1 Metaphor and literature

Consider the following metaphysical poem, ‘To his coy mistress’, written by Andrew Marvell and published posthumously in 1681.

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, Lady, were no crime
We would sit down and think which way
To walk and pass our long love’s day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges’ side
Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow;
A hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, Lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time’s winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
This poem is often taken to be a paradigm example of a *carpe diem* poem, and is noted for its complex and ambiguous use of metaphor.

a. Using ideas from conceptual metaphor theory, develop and present a cognitive poetics account of the way(s) in which time is conveyed in the poem.

b. How does Marvell’s use of metaphors for time contribute to your reading of the poem?

2 Blending in Romeo and Juliet

When Mercutio lies dying in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, he says: ‘Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man.’

The interpretation of this line, and the ensuing gallows humour, relies on simultaneous understanding of two distinct conventional meanings associated with *grave*, namely as a noun, a place of burial, and an adjective, relating to being serious or sombre.

Using ideas from blending theory, provide a cognitive poetics analysis of how the gallows humour is achieved, in terms of integrating these distinct meanings in a single utterance.

3 Symbolism in Bleak House

Charles Dickens’ novel, *Bleak House*, satirises the English judicial system. It famously uses ‘fog’ as a symbol for the judicial system. Consider the following excerpts, from the beginning of the book:

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats … Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds.

The raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy streets are muddiest near that leaden-headed old obstruction,
appropriate ornament for the threshold of a leaden-headed old corporation, Temple Bar. And hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln’s Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery.

In light of what you have learned in Chapter 29, draw upon one or more theoretical frameworks from cognitive linguistics, and provide an analysis of how Dickens uses fog, in these extracts, to satirise the judicial system.

4 Vachel Lindsay’s ‘Factory Window Song’

Vachel Lindsay was an American poet, who pioneered what he dubbed ‘singing poetry’. Consider the following example:

    Factory windows are always broken.
    Somebody’s always throwing bricks,
    Somebody’s always heaving cinders,
    Playing ugly Yahoo tricks.

    Factory windows are always broken.
    Other windows are left alone.
    No one throws through the chapel window
    The bitter, snarling derisive stone.

    Factory windows are always broken.
    Something or other is going wrong.
    Something is rotten – I think, in Denmark.
    End of the factory-window song.

This poem alludes to Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*, with its reference to Denmark in the final stanza. This is an instance of intertextuality, a literary device that refers to other texts in order to create deeper layers of meaning within a given text.

a. In light of what you have learned in Chapter 29, draw upon one or more theoretical frameworks from cognitive linguistics, and provide an analysis of how this instance of intertextuality functions.

b. How does the use of intertextuality facilitate your reading of the poem?