one hand, that each mapping is "a fixed pattern of ontological correspondences" (Lakoff 1993: 210), but it defines, on the other hand, "an open-ended class of potential correspondences" (Lakoff 1993: 210). I see a tension between "fixed" and "open-ended". For "open-ended" means that the mapping can always be extended. But then it cannot be fixed. It is therefore contentious whether extensions of conventional metaphors are really novel metaphors. They may be cases rather of what Black (1955: 280; 1979: 27) calls *catachresis*, i.e. the filling up a lacuna in our conceptual system.[19] As long as the source domain and the mapping are fixed by convention, a projection of the source domain on the target domain will be fixed too. If this projection is not conventional, there is a lacuna in our conceptual system that can be filled up through the source domain and the mapping.

Let us turn now to metaphors of types (6) and (7). Novel metaphors are either outside of our conventional conceptual system or they map one conventional mental

19 Black adds: "Catachresis is the putting of new senses into old words. But if a catachresis serves a genuine need, the new sense introduced will quickly become part of the *literal* sense" (1955: 280).

image onto another. Their distinctive feature is that they are typically "one-shot" mappings. In the case of image metaphors, these mental images are elicited by conventional language (like in the example from Kant). The source image is then mapped onto the target image preserving their structure. So the Invariance Principle applies to image metaphors as well. But it is not determined by the words used, but by convention by which part of the source image is mapped on part of the target image; furthermore it is not determined which aspect of the source image should be mapped, i.e. whether we should focus on shapes, or colors etc. The fact that the structure that is mapped is not determined makes image metaphors (and non-conceptual metaphors in general) truly open-ended. Only such metaphors are really novel metaphors which are the main focus of CT.

Lakoff claims further that image metaphors have to be activated. "The words prompt us to map from one conventional image to another", they "are prompts for us to perform a conceptual mapping" (Lakoff 1993: 230). I would like to highlight that we are *prompted* to *perform* a mapping. Which mapping actually? There may be simultaneous mappings which "are very common in poetry" (Lakoff 1993: 219). There must be a reasoning as to which mappings are employed.[20] A mapping (or mappings) is activated and performed. An open-ended set of correspondences is simply not there. Since the set of correspondences is potentially infinite, there must be a reasoning (on the side of the utterer as well as the recipient) which activates this or that correspondence. In conclusion, the open-endedness of novel metaphors and the possibility of simultaneous mappings calls into question the static character of conceptual domains and mappings within CMT.

CMT focuses primarily on conventional conceptual metaphors. Its mechanism of conceptual mappings is static and rigid, because all conventional language is static in this synchronic approach. As soon as the focus is extended into novel metaphors which are not conventional, the mechanism must be made more dynamic. This mechanism of dynamic conceptual mappings is very close to Black's Interaction Theory. There are two sematic domains that are both being enriched by knowledge about the subject matter. This enrichment is open-ended, which means that there is an inherent limitation to it. And finally, there is a mapping between these two domains which preserves their structure so that we can talk about a partial isomorphism. Neither the mapping nor the domains determine which entities are mapped and which are not. As opposed to conventional language, novel metaphors are imaginative precisely because no convention determines what structures are mapped and what are not.

20 Lakoff's example of simultaneous mappings is Dylan Thomas' line "Do not go gentle into that good night." where "go" employs DEATH IS DEPARTURE, "gentle" employs LIFE IS A STRUGGLE and "night" employs A LIFETIME IS A DAY (Lakoff 1993: 219).

7. Conclusion: a plea for a diachronic account

The main objective of this essay is to show that Lakoff's CMT is not so different from CT if we clear up their terminological differences, primarily by getting rid of CMT's cog. sci. jargon. If we focus on recent developments of CMT like Blending Theory, the affinities to CT are even more apparent. Seen in this light, Lakoff's critique of CT is unsubstantiated and is rather a rhetorical self-image.[21] Nevertheless, in my view CMT presents a major improvement over CT consisting of two aspects:

(1) Many theorists before Lakoff's breakthrough in the early 1980s had noticed that our language is full of dead (or conventional in CMT's terms) metaphors.[22] But only Lakoff focused on metaphorical systems rather than just on isolated metaphors. Conventional metaphors are usually not "idiosyncratic, unsystematic, and isolated", but rather systematic. He and his colleagues have elaborated on this idea in the utmost detail. In contrast, CT lacks any obvious device of capturing the systematic character of dead metaphors in everyday language.

(2) CMT maintains that the invariance principle governs the understanding of conventional as well as novel metaphors. Both kinds of metaphors can be understood as a (kind of) mapping from the source domain to the target while preserving both their structures. For conventional metaphors this mechanism is static, for novel ones it is rather dynamic. CT uses a similar mechanism, but for novel metaphors only. CMT is a pioneer especially in the first point. Concerning novel metaphors, the difference between CMT and CT is merely terminological, i.e., verbal.

