Poetic Metaphors

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John Benjamins Publishing Company

Poetic Metaphors

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Volume 15

Poetic Metaphors. Creativity and interpretation
by Carina Rasse

Poetic Metaphors

Creativity and interpretation

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To my mom, Lilija,
for all her love and support

alles ist
wie es war
im Einstieg
der Himmel: nichts
als eine Decke
aus schwarzem Papier
das wächst
wenn man schreibt
und wie schnell
alles verfliegt verflog
was weiß blieb und
unbeschrieben

Robert Kleindienst

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Acknowledgements

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Preface

> *Metaphors signify the core, foundation, central engine, inspiring breath of all poetry. They are how the Muse muses, how Imagination flies, how readers absorb the poet's thoughts too deep for human tears.*
> Shirley Geok-lin Lim (2019, p.c)

Metaphor is a fundamental part of the poetic imagination. Via metaphor one "speak[s] of something as though it were another" (Richards 1936: 116). Or one brings what seem to be distinct entities into a relationship, sometimes without knowing how or why. When Canadian-American poet James Arthur talked to me about the meanings and functions of metaphors, he started with some thought provoking questions: "Why should the sight of the snow shovel leaning against the garage make us sad?", asked Arthur. "Why do the wasps nesting in the sandbox make us think about Donald Trump?" A poet usually writes about multiple images and associations simultaneously, trusting in the authenticity of the intuited connection, and as one writes, the different parts of the metaphor begin to bind themselves together: the snow shovel becomes personified; the wasps become imbued with symbolism; word by word, other stories, images, and ideas enter the poem, and one has the feeling of discovering the meaning, just as a Tarot-card reader discovers meaning through connection. "The meaning is invented, but because it reveals something about the interpreter, it *feels* as if the meaning has always been there, awaiting discovery" (p.c. Arthur 2018).[1]

Readers admire gifted writers for their abilities to both form chains of associations in new ways, and to communicate abstract thoughts in a vivid and creative manner. Still, people often find poetry difficult to understand. "I hear this all time," said James Arthur. "Maybe every poet does. But I believe that in fact most people do understand poetry, knowingly or not, because poetry's logic is so primal". Poetry is indeed a central part of human thought and communication. Consider how rhyme, rhythm, and figurative language are often playfully used to teach children to speak, read, write, or count. We use poetry to help us come to terms with the big things in

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1. Here, I quote from conversations I had with James Arthur over the last three years. Parts of our interactions were also published in "A Cognitive-Linguistic Approach to the Study of Metaphors in James Arthur's Poem 'Wind'" (Rasse 2018). I am extremely grateful to James for teaching me so much about poetry writing and reading.

life, such as love, loss, nature, beauty and the passing of time. People write and read poetry for landmark events such as weddings, funerals, or political rallies. In all of these situations, we not only understand poetry, but rely on it. "People recognize intuitively," as Arthur puts it, "that sound and pattern make their own kind of sense and can in fact guide us across loosely connected chains of associative thought" (p.c. Arthur 2019).

One of the reasons why people understand metaphors in both poetic and non-poetic contexts is their ability to form associations between abstract and concrete concepts. For instance, people's concept of time is structured by metaphorical projections from the knowledge they have about motion. Understanding abstract concepts such as beliefs or theories often requires speakers or writers to draw on the notion they have about motion and possession. This is why expressions like "Time flies", "I cannot hold that belief", or "He has caused the theory to break down" are common to the English language. In the cognitive linguistic view, metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain (e.g. TIME) in terms of another conceptual domain (e.g. MOTION). The former concepts, called targets, are abstract and less well understood in comparison with the latter concepts, the sources, which are typically more concrete and easier to specify. A convenient shorthand way of capturing this view of metaphor is the following: CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN A IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN B, which is what is called a conceptual metaphor. The conceptual metaphors which underlie the above mappings are TIME IS MOTION, POSSESSION IS EATING, and THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS. The main claim of this cognitive-linguistic approach to metaphor, known as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (see Lakoff & Johnson 1980), is that we all automatically and unconsciously use such conceptual cross-domain mappings to get a better understanding of abstract concepts that we encounter in our everyday lives.

Researchers have drawn on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to study how people think, act and communicate in different contexts, ranging from daily conversations, to political speeches, to non-verbal communication such as sign language, gestures, or dance performances. Relatively little attention, though, has been given to the study of metaphors in poetry. This focus stems, most likely, from the original claim of CMT that much of everyday, non-poetic language is metaphorical which has led much of the disciplines to avert studying poetry, where we already knew that metaphor was present. However, the mere fact of knowing that poetry is rich in metaphors does not tell us much about how poetic metaphors work or how they are interpreted by the readers. Nor does it tell us anything about why and how authors use them.

The present monograph aims to fill this gap by exploring how poets produce and readers interpret metaphors in poetry. I consider a cognitive-linguistic approach to be particularly useful in the given context since it takes into account

the many conscious as well as unconscious processes that shape the production and processing of poetic language. Furthermore, the selected approach allows for various empirical investigations which, in turn, may shed light on the cognitive, embodied, and affective dimensions involved in poetry production and understanding. The focus of these investigations will, on the one hand, be on how poets themselves define metaphors, and how they reflect upon the meanings of metaphorical expressions in their own works. On the other hand, the project examines how readers interpret metaphors that they encounter in poetic narratives. The aim is to show that conceptual metaphor is not only a crucial component of poetry itself but also structures how poets talk about the meaning of their poems and how readers respond to poetry.

CHAPTER 1

The scope of this book

1.1   About the book

This project arose from the observation that, in studying metaphors, researchers often make assumptions about the meanings and functions of metaphors in different contexts (e.g., political speeches, doctor-patient conversations, fiction writing, etc.) without taking into account the perspectives of the producers. This is particularly true for poetry where, due to the aesthetic nature of the genre, researchers/readers often make assumptions about why a particular metaphor was used or what the poet's intention might have been in using that figure of speech without asking the poet him- or herself to share their thoughts on these issues. Furthermore, people usually have certain expectations when they read poetry. For instance, they often expect poetic metaphors to be particularly novel and creative. Many people expect to be moved, challenged, surprised, touched emotionally when they read poetry. But how do poets go about achieving these goals? What expectations do *they* have when using metaphors? Would poets consider metaphor in poetry as being so different from metaphors in non-poetic contexts?

A related but broader second motivation was to ask to what extent does the production and processing of poetic metaphors overlap between poets and readers. For instance, does a poet have a specific intention in mind when creating a metaphor? If so, is the poet able or willing to talk about its meaning during a post-hoc reflection process (e.g., when being asked what a specific metaphor means)? And does this "intended" meaning reflect how readers interpret the given metaphor? Or is poetry interpretation so personal and idiosyncratic that only little overlapping between the poets' and readers' responses can be found?

The reason for posing such questions in the poetry genre can be particularly interesting because this genre pushes metaphor to the limit. Just think of how many different, dynamic and interconnected dimensions (e.g., text, rhyme, rhythm, punctuation, sound, and many more) a poem has, and how they all play a role in the ways (metaphorical) meaning is constructed. There is probably no other genre that relies so much on the creator's ability to get his/her message across while, at the same time, leaving enough room for the interpreters to find out for themselves what a poem means to them, what emotions and feelings it evokes and which experiences it conveys.

To show an example for how a poem may be read on different levels and in different ways, mainly because of its use of metaphors, please consider the following reading of "My Papa's Waltz" (1942). "My Papa's Waltz" is one of the most frequently anthologized and interpreted poems of the American poet Theodore Roethke. It depicts an introspective look at a father through the voice of a young son. Literary critics frequently see the poem as being autobiographical by reflecting Roethke's relationship with his father (see e.g., Fong 1990; Discorfano 2017). Formally, the poem seems to be simple. It breaks into four parts, as indicated by the stanza breaks. Each line is written in iambic trimeter. The rhyme follows a relatively regular ABAB scheme, with an exception in line two, that ends with a half rhyme. The poetic elements – metrics, pace, imagery, diction – are constant throughout, with some exceptions like the extra feminine syllable in the second ("could make a small boy dizzy") and fourth ("such waltzing was not easy") lines; or the additional foot that may cause a stumbling effect, adding to the poem's depiction of a clumsy waltz. The lines are short and the language is rather simple. Yet, the meaning of the poem is ambiguous, which leads to various interpretations.

> The whiskey on your breath
> Could make a small boy dizzy;
> But I hung on like death:
> Such waltzing was not easy.
>
> We romped until the pans
> Slid from the kitchen shelf;
> My mother's countenance
> Could not unfrown itself.
>
> The hand that held my wrist
> Was battered on one knuckle;
> At every step you missed
> My right ear scraped a buckle.
>
> You beat time on my head
> With a palm caked hard by dirt,
> Then waltzed me off to bed
> Still clinging to your shirtw.

"My Papa's Waltz" describes a scene in which a working-class father returns home and dances around in the house with his son. Perhaps the boy is standing on the father's feet. And because the father is drunk, the dancing is rough and clumsy. Some readers may describe the poem as nostalgic and melancholic. A poem about a bear-like father remembered many years after by his grown-up son. Most readers, however, will consider the poem as having a darker meaning; possible even

depicting violence. Certain words and phrases indicate that boy is frightened and hurt by the father, even at play. For instance, "I hung on like death" implies fear and tension. When the little boy is holding on tightly to his tall, drunk father, he seems to be afraid of losing grip and possibly being hurt by the father's drunken careening. The verb "romp" implies that they were dancing so vigorously that even the kitchen utensils fall from the shelf. The boy's recount of his subjective experience of his father "holding his wrist" and "beating time on his head" reflects, once again, the father's carelessness, even forcefulness and dominance. Eventually, the father is "waltzing the boy off to bed" while the boy is still "clinging to his shirt", implying that the boy is still worried of letting go, possibly both physically and emotionally.

The ambiguity that a young child feels towards his alcoholic and sometimes violent father is evoked by the author's use of figurative language such as metaphor and metonymy. "The function of metaphor," as poet George Szirtes suggests, "is not to provide an alternative, concrete meaning, but indicates directions a mind might move" (p.c. 2016). In Roethke's poem, the most prominent metaphor is the waltz. It is not only used to literally depict a father dancing with his son. Instead, the waltz has a deeper, more symbolic meaning; it represents, as my analysis of the individual stanzas will show, the relationship between the son and the father.

Let us turn our attention to the first stanza of "My Papa's Waltz" to see how the metaphorical use of waltz works throughout the poem; what it tells us about the poem's meaning and the mood that it creates:

> The whiskey on your breath
> Could make a small boy dizzy;
> But I hung on like death:
> Such waltzing was not easy.

If we consider the waltz as being representative for the father-son relationship, the scene may be interpreted as depicting the contradicting feelings that the boy experiences towards his father. As in a typical waltz, the dancing couple is holding their bodies close to each other while rotating in a clock-wise or anti clock-wise direction. The physical closeness may imply that the relationship between the father and his son is close and intimate. At the same time, Roethke (1942) recounts that the boy is hanging on to his father "like death", which suggests that the little one is not actively engaging in the dancing performance. Instead, he is tenaciously clinging to his father, afraid of (literally) falling down. Or, if we take the metaphorical meaning, of being emotionally separated from his father.

These contradictory interpretations can be justified if we consider the possible conceptual metaphors underlying this stanza. On the one hand, one might suggest that the stanza is reflective of the conceptual metaphor INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS. It

is commonly known that being physically close to somebody – as the father and the son most likely are while they are dancing – usually suggests that one is also emotionally close with that person. As an example, think of a couple hugging and kissing each other to express their love; or a mother holding her baby boy tight to her body to protect him and show him her love. On the other hand, the first stanza could be reflective of the conceptual metaphor EMOTIONAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE. This would support the interpretation of the boy being afraid of losing his grip and being both physically and emotionally distant from his father.

Furthermore, if we consider the conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIP IS A WALTZ as being central to the poem, we get even more information on how the son possibly feels in the given situation. Consider how a waltz is usually a light and simple dance. For the son, though, it is difficult (e.g., such waltzing was not easy). On the literal level, this suggest that it was hard for the boy to dance with his drunken father. On the metaphorical level, the last line of the first stanza may imply that the relationship was difficult; it was hard for the boy to keep in synchrony with his father or to do what the father did.

In the second stanza, we learn that the waltz is so violent that pots and pans begin to fall to the floor. If we think of the conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIP IS A WALTZ, we may say that the father's reckless dance performance possibly reflects his usual behavior towards his son.

> We romped until the pans
> Slid from the kitchen shelf;
> My mother's countenance
> Could not unfrown itself.

In the last two lines of the second stanza, Roethke describes how the mother is watching the scene in disapproval. She does not intervene or try to stop the father from dancing recklessly with the child. The mother is passive and seemingly paralyzed by the event.

In his third stanza, Roethke again depicts the father's careless/violent behavior towards his son:

> The hand that held my wrist
> Was battered on one knuckle;
> At every step you missed
> My right ear scraped a buckle.

The description of holding the wrist, and not the hand – as one would think of in a waltz – adds another detached layer to the relationship. The dancing is not pure or intimate. Instead, the father is dominant, oppressive and violent. In every step that the father missed while dancing, caused a buckle on the boy's ear. In a metaphorical

sense, this could mean that every missed step on the father's end, every mistake or poor choice, has a consequence on the son. A possible underlying conceptual metaphor is EMOTIONAL HARM IS PHYSICAL HARM.

The poem ends with the scene of the father waltzing his son off to bed. Huff notes that the double "t" in the line "you bea**t t**ime on my head" forces the reader to slow down and accent both words, adding to the power and the stress of the dance (2017). At the same time, it creates a further image of the father's abusive behavior. While the father is waltzing toward the bed, the boy is "still clinging to his shirt", which reinforces the idea of the boy being passive and forced to comply. In a dance, people usually hold each other's' bodies and not the clothes. The meaning of this behavior might, in a metaphorical sense, imply mean that the son is holding on to a ghost; or to the memory of the father. It might also suggest that the boy is trying to keep up with his father as – if he cannot hold his body, he can at least hold his shirt.

After reading this interpretation, other readers or literary critics may claim that the analysis of the poem is dubitable. They will probably ask how can I be sure that Roethke meant any of those things? This question can hardly be answered. "Many questions of interpretation," as the poet James Arthur explains, "can't be definitively settled, because each reader brings to the poem an individual sensibility, mood, and frame of reference, with the result that each reader forms an idiosyncratic interpretation of what is most important and arrives at a largely personal understanding" (2019: n.p.). Even if we asked the poet himself about the meaning of the poem, we could not be sure if what the poet says in retrospect indeed reflects the poet's original intention in writing the poem. Interpretations of a poem usually vary across readers. Yet, every poem has, as Arthur suggests, a "general" meaning that most people would agree with. And this meaning, to my mind, can be detected if we pay attention to the conceptual metaphors underlying the poem.[2]

In "My Papa's Waltz", the most central conceptual metaphor which structures the whole poem is RELATIONSHIP IS A WALTZ. To understand the poem, I propose that readers form associations between a waltz and the father-son relationship. For instance, just like a waltz, a relationship has certain rules; there are decisions one makes and actions one takes that either contribute to a successful dance/relationship or hinder it. The couple sets boundaries and gives each other freedom, it creates unity as well as diversity. A misstep in a waltz can literally make the dance partner fall; metaphorically, it may mean that the partner contributed, intentionally or not,

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2.   By that, I do not aim to suggest that readers need to actively attend to the underlying conceptual metaphors to get the meaning of the poem. The processing of conceptual metaphors is, after all, a predominantly unconscious process. My assumption though is that being attentive to conceptual metaphors is one way of how we, as readers and/or researchers, may explain why a poem means what it means.

to one's failure. A holding hand, by contrast, may represent physical and emotional support – both in a dance and in a relationship – and convey the feeling of security and affinity. As we see, the concept of waltz may evoke various associations; not only in terms of meanings, but also thoughts, feelings and experiences. And readers will arrive at their understandings of a poem not only by interpreting the words that the poet presents on the page, but also by imagining the scene that the author creates, by speculating what the author's intention might have been in writing the poem, by drawing connections between the poem's story and real-world-happenings and much more. Consequently, my contention is that paying attention to underlying conceptual metaphors may also help researchers to explore and explain how readers arrive at their understandings of a poem.

1.2   Goals and potential impact of this book

The present project explores instances of conceptual metaphors in six contemporary Anglophone poems. As opposed to previous investigations which applied Conceptual Metaphor Theory on a rather superficial level (e.g., Lakoff & Turner 1989; Freeman 2007; Stockwell 2002), the current investigations will analyze the poems systematically – line by line – and consider not only the most obvious metaphors but point to the different levels of metaphoricity that construct a poem. Furthermore, researchers in the past have often speculated about the intended meanings of a poem without taking the writer's personal opinions into account (e.g., Hrushovski 1984; Freeman 2000; Zanker 2019). This way, the current book differs from other monographs studying, from a cognitive perspective, the meanings and functions of metaphors in poetry in that it (1) studies contemporary poetry written in English instead of "classical/traditional" poetry, such as works by William Shakespeare, Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, Sylvia Plath, or Emily Dickinson, which had usually been at the researchers' attention; (2) takes both the readers' and the poets' perspectives into account; (3) highlights the multi-faceted nature of poetic metaphor by proposing, for instance, that metaphoricity often does not only lie in words but also in rhyme, rhythm, or sound; and, (4), does not only mention current theories in metaphor (e.g., Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Deliberate Metaphor Theory) in passing, but proves empirical analysis of the functioning of metaphor in the writing of and reading of poetry.

In terms of empirical investigations, the monograph used questionnaires and interviews to ask poets to talk about the meanings and functions of metaphors in their works. The poets' responses were then compared to the readers' interpretations of the poems to explore the similarities and differences across the interpretations. Chapter 3 of this book will introduce the four empirical studies in detail.

All in all, the outlined investigations wish to achieve the following goals:

a. **Studying poetic metaphors**. In recent years, relatively little attention has been given to the study of metaphors in poetry in the context of conceptual metaphor study. This focus stems, most likely, from the original claim of Conceptual Metaphor Theory that much of everyday, non-poetic language is metaphorical which has led much of the discipline to attend to work other than studying poetry, where we already knew that metaphor was present. However, the mere fact of knowing that poetry is rich in metaphors does not tell us much about how poetic metaphors work or how they are interpreted by their readers. Nor does it tell us anything about why and how authors use them. The current project aims to fill these gaps.

b. **Exploring the overlap in conceptual metaphor between multiple sets of comparators (e.g., the writer and the readers of the poems).** We, as the multiple disciplines that investigate conceptual metaphor, have long known and have good evidence for, the idea that language produced by speakers/writers/signers, is organized around a set of known, valid and fairly standard conceptual metaphors (e.g., GOOD IS UP, BAD IS DOWN, ACCOMPLISHMENT IS MOVEMENT THROUGH PHYSICAL SPACE, etc.). This understanding is widely, though not universally, accepted. We also know that people encountering metaphorical language will often invoke those conceptual metaphors as part of their comprehension/interpretation. But the question as to how much those conceptual metaphors overlap in language producers and interpreters, has seldom been asked.

c. **Discussing how and where the poets' and readers' responses overlap.** Based on a careful analysis of the readers' and poets' responses to selected poems, this project outlines some "levels" (e.g., when poets and readers talk about the main theme of the poem) in which the responses often overlap. In doing so, I propose that paying attention to conceptual metaphors underlying the poets' and readers' responses may help researchers to uncover some similarities or overlappings in the two perspectives.

d. **Discussing how and where the poets' and readers' responses differ.** Alongside the overlap, there is also some flexibility in the interpretations. This means that a poet can guide readers into a certain direction but, at the same time, leave room for readers' personal interpretations. Again, the project proposes that CMT may help researchers to study the differences in poetry interpretation.

e. **Poetic metaphors may work on textual, thematic, and thematic structural levels.** The book proposes that metaphoricity resides in various dimensions of a poem. For instance, in some cases a word or expression can be considered metaphorical; in other cases, an entire poem can be seen as a metaphor. In this project, I make the differentiation between whether a postulated conceptual

metaphor reflects the meaning of a word (textual level), a theme that is depicted in the poem (thematic level), or a conceptual metaphor that structures the entire poem (thematic-structural level). This way, researchers can make more precise assumptions about readers' interpretations of individual metaphors as well as of metaphorical themes and topics that a poem depicts.

f. **Explicit, implicit, incomplete references to conceptual metaphors in readers' interpretations of poetry.** The current project also shows that people's interpretations of poetry are not always reflective of one (or more) clearly definable conceptual metaphors (e.g., in a response in which the source and the target domains are stated). Instead, it may happen that a reader only mentions the source domain (e.g., metaphorical word or theme) but not the target domain; thus, the reader does not explain how he/she has arrived at that particular understanding. In such cases, the reference to a conceptual metaphor may be seen as implicit. It may also happen that a reader talks about a metaphorical theme or topic. Yet, no concrete reference to a target or source domain can be found in the response. In such instances, I would consider the reference to a conceptual metaphor to be incomplete. Overall, considering the various ways in which readers' references to conceptual metaphors often varies enables researchers to offer a fuller picture of the often diverse and interconnected metaphors that structure an interpretation of a poem.

g. **Encouraging readers to think of the author's intention in writing a work and to express how reading the poem makes the reader feel**. In the current monograph, I not only study how people interpret a poem but also how they react emotionally to it. This insight enabled me to study the language (e.g., metaphorical vs. literal) that people often use when talking about their emotional engagements with a narrative. Additionally, I encouraged readers to think of what the author's intention might have been in writing this particular narrative. This is something that people might not necessarily do when reading poetry, as they are happier to just let the images and impressions flow. In other genres (e.g., education), by contrast, people may be more in an "what are they telling me" mode. One interesting finding in this regard was that encouraging people to talk about the author's intention encouraged them to use more metaphors (some of the interpretations were even allegorical) compared to when they talked about the meaning of the poem.

h. **Some further insights** range from the discussion of how the narrative perspective of a poem may influence a reader's interpretation of a poem, to the pinning down of the subconscious workings involved in metaphor creation and interpretation. Additionally, this book discusses how paying attention to conceptual metaphors enhances one's poetic interpretations, as does the introduction of the social component when we attend to authorial intentions.

1.3   Structure of the book

The following chapter (*Conceptual metaphor theory and the study of metaphors in poetry*) discusses various theoretical and empirical investigations into the study of metaphors in various discourses and contexts. The first part of the chapter explains what conceptual metaphors "are made of" and how they work, introduces the metaphor identification procedure MIP (Pragglejaz Group 2007), and discusses some of the major criticism of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). In the second part, the chapter turns to metaphors in poetry and presents studies that have drawn on insights of CMT to explore how readers interpret poetic metaphors. The chapter closes with a discussion of the challenges involved in the study of the production and processing of metaphors in poetry.

Chapter 3 (*Poetic metaphors: Empirical investigations*) introduces the book's corpus and the methods of data elicitation and analysis. Since the monograph aims to offer a three-fold perspective (analyst, poet, reader) on the production and interpretation of poetic metaphors, a combination of different research methods from the fields of cognitive- and psycholinguistics was required. First, a questionnaire study was used to get the poets' perspectives on the meanings and functions of poetic metaphors. In a follow-up study, interviews were conducted with those poets whose works were discussed in the book to get deeper insights into the meanings of metaphors in their works. Finally, written think-aloud protocols were used to explore how metaphorical thinking shapes readers' engagements with poetic narratives.

Chapter 4 (*Poets' perspectives on the meanings and functions of metaphors in poetry*) is dedicated to the poets' very personal views on why and how they use metaphorical language, what inspires them to write poetry, what they hope to achieve by the implementation of metaphors, whether they think that the creation of metaphor is a conscious, or rather intuitive process, and if they think that they can foresee, or even control, how readers interpret the meanings of their metaphors. The chapter reviews the results of the questionnaires and discuss how the poets' responses support or challenge current theories in metaphor studies.

Chapter 5 (*An in-depth analysis of metaphors in six contemporary poems*) presents the corpus of the monograph, which consists of six poems by contemporary English-speaking writers. The authors of these poems are introduced and their poems are analyzed systematically for underlying conceptual metaphors. The findings of the metaphor analysis then serve as the basis for further the empirical studies.

In Chapter 6 (*On readers' engagements with poetry*), the readers' interpretations of the poems, which were collected in the written think-aloud protocol study, are discussed. The chapter explores how readers interpret the meanings of a poem, how they define their emotional engagements with a poem, and how they talk about

the author's intention in writing the poem. The focus of this investigation lies on whether people are more likely to use literal or metaphorical language when they talk about these aspects, and if conceptual metaphor shapes readers' responses to poetic narratives.

Chapter 7 (*Comparing poets' and readers' responses to poetry*) explores to which extent the poets' and readers' responses to the selected poems overlap. The comparisons are done by close analyses of the conceptual metaphors underlying the different responses. The aim is to show that considering the different types of underlying conceptual metaphors (e.g., conceptual metaphors that reflect the theme of the poem or the meanings of individual metaphors), paying attention to variations in source and target domains, and even considering the number of conceptual metaphors which were postulated for individual responses allows for a more nuanced analysis of the similarities and differences in the interpretation of poetic narratives than a simple comparison between a poet's and a reader's narrative response would do.

Chapter 8 (*Conclusion and future outlook*), eventually, will summarize the main findings of the book and propose some possible directions for future investigations.

Conceptual metaphor theory and the study of metaphors in poetry

The present chapter discusses various theoretical and empirical investigations into the study of metaphors in various discourses that are central to the present project. The first section explains what conceptual metaphors "are made of" and how they work. The second section introduces the metaphor identification procedure MIP (Pragglejaz Group 2007) and talks about the method's advantages and disadvantages. The third section presents how conceptual metaphors shape the ways people think, act and communicate and explains how the existence of conceptual metaphor may be tested empirically. The fourth section discusses some of the major criticism of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Section 5 turns to metaphors in poetry and presents studies that have drawn on insights of CMT to explore how readers interpret poetic metaphors. The chapter closes with a discussion of the challenges involved in the study of the production and processing of metaphors in poetry.

2.1   Metaphor: Then and now

2.1.1   Literal vs. metaphorical language

For centuries, it was believed that metaphor is beyond ordinary language, a special rhetorical device only to be found in poetic language. In addition, metaphor was often considered to be a form of deviant language use. "The greatest thing by far," as Aristotle famously claimed in the *Poetics,* "is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars (Poetics 22, Bywater 1940: 62). Aristotle defined metaphor as "giving the thing a name that belongs to something else" (Bywater 1940: 56). This definition reflects the origins of the Greek word *metapherein*; *meta,* meaning with/after/across, and *pherein,* meaning bear/carry. Aristotle identified four types of metaphor: "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" (Poetics, Butcher 2008: 23). John T. Kirby, professor of classics and comparative literature, presents the following examples for each type of metaphor that Aristotle defined (1997: 533–534):

1. a noun designating a genus may be transferred to a species; e.g. "Here stands my ship". In this example, the verb 'to stand' may substitute for the more concrete expression 'lying at anchor'.
2. a species transferred to a genus. E.g., "Truly has Odysseus done ten thousand deeds of worth". In this example, the specific number replaces the generic 'many'.
3. one species name may be transferred to another. "draining away the life with bronze". In this statement, 'life' is used metaphorically as it is treated as something liquid, like blood.
4. we may find metaphor by proportional analogy: e.g. "The wine bowl stands to Dionysus as the shield does to Ares". An analogy of proportion is when the second term is to the first as the fourth to the third. Thus, the cup may be called 'the shield of Dionysus', and the shield 'the cup of Ares.'

Of the four types that Aristotle listed, the fourth (analogy) has received most attention in contemporary metaphor studies. Expressions such as *Achilles is a lion, The man is a wolf, or The lawyer is a shark* have been used extensively to explain how metaphor works. However, such implicit comparisons, which are at the heart of metaphorical constructions, were not well received in areas that aimed to represent objective, physical reality, such as the sciences. "Because reality is thought to have a preferred description, scientific research seeks to uncover this description through objective empirical means and to present these 'truths' in a language that best reflects them" (Gibbs 1994: 169). In short, literal language was seen as the language that is precise and unambiguous, and thus reflects reality. Metaphorical language, by contrast, was considered distorted and deviant as it is implicit rather than clear and informative; and meaningless because it "violated the empiricist criterion of meaning" (Ortony 1979: 1).

The tacit belief in the privileged status of literal language reached its peak in the doctrine of logical positivism, a movement in Western philosophy which started in Vienna in the late 1920s. A group of philosophically-trained scientists and scientifically-trained philosophers sought to rethink philosophy in connection with the nature and foundations of knowledge. Their central thesis was verificationism, an approach which suggests that only claims which can be verified through empirical investigations can have any meaning and therefore be true or false.

> … the fact that a conclusion does not follow from its putative premise is not sufficient to show that it is false. Consequently one cannot overthrow a system of transcendent metaphysics merely by criticizing the way in which it comes into being. What is required is rather a criticism of the nature of the actual statements which comprise it. And this is the line of argument which we shall, in fact, pursue. For we shall maintain that no statement which refers to a "reality" transcending the limits of all possible sense-experience can possibly have any literal significance; from which it must follow that the labours of those who have striven to describe such a reality have all been devoted to the production of nonsense. (Ayer 1959: 34)

Ayer's view was a form of empiricism and was shaped by David Hume's work on the experimental science of human nature (1739). According to Hume, humans are part of the natural world. Thus, human beliefs, desires, and motivations must have natural explanations and laws. Anything that could not be justified on the basis of reason and experience, such as religious views about God, ethical talk about value, our evaluations of aesthetic beauty, was without meaning.[3]

A linguistic approach that denied any veridical epistemological access to reality is the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis. The theory has its roots in the late eighteenth century and came to prominence through the work of Edward Sapir in the 1930s and his student Benjamin Lee Whorf. In a paper published in 1929 Sapir writes:

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. (1929: 209)

Our language affects how we perceive things:

> Even comparatively simple acts of perception are very much more at the mercy of the social patterns called words than we might suppose. …We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (1929: 210)

The differences, however, do not end with perception:

> The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same worlds with different labels attached. (1929: 209)

The central idea of linguistic relativism is that human languages are flexible and extensible, so most things that can be said in one can be approximated in another. In addition, the theory suggests that cognition, as the psychologist Andrew Ortony puts it, is the result of mental construction:

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3. After World War II, the movement shifted to a milder variant, which is called logical empiricism. The movement's central premises were, in the following years, heavily criticized by leading philosophers, such as Willard van Orman Quine and Karl Popper. By 1960, the movement had run its course.

> Knowledge of reality, whether occasioned by perception, language or memory, necessitates going beyond the information given. It arises through the interaction of this information with the context in which it is represented and with the knower's preexisting knowledge […]. The objective world is not directly accessible but is constructed on the basis of the constraining influences of human knowledge and language.
> <div align="right">(Ortony 1993: 1–2)</div>

In this view, language, perception and knowledge are inextricably intertwined, and no differentiation is made between scientific, literal language and other kinds (e.g., figurative).

2.1.2   Metaphor – A matter of language, thought, and action

The relativist view challenged earlier ideas about metaphor as being a purely figurative embellishment of literal language (e.g., "the sun's golden face" might simply add a descriptive flourish). In addition, metaphor was no longer seen as exceptional and distinctive but as the basic means of structuring both poetic and ordinary speech and thought. Starting with I. A. Richards' *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936 and Max Black's *Models and Metaphor* (1962), scholars began to consider metaphor as a conceptual tool of meaning. "In the simplest formulation," as Richards explains, "when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction" (1936: 93).[4] To define the two parts of a metaphor, Richards introduced the terms "tenor" and "vehicle". In a metaphorical expression such as *Man is a wolf*, 'man' is the tenor (also known as target domain in conceptual metaphor theory), the thing being compared, and wolf is the vehicle (called source domain in conceptual metaphor theory), the thing that the tenor is being compared with. In Richards' view, the "co-presence of the vehicle and tenor results in a meaning (to be clearly distinguished from the tenor) which is not attainable without their interaction" (1936: 100). This means that the vehicle is not only ornamental or additional. Instead, the tenor influences the vehicle, and vice versa. And together they create a new meaning that cannot be ascribed to either term individually (see also Black 1962: 63–78).

The assumption that metaphor is only a matter of language and rhetoric was further challenged in the late seventies, a period known as the "cognitive-turn". Historically, the mind and the body were seen as distinct and separable entities (e.g., Descartes 1644). The roots of this view lie in the Cartesian mind-body dualism

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4.   Black and Richards can be seen as early proponents of Blending Theory (e.g., Fauconnier and Turner 2002). The theory assumes that different semantic domains merge to create a new "blended space", which, in turn, helps people to construct meaning in different life situations.

and formal theories of symbol processing. "The so-called symbolic, cognition paradigm," as cognitive linguist Michael Kimmel explains, "builds on the assumption that knowledge is independent of the 'hardware' it is implemented on. It is just stored and run there via the manipulation of symbols and algorithms" (2013: 303). Thus, the mind was seen as a computer, and concepts were understood as a software that is "loaded into" the mental hardware. And it was assumed that the body does not affect the content or the mental processes. From the 1970s onwards, theories in the humanities and social sciences pointed out that cognition is not disconnected from the human body, but grounded in somatic and sensorimotor experiences as well as activations (e.g., Gordon 1986; Gallese 2005, 2020). This view is called the embodiment paradigm.

The theory of the mind being embodied suggests that "we understand language by simulating in our minds what it would be like to experience the things that language describes" (Bergen 2012: 13). Even if people are not engaging in overt action, they automatically employ their bodily resources to create an interpretation of a given text or speech sample (e.g., Gibbs 2006; Gallese 2016; Colston 2019). For instance, empirical research has shown that people understand the statement "John hammered a nail into the wall" by imagining themselves engaging in this action which facilitates their knowing that the nail was inserted in a horizontal manner (Stanfield & Zwaan 2001). This is possible due to ongoing embodied simulation processes. Embodied simulation theory has its roots in neuroscience studies on "mirror neurons" which showed that motors areas of the brain are activated when individuals see other actors performing different bodily motions (Gallese 2005; Grafton 2010). This, in turn, enables people to imagine what it must be like to be in the position of somebody else and draw conclusions from these imaginative engagements.

Embodied simulation was also shown to shape the ways people interpret metaphorical language. For example, the simple statement "John couldn't grasp the concept of infinity" is impossible to perform in the real world. However, research has shown that when we articulate or hear this sentence, we simulate this action by imagining the "concept" to be a concrete object which can be understood once it is physically grasped (Wilson & Gibbs 2007). In addition, the embodiment paradigm suggests that people's conceptual understanding depends on the nature of our bodies and the physical environment in which they function (Kimmel 2013: 52–54). For instance, people associate 'good' with 'up' and 'bad' with 'down' since, when people feel happy, healthy and confident they usually have an upright body position whereases a bent posture may indicate sadness or illness.