My final thoughts will be devoted to a problem concerning both CMT and many CTs. Lakoff (1993: 239 and 249) has highlighted several times that his approach belongs to that of synchronic linguistics. His main focus is on language and thinking, and their usage at a particular moment of time. His typical questions are: How a language user does understand this or that particular field of experience? Why our conceptual system structured this way and not that way? The answer is always: Because of this or that conceptual metaphor, i.e., because *this* (target) domain of experience is understood or structured along *that* (source) domain. The presence

21 Bo Pettersson points out about cognitive literary criticism like CMT that it "at times displays a disregard of other literary theory and criticism, which may lead to thwarted results or false claims of critical novelty" (2011: 94).

22 Lakoff, in an interview with Pires de Oliveira (2001: 39), disagrees with this point. All previous quotes that resemble CMT are too vague according to him. He does not "really see detailed cross-domain mappings that are experientially grounded in any earlier material". See, however, Jäkel (1997) for an exhaustive overview of the predecessors of CMT. I would like to add that several philosophers (e.g., Kant or Nietzsche) focused on what we now call conceptual as well as novel metaphors, at times under different labels. Kant, for instance, provided no explicit theory of metaphor, but his concept of symbolic representation covers conventional metaphors and his concept of aesthetic idea can be used to explain novel metaphors. See my earlier paper, Mácha (2009), for details.

of a conceptual metaphor is, thus, always an *explanans*. Conceptual metaphors are grounded in so-called *primary metaphors* whose source domain is our everyday experience (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 254ff). The only explanation why there are specific primary metaphors is physical or, more specifically, neuroscientific; they are hard-wired in our brains and bodies.

Black's Interaction Theory focused on metaphor from a similar perspective – the perspective of the language user. Black is interested in the problem of how a language user produces and understands metaphors: with the help of the metaphorical meaning which is the result of an interaction of two complexes. But if we accept Davidson's objection to his account, there is no metaphorical meaning communicated. All that metaphors accomplish is that they make us see one subject *as* another subject. There are, however, many dormant (i.e., nearly dead) metaphors that, as matter of fact, have (nearly) a conventionalized meaning. How did they acquire this meaning and, in particular, is this meaning the result of the interaction of the two complexes?

A conceptual metaphor (dead/extinct/dormant metaphor for CT) is a former novel metaphor. At some point in time, someone applied the expression "neck" to bottles. It was a novel metaphor that was conventionalized eventually and resulted in the expression "bottleneck". CT gives us a mechanism how to understand the expression "This bottle has a neck." when it was a novel metaphor. CMT can inform us that the expression "bottleneck" is a realization of the conceptual metaphor PHYSICAL OBJECTS ARE HUMAN BODIES or the like. The most interesting question is, however, how an original novel metaphor used to be transformed into a conceptual one. The question why there is this or that conceptual metaphor can be answered by providing its history, i.e., the way how this metaphor has developed into its present state.

Metaphors do have history. This claim is not surprising for languages in general have history. CMT, within its cog. sci. framework, as well as many CTs within analytic philosophy have been mainly preoccupied with the synchronic dimension of language, whereas they have neglected the diachronic one.[23] This is not surprising for CMT owes much de Saussure's structural linguistics, and CT goes back to logical positivism. Both schools tend to see language as an in-itself closed formal system which is (at least for the sake of our understanding) fixed and static. To borrow de

23 Cf. Mitchell (2015: 25): "Taken together, critiques of CMT suggest that its rigid structure – though useful in analysing everyday, commonplace metaphors – fails to take into account a number of complexities, including the 'history' of metaphors […]." Lakoff, when asked whether his methodology accounted for the historical dimensions of language, replied that this kind of research was done by his students and colleagues, "I just do not happen to do that research myself" (Pires de Oliveira 2001: 29). I take the term "diachronic linguistics" to be roughly equal to "historical linguistics". Cf. Harris (1993: 17): "*Diachronic* literally means *across-time*, and it describes any work which maps the shifts and fractures and mutations of languages over the centuries".

Saussure's analogy, language is like a game of chess. In order to understand chess, we do not need to study the history of chess, but its actual rules only. The presence of metaphors – novel as well as conceptual – indicates that language is, in an important respect, *not* like chess. If we want to understand the structure of our actual language, which is full of conceptual metaphors, we need to study how these metaphors have evolved from novel ones into their present form. What we need is to understand *how* metaphors catalyze semantic change. This approach entails that we have to abandon the perspective of an individual language user in favor of a wider perspective that spans a larger amount of time where semantic change is relevant. This is what I mean by a diachronic-driven account in the study of metaphor.

Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language, esp. his notion of language game may provide a general framework for the diachronic approach which has been elaborated in Quine and more specifically in Davidson (1979). Also, continental philosophy is more prone to an historical analysis. Consider, for instance, the philosophical attempts to backtrack the evolution of philosophical conceptual metaphors in José Ortega y Gasset's (1925) "Las dos grandes metáforas" ["The Two Big Metaphors"], and especially in Hans Blumenberg's (1960) metaphorology which very loosely elaborates upon Husserl's phenomenological project.[24] These accounts are however restricted to philosophical metaphors. We still lack any general theory that would be as robust as CMT.