In the field of metaphor studies, embracing the embodiment paradigm has led to a new and – as we know today – more appropriate understanding of what metaphor is and how it works. Both metaphorical and literal meaning are considered to be "regulated and constraint by the properties of the mind, as well as intention,

context and patterns of organized experience" (Kimmel 2013: 55). These new insights into how the mind and the body contribute to the people's understanding of language were at the center of Andrew Ortony's edited volume *Metaphor and Thought* (1979). Ortony invited scholars from various backgrounds studying metaphor to jointly explore what metaphors are (theoretical issues) and what metaphors are for (practical issues). Their work has set the cornerstone for George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's famous book *Metaphors We Live By* that appeared in 1980. This hallmark publication, together with Lakoff's *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor* (1993) and Lakoff and Johnson's *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999), are best known for their exploration, definition and contextualization of what is known as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) – the theory which has for the last forty years been at the center of metaphor studies.

CMT emphasizes that meaning is "located in the complex, dynamic arc of interactions that includes brains, bodies, environments, and cultural artifacts and institutions" (see Pires de Oliveira & de Souza Bittencourt 2008: 45). People use metaphors not only to speak about certain aspects of the world but also to think about them and to act in certain ways. Lakoff and Johnson offer first evidence for this assumption by discussing, among others, the meanings and functions of the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR (1989: 4). First, the authors point out that people **talk** about arguments in terms of war, as reflected in common English expressions such as *Your claims are indefensible, He attacked every weak point of my argument or Her criticisms were right on the target* – in which the abstract target domain ARGUMENT is defined by the concrete source domain WAR. Secondly, the authors suggest that people **think** of arguments in terms of wars. This is why people having an argument are, in Western traditions, seen as opponents, and the goal is to attack the opponent's position and defend our own. As a counter-example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 7) ask us to imagine a culture in which arguments are seen as a dance. In this view, the people having an argument would be seen as performers, and the goal would to perform in an aesthetically pleasing way. In such a culture, people would perceive and talk about arguments differently as people from a Western culture do; and they would also, as Lakoff and Johnson suggest, carry them out differently as people who conceptualize arguments in terms of war. Thus, metaphor also shapes the ways people **act.** "Many things that we *do* in arguing," as Lakoff and Johnson state, "are partially structured by the concept of war" (1980: 4). In Western cultures, this would mean that the opponents plan and use strategies, attack each other's positions, and eventually win or lose arguments.

There are hundreds of examples that Lakoff and Johnson, as well as other metaphor scholars, have, over the last forty years, analyzed along the lines of the ARGUMENT IS WAR conceptual metaphors. In addition, much effort has been put into

conducting empirical studies that give evidence for the assumption that the ways people think, act and communicate are, to a large extent, structured by conceptual metaphors. A crucial question to be asked at this point is why a particular source domain can be paired with a particular target domain. Kövecses (2017: 13–19) presents a number of explanations: First, a source and a target domain may be paired based on the **similarity**, or resemblance, between the two things or events. The different types of similarity are "objectively real similarity", "perceived similarity", or "similarity in generic level structure" (Kövecses, 2017: 17–18). As an example for objectively real similarity, Kövecses mentions *roses on one's cheek* which points to the real, objective similarity between the color of some roses (pink or red) and that of a person's cheeks (also pink or some light red). As for perceived similarity, he lists the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A GAMBLING GAME, which is based on the assumption that certain actions in life and their consequences are seen as gambles in a gambling game with a win or lose outcome. To explain the similarity based on generic-level structure, Kövecses (2017: 18) discusses the HUMAN LIFE CYCLE IS THE LIFE CYCLE OF A PLANT conceptual metaphor:

> The two domains share a generic-level structure that can be given as follows: in both domains, there is an entity that comes into existence; it begins to grow, and reaches a point in its development when it is strongest; then it begins to decline; and finally it goes out of existence. Based on this shared structure, the plant domain can function as a source domain for the human domain.

In many cases, however, the source domain cannot be viewed as similar to the target domain. Consider the common metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY as an example. This is a special case of LONGTERM PURPOSEFUL ACTION IS A JOURNEY (see Lakoff, Espenson & Schwartz 1991). The LOVE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor expresses a scenario in which the lovers are travelers on a journey, their relationship and their shared life goals a destination. The travelers/lovers may encounter obstacles on their journey or be confronted with choices about their future. Elements in the target domain of love, including the couple, their challenges and goals, correspond systematically to elements in the source domain of a journey such as the travelers or the destination. But the concept of JOURNEY bears no resemblance to that of LOVE whatsoever. So why are these concepts still brought together?

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) stated that the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor consists of numerous basic components. These are, what Grady (1997) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999) call **"primitive" or "primary" metaphors**. "Such conceptualizations are acquired in ordinary daily life when two basic embodied experiences regularly occur together" (Lakoff 2014: np). Grady (1997) speaks of "basic experiential metonymies" which are rooted in bodily experiences from early childhood, such as

INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS (being held close by the mother or father) or RELATION-SHIPS ARE ENCLOSURES (living together).[5] These primary mappings inform complex metaphors, such as LONGTERM PURPOSEFUL ACTION IS A JOURNEY. Lakoff (2014: np) explains how purposes are understood as destinations: In everyday life, achieving purposes often requires getting to a destination. A relationship is a metaphorical vehicle for three reasons, as defined by Lakoff: "First, a vehicle is a means of getting to a destination. Second, a vehicle is a container. In general, relationships are described in terms of containers: you are in relationship; you can enter or leave a relationship. Third, intimacy is understood metaphorically in terms of closeness: We're very close; we're drifting apart. Thus, a relationship is conceptualized as a container in which you are close and which is a means for reaching destinations" (2014: np).

As a third factor that shapes the pairing of a particular source with a particular target domain are "**image schemas**". Image schemas are abstract, pre-conceptual structures which emerge from our recurrent experiences of the world (Johnson 1987: 194; Lakoff 1987). Such structures include SOURCE-PATH-GOAL FORCE, VERTICALITY, CONTAINER, and some others. In image schemas, spatial structure is mapped into conceptual structure (Mandler 2008: 591). Infants acquire image schemas via motion, object manipulation, and body position (see, e.g., Kimmel 2013). For instance, we see our bodies as containers for air, blood, and faces. We experience what it means to be inside a room, go outside, and to encounter boundaries. We experience relationships as containers because when we are growing up, we tend to live in the same enclosed spaces as other family members. The main contention of this approach is real-world embodied experiences lead to primary conceptual metaphors which can combine to form complex conceptual metaphors, like the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor (see Lakoff 2014; Kimmel 2013).

The theory of image schemas has led to the theory of embodied cognition. Embodied simulation theory claims that:

> people's subjective, felt experiences of their bodies in action provides 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
> (Gibbs 2003: 2)

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5. For detailed discussion of the complexities involved in metonymy production and understanding in different contexts, and for an outline of how metonymy differs, but is also similar to, metaphor, please see Jeannette Littlemore's *Metonymy: Hidden Shortcuts in Language, Thought and Communication* (2015).

This approach challenges the earlier view in cognitive science of seeing the mind as being separated from the body. Embodied cognition is a scientific approach to study the human mind, its interplay with the body and its interaction with the environment.

2.2   Embodiment in verbal and non-verbal metaphor understanding

Psycholinguistic and cognitive neuroscience research provides much evidence for the assumption that people understand literal and metaphorical language by simulating what it would be like to experience the things that language describes (e.g., Bergen 2012; Colston 2019). For example, a study conducted by Glenberg and Kaschak (2002) has shown that participants were faster in pressing a button close to the body when they processed sentences about moving one's hand toward the body, such as *Scratch your nose.* By contrast, if participants read a sentence about an action away from the body (e.g., *Ring the doorbell*), they were faster in pressing a button that was away from their bodies. Another study was conducted by González et al. (2006) who showed that reading odor-related words such as *jasmine* and *cinnamon* produced greater activation of the olfactory cortex than control words. Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that reading emotion words relates to the physical expression of those emotions. For instance, Havas et al. (2007) asked participants to read sentences that described happy or sad scenarios. The findings of the study revealed that the positive sentences caused activation of the facial muscles responsible for smiling and negative sentences caused activation of the facial muscles responsible for frowning.

The following section outlines some empirical investigations that offer evidence for the presence of conceptual metaphors in verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. In addition, it will show that embodied simulation plays a crucial role in how people engage with abstract concepts. The methods that will be discussed relate to the present project and may serve as inspirations for the study of metaphors in poetry. There is a great range of other methods that researchers have used to study the relations between metaphorical language, thought and action in different contexts. A helpful overview is given in Gibbs' *Metaphor Wars* (2017).

2.2.1   Lexical priming

Lexical priming tasks are another way of exploring whether people access conceptual metaphors during thinking and speaking metaphorically. For instance, Gibbs et al. (1997) conducted a set of studies using lexical priming to explore whether people access conceptual metaphors during online processing of idiomatic metaphors. Participants read stories which ended in one of three different phrases: an idiomatic expression, a literal paraphrase of the idiom, or a control sentence. Participants had to press a comprehension button after they finished reading the presented phrases, and they were then shown a letter string, for which they had to decide whether that string constituted an English word or not. These letter strings were words that were related or unrelated to conceptual metaphors motivating appropriate idioms. The researchers' assumption was that if people access specific conceptual metaphors (e.g., THE BODY IS A CONTAINER) during understanding of idiomatic phrases (e.g., *Don't spill the beans*), this activated metaphorical knowledge facilitates participants' responses to the related targets. Moreover, participants should be faster in responding to the related targets when they read the idioms than when they read either literal paraphrases (e.g., *Don't tell them your secret*) or control sentences (e.g., He saw many birds).

The results showed that people's reading of idiomatic phrases (e.g., *Sara revealed the beans to her friend*) primed their subsequent lexical decision judgments for word strings related to the conceptual metaphors motivating the figurative meanings of the idioms. Furthermore, participants were faster in making lexical decisions to a word like "body" after reading *Sara reveled the beans to her friend* than sentences that were motivated by unrelated conceptual metaphors. Based on these findings, the researchers concluded that conceptual metaphors can be accessed during immediate idiom comprehension.

Reflecting on metaphorical meaning and recognizing the presence of conceptual metaphors
A study that focused on how people reflect on metaphorical meaning had been conducted by Boers and Littlemore (2000). Participants were asked to explain the meanings of three conceptual metaphors that are central to economics. They were given three metaphors (e.g. ECONOMICS IS HEALTH CARE, ECONOMIC COMPETITION IS RACING, AN ECONOMY IS A MACHINE) and asked to talk about the possible meanings of these conceptual metaphors. The analysis of the data showed that over 40 percent of the participants explained the metaphors by referring to correspondences between the source and target domains.

Another way of eliciting people's conceptual metaphorical knowledge is to study whether people generally recognize the presence of conceptual metaphors. One of such studies was conducted by Valenzuela and Soriano (2007). The researchers used

a priming experiment in which subjects performed a categorization task after being exposed to an image. The images belonged to four different domains: tools, fruit, vehicles and anger. Participants had to respond to the question "is X a Y?", where Y was a category (EMOTION, TOOL, FRUIT or VEHICLE) and X could be a member of this domain or not (e.g., anger, hammer, banana, train). Some of the questions were primed with a category-related image (for example, being shown a picture of a strawberry just before the question "Is a banana a fruit?"), whereas some others were category-unrelated (for example, being shown a picture of a hammer before the question "Is a banana a fruit?"). In the case of anger, the researchers used images that were indirect representations of the emotion. Thus, instead of using a picture of an angry face, Valenzuela and Soriano used images that were related to the source domain of the conceptual metaphors ANGER IS HOT FLUID IN A PRESSURED CONTAINER and ANGER IS A NATURAL FORCE.[6]

Participants were expected to respond to the questions faster when primed with category-related rather than category-unrelated images. In the case of anger the same result was expected, even though the question was not primed by a literal pictorial representation of anger, but by a metaphorical reference to it. The idea behind this proposal, as the researchers explained (2007: 7), is that if metaphors are stable associations that are accessed automatically, the picture is expected to activate the concept of ANGER. This, in turn, would make participants respond to the question "Is anger an emotion?" faster than after seeing a metaphor-unrelated picture.

The results have shown that there was a clear facilitation when questions were primed with category-related images. This applied to the anger-related questions as well. Based on these findings, the researchers proposed that presenting an image activates the domain in the speakers' minds, which makes it easy to recognize a given element as belonging to the domain. Since anger had not been represented directly, but through a metaphorical depiction of the source domain, the researchers concluded that an activation of the source domain can automatically activate the anger domain in the speakers' minds.

2.2.2   Behavioral studies

Empirical investigations in the cognitive sciences have shown that embodied simulations and conceptual metaphors also shape the ways people engage with non-verbal realms, such as images, sound, and body language (e.g., Gibbs 2006, 2017; Kövecses 2015; Forceville 2012; also see Gijssels & Casasanto 2017 or Hampe 2017 for critical

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6.   Valenzuela and Soriano did not include an example of the images that were supposed to represent anger in their article.

discussions). For instance, choreographers or dance teachers often use metaphors to explain bodily movements to their students. Müller and Ladewig (2013) focused on the perception and experience of balance in two dancing styles, ballet and tango. In ballet, balance is achieved when the center of the body is stable, strong and static. The upper body serves as an anchor for the legs and arms, which should look and feel light and elegant. "Ballet is all about thinking 'up' and 'light'", as the researchers explain (2013: 306). The ballet teacher explained to his students that "an erect hip position is a core element for an upright and stable upper body and the subtle and yet strong material silk corresponds to the idea of lightness and strength" (306). A possible conceptual metaphor that depicts this bodily experience is FINDING BALANCE IS FEELING A SILK THREAD PULLING THE NAVAL TOWARDS THE SPINE.

The tango teacher used a different metaphor to explain the concept of balance. In tango, finding balance needs, as in ballet, a strong center. The idea of stability, though, comes from a strong connection to the ground. Tango "is all about thinking 'down' and 'heavy'", as Müller and Ladewig explain (2013: 306). Students are encouraged to think of their legs as anchor chains pending in the water. The conceptual metaphor that depicts this movement is FINDING BALANCE IS FEELING STABLE LIKE A SHIP WITH A PENDING ANCHOR CHAIN. Müller and Ladewig's study on metaphor in dance performances points to an important aspect in the study of metaphor, namely the discussion on universality versus variation in metaphor production and comprehension. If we say that the human body and the brain are predominately universal, we might assume that our understanding of balance is universal too. Yet, as Müller and Ladewig have shown, the conceptualization of balance may change depending on the context in which balance should be performed (e.g., dancing ballet versus dancing tango).

Recent experimental work in the cognitive sciences has contributed valuable insights into how individual differences in our embodied experiences may generate distinct patterns of metaphorical thought and action. For instance, in Western cultures, people draw on the metaphorical understanding of the FUTURE BEING AHEAD and the PAST BEING BEHIND to talk about the ways they experience time. These conceptualizations are reflected in utterances such as "That's still ahead of us" or "That's all behind us now" which suggests that the speakers consider the space in front of them to be the future and space that is behind them to be the past. Based on these findings, Kimmel (2013: 328) proposes that shared human somatic experiences play a crucial role in creating concepts that are (near-) universal. Yet, there are also exceptions to such patterns. Aymara speakers, for instance, use space in relation to time inversely. They talk about the future, which is unknown, as being behind them; and the past, which is known, as being in front of them (Nunez & Sweetser 2006). Such findings suggest that universal bodily experiences do not necessarily lead to universal metaphors (see, e.g., Boroditsky 2011; Fuhrman et. al. 2011).

Kövecses (2020: 11) proposes that sociocultural norms, values and practices are the most common factors that lead to variation in metaphor production and comprehension. For instance, love is conceptualized as a journey in many cultures, including English, German and Chinese. Yet, in certain dialects of Chinese love is compared to flying a kite (Yang 2002). It was also found that differences in mental representations of left and right shaped the comprehension of abstract concepts such as values. For instance, Casasanto (2009) has shown that right-handers value things more highly if they are presented to them on the right sight, as compared to left-handers for whom the opposite was the case.[7] Such findings indicate that metaphors can derive from the body – the ways we act, perceive the world, and interact with the environment and other people – from cultural specificities, and from the more general context and idiosyncratic factors. This dynamic systems perspective in CMT (see e.g., Cameron et. al. 2009; Gibbs 2013; El Refaie 2019), eventually, encourages researchers not to study metaphors in isolation but rather to take the continuous interplay of neural processing, socio-cultural constraints, and the unfolding of immediate sensory-motor experiences into account.

Up to this point, the present chapter has discussed what conceptual metaphors are and how they function. It has also outlined a number of examples for metaphor in thought, speech and action and how the presence of conceptual metaphors may be investigated empirically. However, many critics are skeptical about the empirical evidences and demand different scientific proofs that people really think, act and communicate via conceptual metaphors. Some of the major criticisms are discussed in the following sections.

2.3   Criticism of CMT

Several scholars are skeptical of the existence of conceptual metaphors (e.g., Cameron & Maslen 2010). Most of the criticism, as Kövecses notices, "is based on Lakoff and Johnson's work exclusively, which represents only the initial stage of CMT, ignoring much of the later work in CMT" (Kövecses 2020: 17). Since the present project builds upon Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By*, it will focus on the discussion of criticisms that relate to the original features of CMT. Other points that CMT has been criticized for are discussed in Kövecses most recent monograph *Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (2020: 117–149).

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7.   Numerous other studies on the variation in metaphor production and understanding are discussed in Jeannette Littlemore's book *Metaphors in the Mind: Sources of Variation in Embodied Metaphor* (2019).

2.3.1   Unreliable method

One criticism of conceptual metaphor theory is that researchers too often postulate conceptual metaphors based on their intuition. This means that analysts examine their mental lexicons or the data found in dictionaries, and on the basis of some linguistic examples they suggest conceptual metaphors. If, for instance, in the dictionary the verb 'to attack' also means 'to criticize strongly' or 'to defend' also means 'to speak to support somebody', then CMT researchers presume that there exists a conceptual metaphor that is called ARGUMENT IS WAR. Critics see this procedure as problematic because, as Kövecses (2013: 58) explains, they claim that CMT researchers take for granted which expressions are metaphorical and which literal. In addition, critics suggest that applicants do not pay enough attention to which actual expressions are used for the target domain by real speakers in natural discourse (see e.g., Pragglejaz Group 2007). After all, speakers or writers may appropriately employ certain conventional expressions without being aware of why these words and phrases mean what they do.

Metaphor scholars have long debated over whether or not specific uses of words, phrases, and expressions in discourse should be recognized as having metaphorical meaning. Gibbs describes the struggle as follows:

> The struggle to identify metaphor in language has significant consequences for conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), as well as for many competing theories of metaphor. Simply put, if CMT claims that underlying conceptual metaphors motivate different conventional metaphorical expressions in language, then the theory must, as a first step, precisely identify what words or phrases actually express metaphorical meanings in discourse. CMT does not p presently advance a specific procedure for identifying metaphor in language. Individual linguists, and others, simply assert that particular words or expressions convey metaphorical meaning, usually by noting the cross-domain mappings between a discourse topic and the source domain used to speak of that idea (e.g., speaking of life as different physical journeys).   (Gibbs 2017: 58)

Gibbs points to one of the main criticisms of CMT, namely the application of unsystematic metaphor identification methods that rely too much on the analyst's intuition about what counts as a metaphoric word or phrase. These gaps have encouraged ten metaphor scholars, from different academic disciplines, to create a method for the identification of metaphorically used words in spoken and written language, the Metaphor Identification Procedure or MIP (Pragglejaz Group 2007).[8]

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8.   The name Pragglejaz Group was coined after the initials of the first names of the ten scholars involved: Peter Crisp, Ray Gibbs, Alan Cienki, Gerard Steen, Graham Low, Lynne Cameron, Elena Semino, Joseph Grady, Alice Deignan, and Zoltán Kövecses.

MIP provides a set of criteria for metaphor identification that researchers can easily use in doing various kinds of studies. The procedure consists of a set of instructions to be followed by analysts aiming to find linguistic metaphors in a stretch of discourse (Pragglejaz Group 2007: 3):

1. Read the entire text (i.e., written text or talk transcript) to establish a general understanding of the discourse.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text.
3. For each lexical unit in the text, check metaphorical use: Establish the meaning of the lexical unit in context (i.e., how it applies to an entity), and the relation in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). You should take into account what words are before and after the lexical unit. Determine if the lexical unit has a more basic current/contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be: more concrete; what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste; related to bodily action; more precise (as opposed to vague); and historically older. Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meaning of the lexical unit.
4. If the lexical unit has a more basic current/contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning can be understood by comparison or contrast with the basic meaning. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical. Repeat steps 1–4 for each lexical unit.

Please consider how MIP was applied to analyze the first sentence of a newspaper story about the president of an Indian political party, Sonia Gandhi.[9] The lexical units in the sentence are marked by slashes:

> /For/years/Sonia Gandhi/has/struggled/to/convince/Indians/that/she/is/fit/to/ wear/the/mantle/of/the/political/dynasty/into/which/she/married/, let alone/to/ become/premier/   (Pragglejaz Group 2007: 4)

After the lexical items have been established, each unit was analyzed for its possible metaphorical meaning. Let us take the first clause as an example. According to MIP, the items "for," "years," "Sonia Gandhi," "has," "to," and "convince" were not metaphorical. Only the item "struggled" was considered to be metaphorical because of its contextual meaning, indicating effort, contrasts with its basic meaning referring to using one's physical strength against someone or something. The contrast between the contextual and basic meanings of "struggled" is, according to MIP, based on comparison as we understand abstract effort in terms of physical effort. Thus, MIP marked the lexical item "struggle" as metaphorical.

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9.   example taken from Pragglejaz Group (2007: 4).

In the entire statement, the Pragglejaz Group (2007: 4) determined that six of the twenty-seven lexical units were judged to be potentially conveying metaphorical meaning. The researchers point out that the selected words only potentially convey metaphorical meaning since MIP is unable to determine whether any individual speaker would necessarily interpret a specific word as being metaphorical in context. The decisions about the metaphorical uses of words depend on how the contextual and basic meanings were defined, and the judgment that the possible differences between these meanings was due to comparison as opposed to some other relationship (e.g., contiguity, opposition).[10]

MIP is generally recognized to be an empirically reliable method for metaphorical word identification. Psychologists may use MIP to ensure that their metaphor stimuli convey metaphorical meanings in context. This method can be seen as more objective and reliable compared to asking naïve speakers to vote on whether some word or phrase is metaphorical in the given context or not. Additionally, discourse analysts and corpus linguists can use MIP to determine the frequency and distributions of metaphors in speech and writing. "MIP provides an initial bases for identifying metaphor in language", as Gibbs explains, "which can serve as the first step in a procedure for inferring conceptual metaphors. Even if one does not pursue quantitative studies on metaphor in discourse, MIP and MIPVU offer excellent 'intuition pumps' that scholars can use when making arguments about whether words in discourse convey metaphorical meanings or not" (Gibbs 2017: 73).

In sum, the application of conceptual metaphor theory has primarily been criticized for reflecting only the applicant's subjective understanding of whether a word or an utterance is metaphorical in a given context or not. In addition, CMT advocates often focus too much on de-contextualized examples when they postulate conceptual metaphors instead of analyzing real discourses. In the last fifteen years, though, metaphor scholars tried to fill these gaps by creating metaphor identification procedures such as MIP (Metaphor Identification Procedure, Pragglejaz Group, 2007), MIPVU (Metaphor Identification Procedure + Vrije Universiteit, Steen et al., 2010), VISMIP (Visual Metaphor Identification Procedure, Šorm & Steen 2013), MCI (Metaphor Candidate Identifier, Sardinha 2012); (please also see Shutova 2013 for an extensive review of computational systems that identify and interpret linguistic and conceptual metaphors); by analyzing metaphor in various, linguistic

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10. A variant of MIP, called MIPVU (VU stands for Vrije Universiteit), has been developed by Gerard Steen and colleagues and then applied to detect the metaphors in large segments of different texts from varying genres. Since it is not relevant to the present project, I will not explain the MIPVU method further. Please refer to Steen et. al. (2010) for detailed instructions and critical discussions.

and non-linguistic contexts, some of which have been discussed in Section 2.3; and by combining different theoretical and methodological approaches (e.g., by using quantitative and qualitative methods or by working across disciplines) to study the multiple meanings and functions of metaphor in language, thought and communication.

2.3.2   What counts as metaphor and do people always access conceptual metaphor when producing or understanding metaphorical language?

"The major argument in metaphor wars," writes Gibbs, "concerns the legitimacy of drawing inferences about human thought and experience from the analysis of what people say and write" (2017: 8). Psychologists and cognitive scientists are often skeptical of claims about human thought based solely on the analysis of linguistic patterns. They strongly argue that experimental studies need to be conducted to offer evidence for the assumption that conceptual metaphorical knowledge plays a meaningful role in people's use of verbal metaphors. Earlier in this chapter, I outlined numerous empirical studies (e.g., time measurements, lexical priming, behavioral studies) that were conducted in the past and which support the conceptual and embodied account of metaphor understanding. Furthermore, various neuroscientific studies have shown that people access sensory representations in relevant brain areas as part of their processing and interpretation of verbal metaphors. For example, one study used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to examine people's comprehension of literal (e.g., "Sam had a bad day") and metaphorical (e.g., "Sam had a rough day") sentence pairs (Lacey, Stilla & Sathian 2012). Participants lay in a scanner and read the various sentences as they appeared individually. As soon as they understood each statement, they pushed a response button. The analysis of the data showed that texture-selective somatosensory cortex in the parietal operculum is activated when processing sentences containing metaphors, but not literal paraphrases. This means that somatosensory areas of the brain, which are related to touching, are activated when people read the statement "Sam had a rough day"; almost as if they were feeling a rough texture.

Despite the vast scientific evidence in favor of CMT, critics often remain skeptical. Consider the following narrative from a client in psychotherapy who elaborates on his difficulty in expressing emotions (see Gibbs 2019: 168):

> I keep things inside me until they blow out instead of like a normal progression. This is bothering me now and I just overlook it and one day it'll get so big – Mount Vesuvius will blow up. . . To just keep things tied up inside me until they get so much and then I just blow them all out at one time.

This narrative is reflective of various conventional expressions (e.g., "keep things inside me," "I just overlooked it," "I just blow them all out at one time") that are motivated by conceptual metaphors (e.g., EMOTIONS ARE FLUIDS IN A CONTAINER, SEEING IS UNDERSTANDING, ANGER IS HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER). The mere postulation of conceptual metaphors, though, does not show if the speaker accessed these conceptual metaphors as part of the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in formulating what s/he said. A person, for instance, may understand that "I just overlooked it" means "I didn't attend to it" without knowing why these words have the meanings they do.

The methodological difficulty here is that one cannot know what underlies a speaker's use of a verbal metaphor simply by examining the language alone. Furthermore, one cannot know whether the analysis of linguistic patterns indeed reflects the speaker's or rather the analyst's ways of thinking. Gibbs sums up the cognitive linguists' methodology as follows (2017: 169):

> Cognitive linguists may respond to this question by noting that their work focuses on detailing the contents and structure of human conceptual systems in general, rather than on what specific individuals may be thinking on particular occasions. Thus, the aim of positing the existence of conceptual metaphors is to suggest a fundamental principle for how people typically conceive of ideas and events and, as such, provide a major contribution to cognitive theories of language and mind. Determining whether particular individuals use conceptual metaphors in different circumstances is another matter, even if cognitive linguists tacitly assume that the use of many conventional expressions must be motivated in some manner by individual speakers' metaphorical thoughts.

Researchers from various disciplines are often skeptical of claims about human thought being solely based on the analysis of linguistic patterns. They argue that any assumptions about metaphor in thought must be accompanied by evidence that shows what people were thinking when they speak metaphorically.

In some cases, misinterpretation or overgeneralization of results collected in previously conducted neuroscientific or psycholinguistic studies leads to criticisms against CMT. For instance, Gibbs and O'Brien (1990) conducted three experiments to investigate the mental images associated with idiomatic phrases in English. In the first study, participants were asked to describe their mental images for various idiom. Then they got more detailed questions about their images regarding the causes and effects of various events within the images. The results of Experiment 2 suggested that the conventional images associated with idioms are not solely based on their figurative meanings. Experiment 3 then revealed that the images associated with literal phrases were quite varied and unlikely to be constrained by conceptual metaphors. Overall, the researchers concluded that their study supports the idea

that conventional images and knowledge associated with idioms are constrained by the conceptual metaphors that motivate the figurative meanings of idioms.

Cacciari and Glucksberg (1995) aimed to replicate the study and asked people to form mental images for different idiomatic phrases. The researchers found that participants usually produced images based on the idioms' concrete literal meanings. These findings, as Cacciari and Glucksberg pointed out, stand in contrast to the claims of Gibbs and O'Brien since they suggest that these images do not directly offer information about idiomatic meanings or conceptual metaphors that might underlie many idioms.

However, Gibbs and O'Brien (1990) never claimed, as Gibbs (2017: 208) points out, that ordinary speakers' mental images for idioms were simply based on what these phrases figuratively mean or even the conceptual metaphors underlying these metaphorical phrases. Indeed, similar to Cacciari and Glucksberg (1995), Gibbs, Bogdanovich, Sykes, and Barr (1997) found that participants primarily form concrete mental images for idiomatic expression (e.g., "blow your stack"), and that people's mental images across different idioms (e.g., "blow your stack," "flip your lid," and "hit the ceiling") were highly consistent. The researchers showed that this consistency is not due to these phrases having similar figurative meanings, but can be explained in terms of the idea that each idiom is motivated by a similar conceptual metaphor (e.g., ANGER IS HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER). For this reason, the data from Cacciari and Glucksberg may actually provide a confirmation of Gibbs and O'Brien, and can possibly be seen as support for CMT, as stated by Gibbs (2017: 208).[11]

When doing empirical research, it is important to keep in mind that that data collected in one study may be interpreted differently by different people, depending on what their research background or aims of the study are. In addition, if one study brings unexpected or contradictory results, it does not necessarily mean that the findings of previous studies are automatically invalid. In the context of metaphor studies, Gibbs (2017) points to the wealth of empirical data showing that conceptual metaphors are a critical part of verbal metaphor use. At the same time, he also openly points to the shortcomings of conceptual metaphor theory, which I summarize as follows (Gibbs 2017: 212–221):

1. Even if conceptual metaphors are active during metaphor processing, it is not clear whether this knowledge is accessed as pre-stored chunks of information or computed in the moment as a person creates, or recreates, the source-to-target domain mapping during each instance of verbal metaphor understanding

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11. A critical discussion of additional studies that aimed to offer empirical evidence against CMT can be found in Gibbs (2017: 209–211).

2. If conceptual metaphors are activated as holistic units from long-term memory, are all of their entailments accessed as well, or might these be computed online after the basic conceptual metaphor structure has been accessed? Are there constraints on the number, or types, of entailments that are accessed or computed during verbal metaphor processing?

3. Is it possible that conceptual metaphors arise as emergent products of the understanding process so that a person may tacitly see how the specific meaning of a verbal metaphor points to other higher-order conceptual structure, namely a particular conceptual metaphor. For instance, people would then interpret a conventional phrase like "John blew his stack" to mean get very angry in specific ways, and then, at a later moment in the understanding process recognize some connection between this phrase, its meaning, and the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER.

4. Finally, conceptual metaphors may be accessed during linguistic processing or even emerge as later products of verbal metaphor understanding. People may know many conceptual metaphors as part of their ordinary conceptual systems. This, however, does not mean that conceptual metaphors play a role in how a person constructs what a linguistic expression means in a given context.

By outlining these concerns, Gibbs points to the fact that different approaches to metaphor may not be opposing, but quite complementary. They may give a more nuanced, as well as more realistic, view on how metaphors are processed. "People's verbal metaphor behaviors," states Gibbs, "may better be characterized as the in-the-moment outcomes of dynamical processes where many sources of constraint interact to give rise to an emergent meaning product, one that is always specific to the person, language, task, and social situation" (2017: 2019).

2.3.3   Do people always use conceptual metaphors when producing or understanding metaphorical language?

Closely related to the criticism of what counts as evidence for conceptual metaphors, there are also controversies on whether people always use conceptual metaphor when producing and understanding metaphorical language. This criticism has its roots in traditional psycholinguistic and philosophical studies of metaphor that often focused on "A is B" metaphors, such as "The lawyer is a shark". Glucksberg and his colleagues (e.g., Glucksberg 2001; Glucksberg & Haught 2006; Glucksberg and Keysar 1990), in particular, reject the view that metaphors are processed as cross-domain mappings. Instead, the scholars suggest that metaphors are not implicit comparison statements but "exactly what they look like, namely class-inclusion statements" (Glucksberg 2001: 44). The class-inclusion model proposes that the

topic or target domain belongs to the superordinate category defined by the vehicle/ source domain. For instance, in the statement *The lawyer is a shark*, it is asserted that the lawyer belongs to a superordinate category that sharks exemplify, namely the category of 'animals that predatory and vicious creatures'. Since the category has no name of its own, the writer or speaker borrows the name of a prototypical member (e.g. sharks). The class inclusion theory assumes that the interpretation of metaphor involves a selection of certain properties of the vehicle/source domain to create an ad-hoc attributive category based on this selection. In the case of *The lawyer is a shark*, Glucksberg asserts that the metaphorical shark-properties (e.g. vicious, predatory, aggressive, and tenacious) are attributed to lawyer, but the literal shark-properties (fast swimmer, has fins, has sharp teeth, has leathery skin, has gills) are not (1998: 41).

However, what the approach does not seem to consider is how one can define what a superordinate-category level and what basic-level property is. After all, the basic-level *shark* is a member of several superordinate categories, and one could propose that Glucksberg's selection (predatory creatures, rather than, e.g. fish) is based on his intuition. Furthermore, experimental studies show that people do not consider the literal referents of source domains when reading metaphorical statements, because this irrelevant information is suppressed during comprehension (e.g. Rubio-Fernandez 2007). These findings support the assumption that understanding verbal metaphors involves creating a new, ad-hoc category and not merely the comparison of one's knowledge about target (e.g., "lawyer") and source (e.g., "shark") domains. Additionally, CMT advocates (e.g., Gibbs 2017; Cameron 2003, Deignan 2006) claim that Glucksberg's class-inclusion model cannot be representative for people's general processing of metaphors, as the model only studies one type, namely A is B metaphors. These, however, and are extremely rare in natural contexts.

A further criticism of CMT concerns the processing and interpretation of conventional metaphorical expressions, such as "I'm feeling up" or "You're wasting my time". Critics believe that such expressions do not count as metaphors because they are so common or clichéd (see e.g. Steen 2007, 2010). They assume that conventional expressions have lost their metaphoricity over time. Consequently, people no longer need to access concrete domains (e.g., JOURNEY) in order to understand more abstract concepts (e.g. LIFE), as proposed by CMT. The strongest and most recent theory that claims that many metaphorical expressions remain "unnoticed" to people and are thus processed by categorization rather than cross-domain comparison is Gerard Steen's Deliberate Metaphor Theory (DMT).