There are some indications how a diachronic perspective can be accommodated into CMT. Kövecses (2005: 103–105) indicates by referring to empirical evidence *that* conceptual metaphors undergo change over time. His main assumption is that there "may be some universal basis for the same metaphors to develop in the diverse languages" (Kövecses 2015: 4). This universal basis is made up by some "universal bodily experience", "universal embodiment" (Kövecses 2015: 5). The change in context (broadly understood, including culture) is the reason for a conceptual change or a variation. Kövecses' perspective is, however, that of a single language user (a speaker or a recipient). Different users may have similar bodily experiences (universality) and may be influenced by various contexts (variation, semantic change). Kövecses claims basically that semantic change is driven by changes in the non-linguistic context (i.e., by cultural changes), and less by changes of our bodily structure. This is not surprising. In my view, what is lacking in his approach is an explanation of the mechanism of this change and the role of metaphor in it. The main questions still remain unanswered: How a novel metaphorical expression acquires a conventional meaning and becomes a conceptual metaphor?

24 Cf. Jäkel (1997: 17): "As Cognitive Linguists and 'metaphorologists' doing primarily synchronic research we would certainly be well-advised to give more attention to the diachronic dimension in our analyses of metaphor than do Lakoff and Johnson. Especially in this regard, Blumenberg's approach could provide a model for the methodology of the cognitive theory of metaphor".

Relevance Theory, which is another major contemporary response to the classical accounts of metaphor, provides (better to say: points towards) an account for the fixation or stabilization of the meaning of a novel metaphorical expression. To be sure, Relevance Theory is a predominantly synchronic approach drawing on Gricean pragmatics (Sperber and Wilson 2008: 87), because their perspective is a single act of linguistic communication. In the course of this act, the addressee tries to encode the speaker's intended meaning by adjusting lexical meanings "in order to satisfy *expectations of relevance*" (Wilson 2011: 47). Relevance is, roughly, defined as the cognitive value of an utterance (and other stimuli) in proportion to the processing effort required to achieve this cognitive value.[25] An adjustment of lexical meanings involves sometimes the construction of so-called "ad hoc" concepts (typically by the narrowing or broadening of the encoded lexical meaning). Ad hoc concepts inherit some (but not all) properties of the linguistically encoded meanings. It is important that these concepts are typically *occasion-specific* (Wilson 2011: 43). Given this general scenario, relevance theories claim that metaphorical communication is a case of the construction of ad hoc concepts. So, for instance, if one utters about a woman "You are a rose.", the addressee is invited to construct an ad hoc concept of ROSE* in order to maximize the relevance of the utterance. ROSE* may express, among other things, the property of being beautiful or the property of being thorny depending on the context of the utterance.[26]

The mechanism of constructing ad hoc concepts is, roughly, compatible to the CMT's method of the construction of one-shot mappings as described above. This is the synchronic part of Relevance Theory's approach. But the construction of an ad hoc concept "may be regularly and frequently followed, by a few people or a group, until, over time, the resulting 'ad hoc' concept may stabilise in a community and give rise to an extra lexicalised sense" (Wilson 2011: 52). This is a genuinely diachronic approach, because the perspective of a single act of linguistic communication is abandoned in favor of the perspective of "a group" and "over time". A new lexicalized meaning arises through the repeated constructing of the same ad hoc concept, because the amount of processing effort needed to understand the utterance is reduced when a meaning is lexicalized. In other words, a metaphorical expression acquires a lexicalized meaning through repeated interpretations.[27] This

25 What exactly this cognitive value is remains unclear. Similarly to CMT, Relevance Theory uses the terminology of cognitive science, although to a significantly lesser degree. A proper critical assessment of Relevance Theory is out of the scope of the present essay.

26 CMT would say that this metaphorical utterance is an instance of the conceptual metaphor WOMEN ARE FLOWERS (See Wilson 2011: 43). The explanation given by Relevance Theory is clearly superior to the one given by CMT – provided that there will be an adequate explanation of the notion of relevance. See the previous footnote.

27 An advocate of CMT might argue that a similar mechanism of meaning fixation and stabilization can be brought forward within CMT: A conventional cross-domain

is, however, a very general characterization of semantic change. How this is exactly achieved still remains unclear.[28,29]

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mapping is established by a repeated use of novel metaphorical expression. But this explanation is not available within CMT, because conceptual metaphors exist at the fundamental level of thought; and linguistic expressions are only a manifestation of this level of thought. If language could impact thought, the level of thought would not be fundamental. The only explanation that is available for CMT is a neural one, e.g. in the form of Hebb's principle: "*Neurons that fire together wire together*" (Lakoff 2008: 26).

28 There are some promising proposals within Relevance Theory. The notion of *demetaphorization* advanced by Oswald and Rihs (2014) combines Relevance Theory with an argumentative perspective. The authors present a concrete mechanism of how an originally metaphorical statement ceases to be perceived as a metaphor. An argument may begin with a metaphorical statement which involves a mapping between two domains. The argument, then, goes on with a step-by-step elaboration of elements of this mapping. This process eventually justifies the relevance of the original metaphorical statement which fades away to be perceived as a metaphor.

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