Steen argues that a metaphor is used deliberately "when it is expressly meant to change the addressee's perspective on the referent or topic that is the target of the metaphor, by making the addressee look at it from a different conceptual domain

or space, which functions as a conceptual source" (2008: 222). For instance, within this framework the utterance *Juliet is the sun* deliberately introduces an alien domain into the discourse and invites readers to review their perspective of Juliet in light of this source domain. "The utterance expresses a blatant falsehood," as Steen explains, "while drawing attention to the new information presented at the end of the sentence that causes the falsehood, 'sun'. It cannot be anything but a deliberate invitation for the addressee to adopt a different perspective of Juliet from a truly alien domain that is consciously introduced as a source for reviewing the target" (Steen 2008: 222). An expression such as *we have come a long way*, on the other hand, does not clearly invite listeners or readers to change their perspective of the topic; thus, thinking of relationships in terms of journeys. Nor, as Steen proposes, is it intended by the speaker to offer a new perspective on relationships. Thus, if we follow Steen's DMT, the conventional expression *we have come a long way* would not require cross-domain mappings.

In response to Steen's approach, Gibbs says the following:

> Viewing metaphor as anomalies implies that people first sense the anomalous falsehood when reading a metaphor, but continue processing until the anomaly is resolved in some manner to create a sensible metaphorical meaning. But much psycholinguistic research shows that people do not first recognize anomalies and only then derive appropriate metaphorical meanings. If anomalous utterances are always first analyzed as falsehoods, then people should initially find metaphors to be deviant utterances, and always take longer to properly interpret than non-metaphorical statements. Some metaphors may take considerable effort to interpret, but many kinds of both novel and conventional verbal metaphors are quite easily understood in discourse and do not take longer to comprehend than comparable non- metaphorical expressions. These results pose a major problem for any account of metaphor that assumes the immediate detection of anomaly as mandatory in the metaphor interpretation process.   (2017: 84)

Gibbs' claims are supported by the vast body of research from cognitive linguistics and the neurosciences that show that people neither recognize anomalies nor determine the literal meanings of metaphorical expressions before processing them as metaphors. Steen's view would, as Gibbs and Chen point out, require people to "first read a verbal metaphor, make some preliminary judgment 'Oh, this must be a deliberate metaphor,' and only then begin to draw detailed cross-domain mappings" (2019: 123). Given the fact that metaphor processing is a fast and automatic process, such conscious considerations are very unlikely. Steen, however, maintained the theory that only a small number of metaphors are actually used or processed as metaphors. Despite the fact that numerous other metaphor scholars have adopted Steen's view, only a very small number of empirical studies have been conducted to support the claims of DMT (e.g., Cuccio & Steen 2018).

A different proposal, called the Career of Metaphor Theory (Genter & Bowdle 2001, 2008; Bowdle & Gentner 2005), presents another way of how one might differentiate between the processes involved in understanding novel as compared to conventional metaphors. The hypothesis assumes, as Gibbs & Colston explain, that there is a shift in mode of mappings from comparison to categorization processes as metaphors become conventionalized (2012: 133). For instance, the base term *glacier* in the novel metaphorical utterance "Science is a glacier", has a literal sense ("a large body of ice spreading outward over a land surface") but no related metaphoric sense (e.g., "anything that progresses slowly but steadily") Therefore, this novel statement, as Bowdle and Genter assert, is interpreted as comparisons, in which the target concept is structurally aligned with the literal base concept (2005: 199). This comparison process may, in some cases, lead to the creation of novel metaphorical categories.

Conventional metaphors, by contrast, can be understood either by comparison or categorization processes. For example, the conventional base term *blueprint* in "A gene is a blueprint" has two closely related senses: "a blue and white photographic print in showing an architect's plan" and "anything that provides a plan" (see Bowdle & Genter 2005: 199). The base terms are polysemous, which means that the conventional metaphor may either be understood by matching the target concept with the literal concept (as comparisons), or by seeing the target concept as a member of the superordinate metaphoric categorization named by the base term (as categorizations). Overall, the Career of Metaphor Theory may be seen as less radical than DMT, and thus more supportive of CMT, in that it does not assert that certain metaphors (e.g., dead or conventionalized) are not processed through categorization and or comparison at all/through cross-domain mappings. Instead, the Career of Metaphor Theory allows for some change in metaphor processing as they become more conventionalized.[12]

2.4   Metaphors in poetry

This chapter so far has explained how conceptual metaphors work and how metaphor may be studied in different contexts by drawing on theoretical and methodological approaches from various disciplines. It has also discussed why some scholars are skeptical of claims made by CMT. The following sections will focus on metaphors in poetry. First, some of the meanings and functions of poetic metaphors

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12. For an overview of empirical studies in favor and against the Career of Metaphor Theory, please see Gibbs & Colston (2012: 133–137).

will be discussed. Secondly, the sections will review a number of studies that explored the role of conceptual metaphor in poetry interpretation. The chapter will close with a discussion of challenges involved in the study of poetic metaphors.

2.4.1   The meanings and functions of poetic metaphors

There are situations in which people may come up with novel, idiosyncratic metaphorical expressions that stand alone and are not used systematically in our language or thought. For instance, the expression "I had it all/But I let it slip away" indicates that LOVE can arrive and leave. In this case, LOVE is not only a JOURNEY for the people involved but also that LOVE itself is not constant but can change and embark on physical JOURNEYS. LOVE is on a JOURNEY travelling from point A to point B.

Poetry, in particular, is rich in creative metaphorical expressions. Consider this famous stanza of Robert Frost's poem "The Road not Taken" (1915):

> Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
> I took the one less travelled by,
> And that has made all the difference

The poem is typically interpreted as discussing options for how to live life. In the stanza above, the narrator explains how he "took the road less travelled by", which may be interpreted as choosing to do things differently than most other people do. But how do we arrive at such an understanding? Lakoff and Turner (1989: 3) claim that the interpretation stems from our implicit knowledge of the structure of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor. Readers draw on the general knowledge of journeys (e.g. the person leading the life is a traveler, decisions in life are like choosing among branching paths) to understand the metaphorical meaning of the poem.

Just as readers access common conceptual metaphors when they encounter abstract metaphorical concepts in poetry, poets too make use of ordinary conceptual metaphors when creating novel metaphorical expressions. "What makes many uses of metaphor so creative," as Gibbs points out, "is their novel way of articulating some underlying mapping between concepts that already structures part of our experience in the world" (Gibbs 1994: 251). In *More than Cool Reason* (1989), Lakoff and Turner discuss various fragments of poetry that show how poetic metaphors often have their roots in common conceptual metaphors. Furthermore, the authors defined four reasons for why poets use metaphors in their works, namely for the purposes of **elaboration, extension, questioning, and combining** (Lakoff & Turner 1989: 7).

As an example for **extension**, Lakoff and Turner (1989: 67) discussed the following excerpt from Hamlet's soliloquy:

> To sleep? Perchance to dream! Ay, there's the rub;
> For in that sleep of death what dreams may come?

In this case, the DEATH IS SLEEP conceptual metaphor is extended in that the concept of 'dreaming' is added to the more common aspects that this metaphor embodies, namely inactivity, inability to perceive, or lying in a horizontal position.

As opposed to extension, which asks readers to extend a metaphor by mapping additional slots, **elaboration** encourages readers to fill the slots in unusual ways (1989: 67). For instance, Horace's reference to death as the "eternal exile of the raft" is an elaboration on the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS DEPARTURE for two reasons. First, it encourages readers to think of a very specific destination that one goes to, namely exile. Secondly, the vessel that the traveler uses to reach the destination (to get away from life) is again a specific and unusual one, namely a raft; unless some readers recognize the intertextual reference to Greek mythology according to which the souls of the newly deceased were taken on a raft across the river Styx into Hades's realm. Such uncommon elaboration of the very common DEATH IS DEPARTURE conceptual metaphor makes, as Lakoff and Turner state, readers conceptualize and reason about death differently than one would usually do.

In addition to extending and elaborating conventional metaphors, poets may also **question** a common metaphorical concept (1989: 69). For instance, Catullus questioned whether the metaphors A LIFETIME IS A DAY and DEATH IS NIGHT are appropriate to explain human morality:

> Suns can set and return again,
> but when our brief light goes out,
> there's one perpetual night to be slept through.

Here Catullus observes how day becomes night and night becomes day; but when we die, we do not live again. Thus, the conceptual metaphors A LIFETIME IS A DAY and DEATH IS NIGHT are only partially appropriate to explain human life and death.

As the fourth purpose for why poets use metaphors, Lakoff and Turner list **composition**. This technique enables poets to use more than one source domain to define one target domain. For instance, life could be viewed metaphorically as day and as a valuable possession. Poets, as Lakoff and Turner claim (1989: 70), often use two or more of such metaphorical conceptualizations simultaneously in one and the same passage, or even in the same sentence. The following lines of Shakespeare's *Sonnet 73* provide a good example of metaphorical composing:

> In me thou seest the twilight of such day
> As after sunset had fadeth in the west;
> Which by and by black night doth take away,
> Death's second self that seals up all in rest.

Several conceptual metaphors motivate this quatrain, including LIFE IS LIGHT, A LIFETIME IS A DAY, LIFE IS POSSESSION, EVENTS ARE ACTIONS AND LIGHT IS A SUBSTANCE. These poetic metaphors, as Lakoff and Turner (1989: 27) claim, are therefore

not entirely novel creations in the sense of introducing new cross-domain mappings, but are specific, and spectacular, instantiations of common metaphorical concepts.

Overall, in their analyses of numerous poems, Lakoff and Turner have shown that poets use conceptual metaphors that are not unique to the poetic context but structure how people, in general, make sense of abstract concepts. This is one reason why, as the authors claim, many people enjoy poetry so much. Without much effort, readers understand the story that a poem tells. Other metaphor scholars over the past several decades, too, have shown that metaphoric thinking and language use is not restricted to a special few people, or geniuses, but is a fundamental part of how all people think, reason and imagine about their lives and the world around them (e.g., Gibbs 1994, 2017; Lakoff & Johnson 1999). Poetic metaphors are often particularly fascinating and engaging as they allow the use of ordinary conceptual resources in unusual ways. "It is by these means," as Lakoff and Turner state, "that poets lead us beyond the bounds of ordinary modes of thought and guide us beyond the automatic and unconscious everyday use of metaphor. What makes poetic metaphor noticeable and memorable is thus the special, nonautomatic use to which ordinary, automatic modes of thought are put" (1989: 72).

But how conscious is the selection of words in poetry? Lakoff and Turner's explanations of conceptual metaphor in poetry are rather subjective and not based on empirical investigation into how people actually produce and process metaphorical language. The authors interpreted and analyzed various poetic fragments, postulated conceptual metaphors based on their understanding of the poems, and have drawn conclusions from these on what *they* think the poets' intentions were in using particular metaphorical expressions and how readers interpreted these. For instance, how can we know that Catullus' intention in writing the lines *Suns can set and return again/but when our brief light goes out/there's one perpetual night to be slept through* was indeed to question the adequacy of the A LIFETIME IS A DAY and DEATH IS NIGHT conceptual metaphors? When we ask a poet, or another artist, to explain the meaning and function of a particular metaphor, they will, most likely, talk far more generally about their thoughts and motivations in creating that art piece and less about the specific meanings of the specific metaphors. That is because poets might not have a set of intentions and then consciously form a metaphor that expresses these. Instead, they frequently have multiple layers of dynamically interacting motivations and communicative needs that are based on automatic cognitive and linguistic processes rather than on slow conscious thoughts (see Chapter 4).

"Creative individuals can", as Gibbs explained, "spin out clever linguistic patterns without necessarily being conscious of what they are doing, especially in cases when a speaker or author is a practiced, skilled word-smith" (2018: 29). All in all, the most proper answer to whether the use of metaphors in poetry is conscious or not would probably be – it is a combination of both conscious, intentional and automatic processes.

I will talk more about the debate on whether the production of poetic metaphors is a conscious and deliberate, or rather an automatic and unconscious process, in Section 2.6.4 of this chapter. Chapter 4, then, will present what poets themselves say about how they create and use metaphors in their works. Before I come to this, though, I will discuss some theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of poetic metaphors that have evolved from recent collaborations between scholars from the social sciences and the humanities.

2.4.2   Cognitive poetics

Cognitive poetics studies the expressive, emotive, and aesthetic power of literary narratives (see Jacobs 2018). In *Towards a Theory of Cognitive Poetics* (1992), Reuven Tsur first described cognitive poetics as an interdisciplinary approach that combines literary criticism with theories from linguistics, psychology and neuroscience. For years, a tension existed between the disciplines of linguistics and literature. Literary studies were criticized for contributing nothing to linguistic enquiries, and vice versa. Tsur was one of the first literary scholars who studied how human cognitive processing shapes poetic language, and how readers respond to poetry.

The field expanded in the late 1990s, driven by the increasing interests of literary scholars in theories of the cognitive sciences. Theories of aesthetics, phenomenology, and semiotics were linked to traditional literary approaches to study psychological processes involved in reading poetry (e.g., Freeman 2000, 2007). The theoretical strand arising from conceptual metaphor studies in Cognitive Linguistics gave rise to Lakoff and Turner's (1989) *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor.* Peter Stockwell's (2002) textbook, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, with its companion volume by Gavins and Steen (2003), *Cognitive Poetics in Practice*, and a volume in the Applications of Cognitive Linguistics series, edited by Geert Brone and Jeroen Vandaele, called *Cognitive Poetics: Goals, Gains, and Gaps* (2009). In addition, more general approaches to literature from the field of cognitive science (e.g., Spolsky 1993; Hogan 2003) developed, along with the ongoing stylistics approaches of the mid-twentieth century which took a so-called "cognitive turn" with the rise of cognitive science and cognitive linguistics (see for example, Semino & Culpeper 2002).[13] Empirical investigations into the study of literary narratives

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13. A field that evolved in the early 2000s and that is sometimes seen as the continuation of cognitive poetics is called Cognitive Literary Studies (see e.g., Zunshine 2006, Abbott 2006, Phelan 2009, Keen 2007). "The difference between cognitive poetics and cognitive literary studies is significant", as Gerhard Lauer explains in his review of Zunshine's *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies* (2015), "and warrants caution before putting both under the same broad umbrella term" (2016: n.p.). According to Lauer, cognitive poetics focuses on poetry, and the methods that are used are close readings informed by findings of linguistics and the cognitive

broadened people's notion of what "reading literature" means. Scholars not only focused on narrative forms or text interpretation, but have been studying the cognitive, perceptual, aesthetic, and experiential values of literature.

Cognitive poetics and conceptual metaphor theory are, in many aspects, related as their foundations are built on similar principles. Consider how Stockwell, in his second edition of *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (2020), talks indirectly about conceptual metaphor when he discusses common ways of human action and interaction:

> We think in the forms that we do and say things in the ways that we do because we are all roughly human-sized containers of air and liquid with our main receptors at the top of our bodies. We get warm when we are angry; we feel alert standing up and relaxed lying down; we understand simple physical cause and effect in terms of objects and motion in our physical world   (2020: 6).

All of Stockwell's examples are based on underlying conceptual metaphors (BODY IS A CONTAINER, ANGER IS HEAT, ALERT IS VERTICAL, RELAXED IS HORIZONTAL, CHANGE IS MOTION) which are rooted in bodily experiences and unconscious thought patterns shared by all people. The notion that the mind is embodied is also central to cognitive poetics: "The notion of embodiment affects every part of language. It means that all of our experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and wishes are involved in and expressible only through patterns of language that have their roots in our material existence (Stockwell 2020: 6). These principles have encouraged scholars using a cognitive poetic approach to pay attention to a variety of factors and questions when studying literary reception and appreciation, such as: What happens neurologically when we read fiction? How does the body react to specific words or expressions? Is it possible to empathize with a character that only exists in one's imagination? (for a detailed discussion see Stockwell 2020).

Studies in cognitive poetics drawing on insights of conceptual metaphor theory include works on allegory and extended metaphor (e.g. Crisp 2008), emotion metaphors and their conceptual structures (Kövecses 2002), or metaphor and authorial presence in poetry (Freeman 2015). Both CMT and blending theory (see

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neurosciences. A shared methodology," as Lauer points out, "is what has formed cognitive poetics over more than two decades". In cognitive literary studies, by contrast, novels are the main object of research and common methodologies and unified theories are refused. This distinction, to my mind, is too radical. Many scholars, such as Patrick Colm Hogan or Monika Fludernik who consider themselves as "cognitive literary scholars" study both poetry and fiction. In addition, scholars in the fields of cognitive poetics are open to different methods and theories when they study readers' engagements with poetry and fiction (see e.g., Csabi's 2018 collection *Expressive Minds and Artistic Creations*).

Fauconnier 1985, 1997) have drawn on schema theory (Schank & Abelson 1977), adapted for literary purposes as a schema poetics (Cook 1994, Cockcroft 2002). Schema analyses of literary reading explore how readers bring different sets of knowledge to a text in order to produce a spectrum of readings. Steen (2003), for example, studied poetry and song lyrics to examine what concepts form a typical 'love story'. Hereby, Steen differentiates between static concepts, such as HAPPINESS, DESIRE, PASSION or LUST that constitute the LOVE concept, and dynamic concepts, which Steen calls "scenarios" (2003: 68). A scenario, for instance, could involve imagining a restaurant scene in which two people meet for a date. The story would evolve around a particular pattern: the two people either want or do not want each other, then they either get or do not get each other, and finally they either keep or do not keep each other. This pattern, as Steen claims (2003: 70–71), can be found in different forms of literary narratives which depict relationships, and the depiction of the love story is structured by a set of conceptual metaphors. For instance, if a song or poem shows how people want each other, some of the conceptual metaphors structuring this scene are DESIRE IS HUNGER, PASSION IS A NATURAL FORCE, and NEED IS ADDICTION. Steen asserts that knowing which concepts and scenarios structure 'love stories' may help readers to interpret love poetry in its various textual forms.

Despite the obvious presence of conceptual metaphors in various forms of fiction and non-fiction, many literary scholars, as Stockwell points out (2020: 105), are often not familiar with conceptual metaphor theory. If literary scholars encounter metaphorical expressions in a text, they usually treat them as a literary device by studying, for instance, what metaphors reveal about the text structure; how metaphors influence readers' understanding of the fictional narrative, or what the use of figurative language tells readers about the author of a story. Literary scholars are interested in the relationship between literature and society, literature and history, author and text, and questions related to the literary canon. Usually, they will do close readings of selected text passages and draw on works written by other literary scholars to study the role of metaphors in the construction and reception of literary narratives. However, their findings will usually not be based on empirical research. Literary scholars are less interested in the conceptual content, as well as possible surface expressions, that underline specific figurative utterances (HUMANS ARE ANIMALS, A MAN IS A SHARK, underlying expressions: "shark-man", he's sharking"). The awareness of conceptual metaphor, though, as Stockwell proposes, may broaden a scholar's interpretation and analysis of a literary text.

In the second edition of *An Introduction to Cognitive Poetics* (2020), Stockwell continues his discussion of CMT by briefly mentioning Gerard Steen's deliberate metaphor theory (DMT), which suggests, as Stockwell points out, that people only perform cross-domain mappings if they encounter novel and creative metaphors

(e.g. "Time is a storm in which we are all lost") as compared to dead (e.g. to spend time) metaphors. Stockwell's response to DMT is that metaphors should not be labeled as dead, living, or deliberate, but as conventional and novel. "Conventional metaphors," as Stockwell explains", "tend o be unnoticed and unmarked, and living metaphors appear more deliberate. Some conventional conceptual metaphors are so powerful and pervasive that they generate many expressions and become the naturalized way of recognizing and communicating the world" (2020: 110). Stockwell, though, does not further elaborate on why and how this distinction might be relevant to cognitive poetics. In addition, and even more importantly, he does not study empirically whether readers actually make such a distinction when they read and interpret poetic narratives or not.

In his discussion of the functions and meanings of metaphors, Stockwell (2002), in the first edition, offers a number of close readings and analyses of poems. Let us consider one example in which Stockwell combined insights from cognitive poetics and conceptual metaphor to explain the role of metaphors in surrealist texts. "Surrealist writing," as Stockwell states, "aimed to access the unconscious mind, by creating as far as possible a disjunction between intentionality and writing, between words and coherent representational meaning" (2002: 113). The awareness of conceptual metaphors may point to the discomfort of surrealism that is caused by an "enforced restructuring of existing familiar source domains" (2002: 114). Please consider the poem "Yves Tanguy" by David Gascoyne as an example:

> The worlds are breaking in my head
> Blown by the brainless wind
> That comes from afar
> Swollen with dusk and dust
> And hysterical rain

In his reading of the poem, Stockwell focuses on the personification metaphor which, as he claims, "is pushed to its extreme" (2002: 114). "The brainless wind", for instance, is literally a true statement (the wind does not have a brain). However, the statement feels so strange and discomforting that we need a metaphorical reading to resolve this statement. What resolves from such an imaginative mapping between source (PERSON) and target domain (RAIN) is a strange and discomforting image of the wind that looks like a person without a brain. And such strange and discomforting images are, as Stockwell aimed to show, a main component of surrealist texts.

Another cognitive poetic analysis with a focus on conceptual metaphor was given by Margaret Freeman (2000). In her reading of Emily Dickinson's poem "My Cocoon tightens-", Freeman points to the CONTAINER metaphor that structures readers' interpretation of the poem:

My cocoon tightens, colors tease,
I'm feeling for the air;
A dim capacity for wings
Degrades the dress I wear.

A power of butterfly must be
The aptitude to fly,
Meadows of majesty concedes
And easy sweeps of sky.

So I must baffle at the hint
And cipher at the sign,
And make much blunder, if at last

Freeman explains that the speaker of the poem is comparing herself to a butterfly which emerges from the container of its cocoon. The source domain of the butterfly is mapped onto the target domain of the narrator, the cocoon onto dress, and the development of wings onto the speaker wanting to break out (2000: 254). Freeman describes how "the tightening of the cocoon is mapped onto the speaker's feeling the constraint of enclosure, the teasing of colors onto the attraction of becoming something different, and the "dim capacity for wings" onto the idea that the something that wants to break out is better and more powerful than the physical, emotional, or mental constraints binding the person" (2000: 255). The first and the last stanzas are related by mappings from the concrete source domains, such as the image of the cocoon, the colors, the wings and the dress, onto the abstract target domains, which are the hint, the sign, the cipher, and the clue. "As these mappings move from the concrete to the abstract," explains Freeman, "they work on both structural and semantic dimensions" (256).

As compared to Stockwell, who has drawn on conceptual metaphor theory to point to the characteristics of a certain literary movement (e.g. surrealism), Freeman's analysis of the metaphors in Dickinson's poem aims to explain and justify the many possible readings of a poem. For instance, the butterfly can be seen as a woman resisting patriarchal restriction as well as considered to be a sign of the Resurrection because of different conceptualization of the CONTAINER metaphor. "Given the isomorphism created by these structural mappings," explains Freeman "we understand the poem according to the purpose and cause of the analogical mapping, as has been noted: for example, in terms of a woman resisting restriction, or the power of poetry, or a symbol of the Resurrection. All these readings (and they are only a few of the possible ones) are consistent with the analogical mapping of the prototypical isomorphic metaphor" (2000: 259).

What becomes clear when we look at Stockwell's application of CMT to Gascoyne's poem and Freeman's application to Dickinson's poem is that the focus

of their studies lies primarily on identification and evaluation of literary style. Literary scholars often maintain different things about metaphors, how they work, and what they communicate without actually studying if real people draw those interpretations or inferences. In fact, there are only a handful of empirical studies that focused on the role conceptual metaphors play in the interpretation of poetry. For instance, Gibbs and Nascimento (1996) explored how pre-existing conceptual metaphors constrain people's interpretation of metaphors in love poetry. One of the poems used in this study was Pablo Neruda's poem *Ode and Burgeoning*. The collected data suggested that participants referred to entailments of the LOVE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor, such as the path (e.g., the couple found a particular road that they could travel together), the goals (e.g., the future of their love was ahead of them), and the impediments to travel (e.g., they managed to get over the rough places) when interpreting the poem.

Another study conducted by Gibbs and Boers (2005) analyzed participants' interpretations of Robert Frost's poem *The Road Not Taken*. The researchers found, similar to previous investigations, that people made indirect references to the LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor by describing typical entailments (e.g. the poet is the traveler, difficulties are obstacles). Furthermore, Gibbs and Boers explained that numerous participants described how they imagined themselves walking through the woods while they were reading the poem. These results suggest that embodied simulation processes shaped people's interpretations of Frost's poem.

There is yet another empirical investigation which studied people's interpretations of Adrienne Rich's poem *Diving into the Wreck* (Gibbs & Okonski 2018). The poem describes the diving experience of a scuba diver. In the study, participants were divided into four groups and were asked to read the poem following one of four different instructions. The first group was given the idea that the poem describes a failed relationship. The second group was encouraged to offer a literal interpretation of Rich's poem. The third group was asked to consider multiple meanings of the poem. And the fourth group did not have any explicit instructions about how the poem should be read. From the collected data, Gibbs and Okonski's (2018) concluded that regardless of how they were instructed, almost all participants articulated the metaphorical/allegorical theme of the poem by making references to source domains that refer to embodied experiences, such as a metaphorical journey into a damaged psyche.

Finally, in a quantitative investigation into the study of poetic metaphor processing, Rasse, Onysko and Citron (2020) used a relatedness-rating task (study 1) and a conceptual-metaphor-selection task (study 2) to explore whether conceptual metaphors are accessed during poetry interpretation. The corpus consisted of excerpts from the following poems: Jason D. Peterson's "How we got here", Rae Armantrout's "The Difficulty", Frank Beck's "The Copper Husk Allegory", Shirley Lim's "Night

Vision", James Arthur's "Wind" and Robert Pinsky's "The Hearts". The same poems were also central to this monograph used in the present study. Rasse, Onysko and Citron, though, focused on the "micro-level" of poetry interpretation (e.g., how readers process individual poetic metaphors) whereases the present project takes the broader context of poetry interpretation (e.g., studying longer fragments of poetry; exploring which factors, beside underlying conceptual metaphors, shape readers' understanding and engagement of poems) into account.

In Rasse, Onysko and Citron's study, the used fragments of poetry varied in length across the two studies: Study 1 (relatedness-ratings) used 14 two-line stanzas from the poems mentioned above. The rationale behind this was to explore, as concisely as possible, how readers interpret specific metaphors. Study 2 (conceptual metaphor selection) used 8 longer excerpts (mean length: 7 lines) of all poems listed above and aimed to explore whether people understand how conceptual metaphors work. The procedure of the empirical investigation was as follows: In Study 1, we explored whether participants rate words that refer to a conceptual metaphor underlying a two-line stanza of a poem as more related to the stanza than words that are not related to the metaphor. For instance, the line *The credits roll / and we don't know when to stand* from Rea Armantrout's poem "The Difficulty" contains the conceptual metaphor ENDINGS ARE ROLLING CREDITS. Based on the assumption that people perform cross-domain mappings when they encounter poetic metaphors, we expected that participants would rate words that refer to the source or the target domain of the conceptual metaphor (in this case break-up, ending, conclusion, closure) as more highly related than words that are unrelated to the metaphor (i.e., endurance, journey, courtesy, friendship). In total, participants of the study were asked to read the 14 two-line stanzas taken from the poems listed above and rate the relatedness of 8 words displayed on a list next to each of the stanzas. The degree of relatedness was indicated on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all related) to 4 (very much related).

In Study 2, participants read eight poetic fragments from the earlier mentioned poems and were asked to select up to 3 conceptual metaphors from a list of 6 pre-given conceptual metaphors which they think best reflect the meanings of the presented stanzas. We included an explanation of what a conceptual metaphor is and how it may reflect the meaning of a poetic stanza. The list of metaphors which was presented to the participants contained at up to three that reflect the meanings of the selected stanzas and were thus considered as target ("correct") metaphors. Additionally, we included at least one conceptual metaphor that was postulated based on the responses of the authors. The other conceptual metaphors in the list served as distractors.

The results of study 1 confirmed our hypothesis in that words which relate to the conceptual metaphors underlying the meanings of the poems were rated as significantly more related to the poetic stanza compared to metaphor-unrelated

words (Rasse et. al. 2020: 330). From that, we concluded that associative relatedness is influenced by conceptual metaphors. It is important to point out that our results could not be explained by more general factors such as semantic distance between target words and their stanza, as this was equal between related and unrelated words. The results of task 2 supported the findings of task 1 in that it showed that participants selected the expected conceptual metaphors significantly more often than the distractors. Furthermore, our discussion has shown that, in all cases, more than one conceptual metaphor was seen as being representative of the meaning of the presented poetic stanza. Rasse, Onysko and Citron (2020: 331) concluded that conceptual metaphor indeed shapes readers' interpretations of poetic excerpts. Furthermore, we suggested that knowing how metaphors in poetry work may, on the one hand, help poets to better understand the readers' reactions to specific metaphors. On the other hand, readers may find it easier to understand a poem when they pay attention to conceptual metaphors underlying the poetic narratives.

Overall, the discussion of individual empirical investigations aimed to show that poetry interpretation is a complex and dynamic process. The use of a single empirical method will hardly capture all the different processes involved in poetry interpretation. For instance, the study conducted by Rasse, Onysko and Citron (2020) may be criticized for studying the processing of metaphors that takes place after the stanzas have been read rather than during reading. A further limitation of such a quantitative investigation is that factors such as the author's background, the context in which the poem was written, or reader' responses that go beyond the mere meaning interpretation of a metaphorical expression were not taken into account. Qualitative investigations, such as the use of written think-aloud protocols, may face similar criticism. They also do not reveal what happens in the mind of a reader during online-processing of poetic texts; neither are such investigations entirely objective since researchers will rely on their interpretation of the readers' responses to postulate conceptual metaphors that are reflective of particular meaning interpretations. In the end, as also stated earlier in this chapter, it is important that the researchers talk openly about the limitations of their studies. The following section will outline more challenges that scholars may face when they study metaphors in poetry.

2.4.3   Difficulties in applying MIP to poetry

Earlier in this chapter, I introduced the metaphor identification procedure MIP and showed how it was applied to an excerpt from a newspaper story about Sonia Gandhi. I have not yet mentioned that, in 2016, I attended the Winter school at the Metaphor Lab in Amsterdam that taught attendees how to apply MIP to different

forms of discourse. As preparation for the sessions, we were asked to bring along some pieces of narratives to which MIP can be applied. I presented a poem, and we realized rather quickly that MIP does not work properly for poetry. Let me point to three shortcomings of MIP which are particularly important in the context of studying metaphors in poetry:[14]

1. MIP involves a binary distinction (metaphorical or non-metaphorical) rather than allowing for varying degrees of metaphoricity.
2. MIP involves the decision of whether a lexical unit is or is not used metaphorically in the given context. Yet, it does not take into account whether the writer or speaker intended the lexical item to express metaphorical meaning and whether the reader or listener understood it as such.
3. MIP is not concerned with relating the identified metaphorically used words to underlying conceptual metaphors.

Poetry is usually ambiguous, which means that one word could be understood literally at first; but then, as the narrative proceeds, the reader might realize that the same word could actually be interpreted metaphorically too, or have a different meaning. For instance, in his poem "Drone", James Artur uses the word 'drone' multiple times; and each time it has another meaning; first it is a drone bee, then a drone string, then a cicada's drone, and eventually a drone bomber. Only after reading the poem multiple times, thinking about the deeper, more symbolic meaning of the narrative and maybe considering what the author might have intended in writing the poem, a reader eventually arrives at the different understandings of the word. MIP, however, cannot take these aspects into account.

Please consider the first stanza of Maya Angelou's poem "Caged Bird" as a further example for how the meaning of certain words, as well as the decision of whether that word is metaphorical or not, may change throughout the poem. This points to a further shortcoming of MIP:

> A free bird leaps
> on the back of the wind
> and floats downstream
> till the current ends
> and dips his wing
> in the orange sun rays
> and dares to claim the sky.

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14. For a detailed discussion of the limitations of MIP, please refer to Schmitt et. al. (2014) or Perez-Sobrino & Julich (2010).

Applying MIP to this stanza, I would mark the following words as metaphorical: back, float, downstream, current, dip, in … sun rays, and claim. The lexical item 'back', for instance, is metaphorical as its basic meaning – the part of the body (meaning 1 in the *Macmillan Dictionary*) differs from its contextual meaning – the part of something that is furthest from the front (meaning 2 in the *Macmillan Dictionary*) – but can be understood in comparison to it. The question that one could ask is whether readers really think of 'the back' as part of the body when they read the line 'a free bird leaps on the back of the wind'? Or is the use of 'back' in the poem so conventionalized that readers would not even recognize its metaphoricity? A sole application of MIP cannot answer these questions.

The other six units (float, downstream, current, dip, in … sun rays, claim) that are marked as metaphorical by MIP seem to work similarly as 'back' as they are all rather conventionalized expressions that have a low degree of metaphoricity. Yet, while reading a poem, many readers may not even pay attention to the meanings of single words but rather interpret entire lines or even stanzas, often by constructing mental images – maybe an image of a bird (literally) flying and dipping its wings into the sun rays. This image would reflect a rather literal understanding of the stanza although the language that the poet uses is metaphorical.

Let us move to the second stanza to see how the meaning of certain words, or even the mental image that the entire stanza creates, may change when the narrative proceeds:

> But a bird that stalks
> down his narrow cage
> can seldom see through
> his bars of rage
> his wings are clipped and
> his feet are tied
> so he opens his throat to sing

The lexical item 'bird' was considered as non-metaphorical in the first stanza. In the second stanza, though, at least to my reading, 'bird' more and more gains in metaphoricity. To my mind, many readers will, if they continue reading, realize that the poem is not only a description of a bird flying in the skies and stalking down a cage, but has a deeper meaning and depicts topics such as freedom and slavery, desire, hope and fear. This, in particular, will be true for readers who know that Maya Angelou is a civil rights activist and a spokesperson for African Americans, in particular women; and who know that Angelou's works center on themes including racism, identity and family. Knowing about the author's background shapes, as studies have shown readers' interpretations of fictional narratives (e.g., Freeman 2015; Claassen 2012; Currie 2020). This aspect, though, is again something that MIP cannot take into account.

The point of this brief discussion was to show that a mere application of MIP cannot capture all the complexities involved in the creation and interpretation of metaphors in poetry. Furthermore, as explained earlier, while MIP can identify metaphorically used words in discourse, it cannot tell whether this word was indeed interpreted metaphorically by the readers or not. Yet, using MIP may still enrich people's understanding of poetry for various reasons. For instance, if MIP is applied to a poem, researchers focus more consciously on the different meanings of single words as they compare the basic meaning of a word to the contextual meaning. This may lead to a more accurate understanding of a poem. Additionally, being aware of the various meanings one word may have enables researchers to present a bigger variety of possible interpretations of a poem.

Furthermore, as MIP provides an initial basis for identifying metaphor in language, it may help researchers to postulate conceptual metaphors. Coming up with a fitting conceptual metaphor for poetic fragments can be challenging as poets frequently use special, non-conventional meanings of words. In such cases, the application of MIP and the attention to various meanings of a word or lexical unit may help researchers to postulate context-specific conceptual metaphors. Furthermore, as MIP enables the researchers to show at which points of the analyses which choices were made, how these were made and why, the application of the basic steps of MIP may still facilitate a more objective construction of conceptual metaphors.

2.4.4   Are poetic metaphors always deliberate?

Deliberate metaphor theory (DMT) was introduced earlier in this chapter as one of the major opponents of conceptual metaphor theory. DMT assumes that only a small number of metaphors are actually used or processed as metaphors; and that such deliberate metaphors "afford conscious metaphorical thought" (Steen 2009: 180). As poetic narratives, akin to other works of art, take up much time and effort to be fully developed, some scholars might believe that this means that also the metaphors evolve consciously and deliberately.

Steen (2009) analyzes the first twelve lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, which are reproduced below from Booth (1977), to explain why poetic metaphors should be considered deliberate:

> Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
> Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
> Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
> And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
> Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

> And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
> And every fair from fair sometime declines,
> By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:
> But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
> Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
> Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
> When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
> > So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
> > So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Steen claims that Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 offers a perfect example for the deliberate use of metaphors. In his analysis of the poem, he first picks out the first line (*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*) and claims that Shakespeare "intentionally presents a metaphorical taunt to himself, then rises to the challenge by producing a brilliant exercise in figurative thinking" (Steen 2009: 181). According to DMT, readers first have to recognize that 'a summer's day' was used metaphorically, before they can map correspondences from the concrete domain ('a summer's day') to understand the more abstract domain 'thee' (in this case the lover). "The following lines [of the poem]", as Steen continues, "verbally thematize a selection of the many potential correspondences between the two domains. These cross-domain mappings are the focus of attention when people read the text – allowing them to recognize the references as involving metaphor and so producing conscious metaphorical cognition" (2009: 182). Once again, Steen proposes that the interpretation of poetic metaphors presupposes that readers recognize metaphors *as* metaphors.

In response to Steen's analysis of Shakespeare's poem, Gibbs and Chen (2017: 118) agree that people may, when they read poetry or other forms of narratives or listen to somebody speaking metaphorically, consciously recognize metaphorical expressions; they may sit back and consider their meanings and even speculate about the possible intentions that a writer or speaker may have in writing or talking as he or she did. However, people usually encounter speech or writing in real time, and construe metaphorical meanings moment by moment *before* consciously thinking about whether a metaphor was used as a metaphor or not. Metaphorical thought arises as an emergent product of the coordination among different dynamical constraints in experience, as shown by numerous empirical studies on metaphor processing that were outlined previously. They are not as the starting point for how people speak or act in the metaphoric ways they do.

In addition, Gibbs and Chen (2017) point out that DMT focuses too much on the communicative dimension of metaphors (e.g. searching for linguistic clues that support the contention that Shakespeare deliberately used 'a summer's day' as a metaphor in order to make readers interpret it as a metaphor). This way, it too often neglects the cognitive and embodied dimensions (e.g. Shakespeare's beliefs,

ideologies, knowledge of language etc.), as well as other external factors (e.g. social context in which the poem was written) that also constrain people's use and processing of metaphorical language:[15]

> Psychological studies, in fact, show that there is a tight connection between embodied cognition, metaphoric language use, and the specific meaning inferences which people draw when they encounter both conventional and novel metaphors in discourse. Contrary to DMT, people draw detailed metaphoric inferences when they encounter both conventional and novel verbal metaphors that reflect metaphoric reasoning about the ways different source and target domains interact. It is simply not the case that only special, so-called deliberate, metaphors are understood as conveying metaphoric messages. These results offer a strong refutation of DMT's most basic axiom regarding differences between language, cognition, and communication, and so-called non-deliberate and deliberate metaphors.
>
> (Gibbs and Chen 2017: 120)

At this point, as mentioned previously, the majority of empirical investigations within DMT have focused on creating analytic schemes for identifying "deliberate" metaphors in discourse. These identification processes focus on the identification of linguistic markers that presumably point to the deliberate manner in which some metaphor has been used. The contention that people only infer cross-domain mappings when they encounter deliberate metaphors has vaguely been empirically proven. In addition, previous studies have mostly made assumption about the meanings and functions of poetic metaphors. Yet, the perspectives of the poets themselves have hardly been taken into account.

2.5   How are poetic metaphors studied in this book?

My own investigation aims to offer evidence for the claims made by CMT advocates, namely that the creation and interpretation of conventional as well as novel, creative metaphors in poetry are shaped by the recruitment of underlying conceptual metaphors. It will explore whether a researcher's attention to (conceptual) metaphors may point to the complexities involved in readers' meaning interpretations of poems. Additionally, this study may help to understand how readers describe their emotional engagements with a poem and what they say about the author's intention in writing a poem. Furthermore, analyzing a poem for underlying conceptual

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15. In his response to Gibbs and Chen (2017), Steen (2017) states that "It is fundamentally misrepresented by Gibbs and Chen (2017) when they write that DMT holds that these are three "completely separate" phenomena. DMT says precisely the opposite, emphasizing that language, thought, and communication are dimensions of one phenomenon, language use" (4).

metaphors and taking the authors' own interpretations into account may reveal the meanings, feelings, and experiences that a poem conveys; which are aspects that might otherwise remain unnoticed.

To wrap up this chapter, please consider the following short narrative in which American poet Tony Hoagland (2006: 21) attempts to explain metaphors:[16]

> There is something irreconcilably, neurologically primal about the act of metaphor. This primal wildness conceals it from us. Of the hinterlands of the gray matter, where metaphors roam free, our data is all rumor, conjecture, and anecdote. Because metaphorical speech is such a commonplace, because almost anyone can and does produce metaphor on a daily basis, we assume that it is scrutable. Because it is a mental process, because it takes place in our own heads (on our property), because it leaves our own authorial lips, we assume we know something of its workings. But we do not. Invariably, the only adequate way to describe the metaphorical event is by another metaphor. It is a mystery hand going into a black mystery box. The head says, "fetch me a metaphor", and the hand disappears under a cloth. A moment later, the hand reappears, metaphor on its extended palm. But despite the spontaneity and ease of this event, we have little idea of where the image came from. And neither does the hand.

Although Hoagland's description sounds more fictional than factual it reflects a good deal of the current "thinking" in metaphor research. From the vast body of theoretical and empirical investigations, we know that metaphor is not only a matter of words, but also of thought and action; it is present in poetic and non-poetic discourses as well as outside of language itself. Most of the time, metaphor is used automatically and unconsciously. There are instances in which a speaker or writer may (intentionally) search for metaphors – as Hoagland describes by 'the head that tells the hand to fetch a metaphor'. This, however, does not mean that the metaphor is interpreted differently to "non-intentional" metaphors by the listener or reader, as suggested by DMT.

Hoagland further suggests that the different factors that contribute to the emergence of a metaphor are usually unknown. "But despite the spontaneity and ease of this event," says the poet, "we have little idea of where the image came from. And neither does the hand". With 'we', I understand the person who uses the metaphor. And 'the hand' may stand for the different processes that are at play when a metaphor is being created. The source of that metaphor, though, – which may be a thought or memory, a feeling or emotion, communicative intention; or maybe a mix of them – is in a black box, thus undefinable to the poet.

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16. I owe my gratitude to poet George David Clark for drawing my attention to Hoagland's essay, for sharing his thoughts on metaphor with me, and for talking so inspiringly about the meanings of metaphors in his work.

The production and processing of metaphorical language is shaped by many factors that people are often unaware of. "People's verbal metaphor behaviors," states Gibbs, "may better be characterized as the in-the-moment outcomes of dynamical processes where many sources of constraint interact to give rise to an emergent meaning product, one that is always specific to the person, language, task, and social situation" (2013: 46). Please consider a few of the constraints that Gibbs proposes, which, together, can produce verbal metaphorical behaviors (48):

> Evolutionary forces (bodily, cultural, cognitive, linguistic)
> Present cultural conditions (beliefs, customary actions, ideologies)
> Present social context (who, what, where, when)
> Knowledge of language (lexical, grammatical, pragmatic)
> Present bodily states (gestures, postures, eye gaze)
> Present motivations and cognitions (needs and desires, communicative aims, interactional goals)
> Immediate linguistic processing (production and reading of words, utterances, longer discourses)

These factors certainly also play a crucial role in the study of metaphors in poetry. A poet's use of metaphor may, for instance, be influenced by his or her immediate environment (e.g. seeing a beautiful sunset), a thought or emotion that the writer experiences (e.g. being lovesick). Furthermore, the poet's choice of metaphor may be influenced by the works of other poets he or she has read, a movie he/she has seen or a narrative he /she has read. Or, the poet might have a particular intention, a message that he/she wants to transmit or an emotion that he/she wants to convey. Very often, there are different factors interacting that are at play when poets produce metaphorical language, and the poets might often not even be aware of all of them. The same applies to the interpretation of poetic metaphors, which may also be influenced by different factors such as a reader's immediate bodily experiences, the cultural or language background, or by his or her close reading skills and present needs or desires.

Recent approaches to metaphor studies mostly embrace the view that producing and understanding metaphors depend on different factors, some of which I have just outlined. These processes, as Gibbs explains,

> operate at different time-scales, with forces toward the top of the above list moving at very slow speeds, and with those forces toward the bottom of the list moving at very fast speeds. The various time scales are not independent, but are hierarchically organized, and nested within one another such that various forces affecting metaphoric experience are coupled in complex, non-linear ways   (2013: 52).

It is thus important that scholars do not ignore various forms of analysis and the different forces that shape metaphorical experiences. Of course, one person cannot study everything. Still, researchers are encouraged to seek connections to other

theories and empirical evidence from other approaches to find complementary links when they offer their own accounts of metaphor in language, thought and communication.

The present project is very conscious of the multiple factors that shape the production and processing of poetic metaphors. To capture at least some of these, it uses different empirical methods and studies metaphor production and processing from both the poets' and readers' perspectives (see Chapter 3 for a detailed description of the methods). The first empirical investigation is a questionnaire, containing eight open-ended questions, that was sent out to English speaking poets. The aim of the survey is to gather first-hand information on the meanings and functions of metaphors, on the origins of metaphors and why poets use them, and on how they think readers respond to the metaphors which they use. The results of the questionnaires are discussed in Chapter 4. Besides asking poets to share their thoughts on metaphors, six poets were asked to talk explicitly about specific metaphors in their works. The results from the interview study serve as a basis for the interpretation and postulation of conceptual metaphors in the poems used in this book (see Chapter 5). To study the readers' perspectives, a think-aloud study was conducted that asked participants to talk about the meanings of the poems, about how reading the poem makes them feel and what they think the authors' intentions were in writing the poem (Chapter 6). Eventually, the authors' and readers' perspectives will be compared to each other to see whether there are any similarities and/or differences between their responses (Chapter 7). The aim is to show that conceptual metaphors not only structure poetic narratives but are a central part of how poets talk about metaphors, how they define the meanings of specific metaphorical expressions, and how readers respond to poetic narratives.

Poetic metaphors
Empirical investigations

Building upon the theoretical framework established in the previous chapters, I will now continue with the presentation of the corpus and the methods of data elicitation and analysis. Since this monograph aims to offer a three-fold perspective (analyst, poet, reader) on the production and interpretation of poetic metaphors, a combination of different research methods from the fields of cognitive- and psycholinguistics was required. The **first study** is a questionnaire that was sent out to English-speaking poets to get their perspectives on the meanings and functions of poetic metaphors. The **second study** entails online-interviews that I conducted with those poets whose works were discussed in the monograph. In these interviews, I asked poets to reflect upon the meanings of selected metaphors in their works. In the **third study,** written think-aloud protocols are used to explore how metaphorical thinking shapes readers' engagements with poetic narratives.

This combination of different study designs has a number of advantages. First, the analysis of poetic metaphor is not limited to the researchers' close readings of the poems and their subjective understanding of the metaphors, but also takes the perspectives of the poets (study 1 & 2) and other readers (study 3) into account. Secondly, this investigation enables me to explore the production and processing of poetic metaphors on both a micro and a macro level: The interviews with the poets focus on the interpretation of individual metaphors whereas the questionnaires and written think-aloud protocols take into account the broader contexts as well as factors that, beside conceptual metaphor, shape poets' and readers' engagements with metaphors.

This chapter will first explain why qualitative methods are particularly effective for the present investigation before presenting the corpus that was used and introducing the individual studies in detail.

3.1   Qualitative investigations into the study of metaphors in poetry

As discussed at length in Chapter 2, a range of empirical methods were used in the past to study metaphors in poetry. Researchers used predominantly qualitative methods as these enable exploration of aspects that are central to poetry interpretation, such as how metaphors influence readers' understandings of poetic narratives (e.g., Gibbs & Okonski 2018), what the use of figurative language tells readers about the author of the poem or about the story characters (e.g. Freeman 2015) and which role metaphor plays in readers' emotional engagements with poetry (e.g. Caracciolo 2013). An advantage of qualitative studies is that they focus on more natural and ecologically valid reading acts than many quantitative investigations, the latter including eye-tracking studies which often only use single words or short phrases without context.[17] For instance, Arthur Jacobs, Professor of experimental and neurocognitive psychology, conducted numerous quantitative studies that explored how figurative language is processed in poetic contexts. Jacobs developed an approach known as Neurocognitive Poetics, which studies affective and aesthetic processes during the reading of poetry; going from 'micropoems' in the form of single words (e.g. Jacobs 2015) to full poems (e.g. Xue et al. 2019) and entire poem corpora (Jacobs 2017; Jacobs 2018a, 2018b). The models that Jacobs created (see e.g., NCPM framework in Jacobs 2015) aim to provide tools for assessing how text, context, and the reader him/herself shape the neuronal and mental processes underlying literary reading. Jacobs' investigations have contributed much to what is known today about how the brain processes and creates literary and poetic texts, including metaphors. However, as Neurocognitive Poetics has given relatively little attention to the humanities and to models from cognitive psychology and linguistics, affective neuroscience, and emotion theory, these studies say little about aspects that go beyond the mere processing of metaphorically used words, such as readers' emotional engagements with a poem or their idiosyncratic interpretation of a metaphor or the poem as a whole.

Qualitative investigations, by contrast, may study people's thoughts, opinions, and their reactions to the meanings, feelings, and intentions that poetic metaphors convey. Furthermore, a qualitative investigation enables researchers to explore individual differences in aesthetic experiences and how people's conscious experiences of thought vary. This is particularly important for the study of people's engagements with poetry, as such interpretations, as we know, are usually subjective. Thirdly, quantitative studies, as Otis (2015: 25) puts it, "give voice to the lived experiences of text-inspired as well as personally evolved metaphors" in ways that experiential,

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17. Please see Otis (2015) for a survey on the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative investigations in the area of literary studies.

behavioral and neuro-experiments cannot. In the context of the current project, this could mean that an investigation is not limited to the exploration of how poetic metaphors are processed but also, for instance, takes into account which metaphors readers use when they respond to poetry.

For the present project, qualitative methods have, despite their limitations, shown to be most appropriate. First, the questionnaires, interviews and think-aloud protocols enable me to go beyond the mere assessment of cognitive processes that are involved in the production and processing of metaphors in poetry. This will be done by studying the poets' and readers' personal thoughts and opinions on the meanings and functions of poetic metaphors. Furthermore, despite the use of qualitative methods, the present project does its best not to present any generalized results. Instead, it points to the diversities that shape poetry production and interpretation. And lastly, it should be pointed out that the results from this qualitative investigation are not to be seen as the end product; instead, they may be considered as a starting point for other, quantitative as well as qualitative investigations that, in their own ways of exploration, may support or challenge the findings of the current study.

3.2   Poems used in the studies

The empirical investigations include six poems written by the following English-speaking poets: Jason D. Peterson ("How we got here"), Rae Armantrout ("The Difficulty"), Frank Beck ("The Copper Husk Allegory"), Shirley Lim ("Night Vision"), James Arthur ("Wind") and Robert Pinsky ("The Hearts"). These poets also participated in the online interviews (study 2).

The poems listed above were used in the think-aloud protocols (study 3). The poems "How we got here", "The Difficulty", "Night Vision", and "Wind" were given in full length; and fragments of "The Copper Husk Allegory" and "The Hearts" were matched in length with the other four poems. The selection of stimuli was based on four criteria:[18] 1) all poets are contemporary writers. This is crucial since the postulation of conceptual metaphors was partly based on the poets' own interpretations of their works; 2) non-canonical poems were chosen so that participants would not be familiar with these materials and therefore not be potentially influenced by pre-existing interpretations; 3) the materials chosen involve metaphorical themes and topics that are common (e.g., life, death, love, possession, personification) and include a mapping that could be traced back to an established or slightly modified conceptual metaphor present in the Master Metaphor List (Lakoff, Espenson & Schwartz, 1991).

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18. The same criteria were used in the co-written article "Conceptual metaphors in poetry interpretation" (Rasse, Onysko & Citron 2020).

3.3   Identification of conceptual metaphors in the selected poems

For the identification of metaphors in the selected poems, I have drawn preliminary on insights of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT). For instance, for the lines *We ate our anger / and soon our love / and the patience of others* in Jason David Peterson's poem "How we got here", I postulated the conceptual metaphor EMOTIONS/ FEELINGS ARE FOOD since 'eating', in the context of the poem, is used metaphorically to show how emotions and feelings can be treated like food (e.g. eaten, swallowed, digested). This method enabled me to establish conceptual metaphors that contribute to the meanings of the poems. As poems are usually ambiguous, it was necessary to postulate various conceptual metaphors for the individual poetic fragments. Otherwise, the different themes and topics that a single poem discusses could not be depicted appropriately. The basic steps of MIP helped me to establish which words were used metaphorically in the given contexts.[19]

As explained earlier, the postulation of conceptual metaphors was, on the one hand, based on my personal understanding and interpretation of the poetic narratives. On the other hand, I took the personal interpretations of the poets into account, which I got from the questionnaires and interviews (study 1 & 2). The responses to questionnaires helped me, on a more general level, to understand what the poets aimed to achieve by using metaphorical language. The responses to the interviews, in turn, helped me to understand the meanings and functions of specific metaphors in the poets' works. For instance, in his reflection upon the poetic lines quoted above, Peterson said that he "tend[s] to think that eating is rather a form of 'trying to get' and one that's equal in relation to 'want' as taking, winning, creating". Based on the Peterson's interpretation, I postulated the conceptual metaphors WANTING IS EATING and DESIRE IS HUNGER in addition to the previously defined EMOTIONS/FEELINGS ARE FOOD conceptual metaphor. This procedure was applied to each of the six poems and serves a dual purpose. First, paying attention to underlying conceptual metaphors may help readers and researchers to better understand the metaphorical meanings of the poems. Secondly, it enables me to explore whether the conceptual metaphors that occur in the poems are also reflected in the readers' responses to these poems, or not.

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19. Please see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of the limitations of MIP and why this metaphor identification procedure cannot fully present which words are possibly used metaphorically in the context of poetic narratives.

3.4 Questionnaires sent to poets (study 1)

A questionnaire was sent out to 54 English-speaking poets (see below) to study the multiple meanings and functions of poetic metaphors. The aim was to learn about the poets' very personal perspectives on why and how they use metaphorical language, where they get their inspirations from, and what they hope to achieve by the implementation of metaphors. In addition, the questionnaire explored whether poets think that the creation of metaphor is a conscious, or rather an intuitive process, and if they think that they can foresee, or even control, how readers interpret the meanings of their metaphors. This way, I hope to offer a nuanced view on how poetic metaphors work, how they are produced and intended to be understood.

Fourteen poets replied in the form of a short essay, and twenty completed the questionnaire. In this book, I only consider the responses to the questionnaires to ensure that the individual responses may be compared to one and another, and that conclusions can be drawn from these. Parts of the essays were included in different forms throughout the monograph, such as in epigraphs to the Introduction and Conclusion, or to support or challenge some theories of metaphor which were discussed in the present project.

The selection of the poets was guided by the goal to get as diverse a picture on poetic metaphors as possible. I thus sent out the questionnaire to poets who primarily wrote in English but were from different geographical, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Most of the poets who had participated in the study write poetry as their main profession. Some teach at universities, and do other forms of art, such as writing fiction, drawing, or creating music. The topics that the poets cover in their works are too broad to be listed here; but they range from the depiction of everyday-life situations, to the poets' personal interpretations of their thoughts, emotions, and experiences, to the discussion of what it means to be human and beyond.

3.5 Interviews with poets (study 2)

The interviews with the poets were conducted as a post-hoc study to the questionnaire. For the online interviews, I got in touch with those poets whose works were used in the think-aloud protocols study of this book. The idea of the interviews was to get the poets' subjective views on the metaphors in their works. These responses, then, helped me to understand the poems and to postulate conceptual metaphors which aimed to reflect the meanings of the poems. Furthermore, a comparison could be made between the poets' and the readers' interpretations of those metaphors. In this context, it is important to point out that the poets' metaphor interpretations should not be seen as reflecting what these metaphors "truly"

mean. A reader's interpretation of a metaphor, even if it is different from the poet's meaning interpretation, is as appropriate as the poet's reflection. Furthermore, what a poet says about the meaning of his or her metaphor does not necessarily reflect the original meaning, neither does it reflect any cognitive processes that were at play when the metaphor was produced.

As explained at length in the previous chapter, the production of metaphors predominately happens automatically and unconsciously. This is why poets often find it hard to say what the origin of that metaphor was and why it was created. In addition, the meaning of a metaphor may change over the time. Different personal and/or external factors usually shape the creation of a metaphor. These factors, though, may be different at the point the poet is asked to talk about the meaning of the metaphor which, in turn, may result in the poet offering an interpretation that is different from the original one. A further variation in the data exists in the ways the poets reflect upon their metaphors. Some of the poets offered a very detailed explanation of individual metaphors while others talked more generally about the metaphorical dimension in their poems. This is also why for some poems, as will be shown in Chapter 4, the postulated conceptual metaphors reflect both the meaning of the entire poem as well as of individual metaphors, while in other poems the conceptual metaphors are confined to particular aspects of the poem.

Beside these shortcomings, the use of online interviews, in addition to the questionnaires, has shown to be effective for the present investigation as it enabled me to include the poets' perspectives. This way, I hope to broaden the understanding of the diverse meanings and functions of metaphors in poetry.

3.6   Written think aloud protocols (study 3)

Think-aloud protocols are extensively applied to investigate "people's cognitive processes during the execution of a wide range of tasks" (Van Den Haak et al. 2003: 339). In addition, as outlined in Chapter 2, numerous studies that explored how poetic metaphors are interpreted also used think-aloud protocols (e.g., Gibbs & Boers 2005; Gibbs & Okonski 2018). This method thus appeared to be appropriate for exploring readers' interpretations of the six poems listed at the beginning of this chapter.

In their interpretations of the poems, participants were asked to talk about the meanings of the poems, about how reading the poems makes them feel, and about what they think the authors' intentions were in writing the poems. The narrative data was then analyzed for whether there are any tendencies across the responses. The aim was to explore if, for instance, participants were more likely to respond metaphorically to one of the three questions (meaning, feeling, communicative intent), and use literal language to respond to another question. In addition, the responses

were analyzed for underlying conceptual metaphors. The aim was to explore, on the one hand, what conceptual metaphors readers used when they talked about the meaning of the poem, when they responded to how reading the poem made them feel and when they talked about the author's intention in writing the poem. On the other hand, the results of the think-aloud protocols aimed to show whether, and to what extent, the readers' use of conceptual metaphors in their interpretations overlaps with the initial postulation of conceptual metaphors. The conceptual metaphors reflect my personal understanding of the poems as well as the poets' reflections upon the use of metaphors in their works.

Participants; Sixty-two students at the University of Alberta participated in the study (37 females and 25 males; mean age = 21). All participants were native speakers of English and received course credits for their participation. Information on age, gender, field of study, first and other languages were collected prior to the study. Furthermore, participants were asked to indicate how often they read poetry and whether they have ever studied poetry. Participants were informed that all personal details remain confidential and that they can withdraw from the study at any time. Signed informed consent was obtained from every participant.

The participants were recruited at the Department of Linguistics at the University of Alberta among students enrolled in the introductory Linguistics course sections. Study 3 was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Alberta and follows the ethical guidelines of the American Psychology Association.[20]

Material. Participants were randomly assigned to interpret three poems from the corpus listed in Section 3.3. The poems "How we got here", "The Difficulty", "Night Vision", and "Wind" were given in full length. From the poems "The Copper Husk Allegory" and "The Hearts" a fragment was selected that matched in length with the other poems.

Procedure. Participants completed the study individually in a quiet laboratory. They were first asked to read the instructions and were then given the chance to ask questions related to the task. Then they were given the questionnaire which contained three poems. In their interpretations, participants were encouraged to respond to the following three questions:

a.   What is the meaning of the poem?
b.   How does reading the poem make you feel?
c.   What could have been the author's communicative intention in writing this poem?

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20. I am very grateful to Herb Colston for all the time and effort he's put into running the study and collecting the data at the University of Alberta.

Participants gave their answers at their own pace by writing their responses on paper. When they were finished, they turned in the questionnaire and were debriefed.

The results of the questionnaires filled out by poets (study 1) will be discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the poets' responses to the online interviews (study 2). In Chapter 6, the readers' interpretations of the poems will be presented (study 3). And Chapter 7 will offer a comparison between the poets' and readers' responses to the poems.

Poets' perspectives on the meanings and functions of metaphors in poetry

Previous studies on metaphors in poetry primarily focused on the exploration of how meaning gets transferred and what effects metaphors may have on readers. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 2, literary scholars drawing on a cognitive poetic approach are often interested in whether readers find metaphorical language more emotionally engaging than literal language (see e.g., Jacobs 2012), or whether metaphor may cause a particular effect on the readers, such as the effect of estrangement in surrealist writing (e.g., Stockwell 2002). Researchers in the social sciences, by contrast, are less interested in the effects of metaphors as a literary device but more in how metaphors are processed. For instance, numerous studies (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson 1989; Gibbs 1994) have shown that readers interpret poetic metaphors very similarly to conventional metaphors. Overall, outcomes of such studies may tell us much about the metaphorical meanings that poetic metaphors convey and how readers arrive at such interpretations. Yet, they usually tell us little about the pragmatic, social, emotional, aesthetic impressions which – beside the meaning per se – are also communicated via poetic metaphor. An additional shortcoming of previous investigations into the study of metaphors in poetry is that scholars from various backgrounds often make assumptions about why and how poets use specific metaphors rather than getting first-hand information from the poets themselves.

The aim of my questionnaire was to get the poets' very personal perspectives on why and how they use metaphorical language, what inspires them to write poetry, what they hope to achieve by the implementation of metaphors, whether they think that the creation of metaphor is a conscious, or rather intuitive process, and if they think that they can foresee, or even control, how readers interpret the meanings of their metaphors. This way, I hope to offer a fresh and more nuanced view on the multiple meanings and functions of metaphors in poetry.

At this point, I would like to thank all the poets who had responded to my emails and shown so much appreciation for the topic I am exploring and the ways I have been approaching it. Without the knowledge and insights that the poets shared so generously with me, the project would not exist in this form.

Overview of survey data. The questionnaire was sent out to 54 English-speaking poets.[21] Fourteen poets replied in forms of short essays, and twenty completed the

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21. Including all the ones whose poems were used for the experiments in this study.

questionnaire. In this chapter, I only take the responses to the questionnaires into account to make sure that the individual responses may be compared to one and another, and that conclusions can be drawn from these. Parts of the essays were included in different forms throughout the monograph, such as in epigraphs to the Introduction and Conclusion, or to support or challenge some claims made by metaphor scholars in the past.

Summary of data. Out of the 20 poets who completed the questionnaire, 12 were female and 8 male. The mean age was 50, and the poets have, on average, been writing poetry for 34 years. All participants write most of their poems in English. The first language of 5 out of 20 participants was not English. The poets, who participated, are currently living in Northern America (12 poets), the UK (3), Germany (2), Austria (1), Malta (1), and India (1). The responses to the individual questions from the survey will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

4.1   What do metaphors mean to you?

Some of the poets define metaphor as a device that helps to give meaning to abstract ideas. Others assign it transformative power or they compare metaphor metaphorically to glue that holds things together. In general, in their responses to the first question, poets give specific functions to poetic metaphors which, in a very broad sense, can be summarized as follows:

– Focus on language (e.g. communicative function of metaphors; metaphor as a tool to express oneself)
– Focus on cognition (e.g. metaphor helps to conceptualize abstract ideas)
– Focus on emotions, feelings, and experiences

Some of the poets talked solely about one of these aspects, others referred to multiple functions that poetic metaphors may have. Karren Alenier's[22] definition, for instance, is reflective of the linguistic function of poetic metaphors. She states that "metaphors are an important aspect in the creative toolbox. They enrich poetic expression." Alenier's understanding of metaphor is similar to Tony Hoagland's, which I discussed in Chapter 2. Hoagland sees metaphors as sitting in a black sack, waiting to be fetched by the poet. Alenier also uses the containment metaphor to describe how metaphors are an item in the creative toolbox which poets use to express themselves poetically.

Another meaning description of metaphor that focuses on the linguistic aspect was given by Daniel Nester. "Metaphors make wild associations. They say X is Y. It's

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22. I got the poets' permission to cite their responses in this monograph.

how language changes – it's how nouns turn into verbs and verbs into nouns". The focus here is clearly on the communicative functions of metaphors. According to Nester, metaphor enables the writer or speaker to say that "X is Y", which mirrors the structure of conceptual metaphors.

That metaphor is a central part of the poetic expression is reflected in most of the responses. Yet, some of the poets talk about aspects that go beyond the communicative function of metaphors. Consider Catherine Hodges' response which clearly recognizes that poets not only talk metaphorically but also think metaphorically: "Fundamentally, metaphors are how my mind conceptualizes ideas for me – before they find their way into words." Another interesting response was given by George Szirtes, who not only talks about the verbal and cognitive aspects, but also about the role of the body in producing and processing metaphors. "Metaphors are," as Szirtes explains, "verbal and sensory analogies that are ways of opening up a thought or feeling into sometimes parallel, sometimes diverging channels, of interest in themselves. A further layering of the world". Szirtes' definition of metaphors is, in itself, metaphorical. On the one hand, the poet considers thoughts and feelings as objects that get "opened up" and/or transported into a different channel by means of metaphors. On the other hand, he considers metaphor itself as "a further layering of the world"; which just seems to be a more poetic way of saying that metaphor is omnipresent or indicates that metaphor creates alternative realities.

The metaphorical notion of space and containment shape, to a great extent, the poets' definitions of what metaphors mean to them. As previously mentioned, George Szirtes talks about "parallel and diverging channels", and "a further layering of the world". Karren Alenier sees metaphors as being part of the "creative toolbox". And for Jason David Peterson, metaphor resides in spaces in which people communicate non-verbally with each other:

> When I write metaphor, I want to have the effect of communicating in an intimate manner that we are not as separate or different as language makes it seem that we are. I think the spaces underneath or between common language, what's seemingly unsayable, is where those connections are most noticeable (our common insecurity, fragility, and nakedness that language can mask or protect), and that's what metaphoric language can help point to.

The poet seems to suggest that metaphor is what all people share, and that through metaphor, we can communicate, even if we use language differently when we talk. His observation supports the idea described at the beginning of this chapter, that metaphor not only communicates metaphorical meaning but also depicts experiences that we, as humans, share and are sometimes hesitant to talk about. Through poetic metaphor, a poet may set up the possibilities for such and other experiences, ideas, meanings, and feelings to emerge in the readers when they read poetry.

4.2   What is the function of metaphors? Why do you use them?

The function of poetic metaphor and why poets use them defined the second question of the survey. The majority of the poets expanded on their previous response. For instance, Catherine Hodges states that "metaphors have a prior-to-words function for me". This way, she builds on her previously described idea of metaphors being central to both cognition and communication. Lesley Wheeler focuses more on the artistic functions of poetic metaphor, saying that metaphors "help transmit insight and often add an attractive weirdness or vividness to a piece of writing. They also increase a reader's engagement with a poem's world". Liz Bahs points to the metaphor's function of building connections and to the metaphor's power of transforming ideas or concepts: "I use metaphors to attempt connections, to bridge gaps and to move the reader's imagination from one thing to another", as Bahs explains. And Adrian Grima's explanation was particularly detailed and poetic and reflective of various functions that poetic metaphors have:

> The function of metaphor is to reconstruct reality. To revisit reality. To rediscover reality. To break the mold of the known, to venture into the unknown, to attempt to construct the unknown, to create it and domesticate it using language. To call attention to poetry as a linguistic act, as a linguistic experience, as a cognitive experience.

Grima explains how metaphor enables him to make sense of the world and to express himself. He also points out explicitly that poetic metaphors have both linguistic and cognitive functions. Across the responses to the second question, every poet assigned at least two different functions to poetic metaphors. Figure 1 summarizes which functions the poets mentioned and how often these appeared across the poets' responses to the second question:

What are the functions of poetic metaphors?
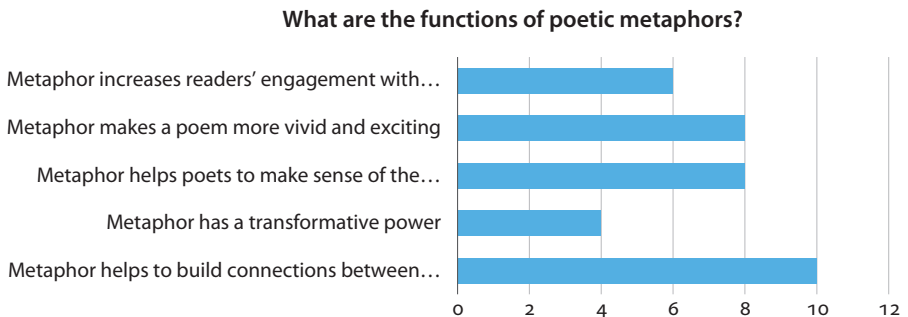
Figure 1. Summary of poets' responses to the functions of metaphors[23]

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23. I created the categories in Figure 1 myself; the numbers indicate how often each of the categories were reflected in the poets' responses.

Generally speaking, the ways the poets talked about the functions of poetic metaphor overlaps, to a great extent, with the functions of metaphors in everyday conversations that Gibbs described in his book *The Poetics of Mind* (1994: 124–137). I summarized these main functions below:

1. Metaphors provide a way of expressing ideas that would be extremely difficult to convey using literal language
2. Metaphor provides a particularly compact and unique means of communication
3. Metaphors may help capture the vividness of our phenomenological experience and, consequently, evoke various mental images in the listener
4. Metaphorical talk often reinforces intimacy between speaker and listener
5. Metaphoric language is often used to inform others about one's own attitudes and beliefs in indirect ways
6. The use of specific metaphors indicates belonging to a social, cultural or political sub-group

Almost all of these functions of ordinary metaphors that Gibbs listed can be found, sometimes in a more metaphorical or poetic form, in at least one of the poets' responses. What is particularly interesting about the poets' responses, though, is their tacit knowledge of, or rather feeling for, *how* metaphor does what it does. Let us take Maggie Butt's metaphorical response as an example:

> We are sensory animals, and abstract thoughts come alive for us when linked to a visual image or embodied sensation. These sensory metaphors are like lightening conductors, taking the charge of an idea, directly to the ground. I think metaphor is a natural way of thinking for people, we liken one thing to another quite automatically.

In her response, Butt not only talks about the functions of metaphors but tries to explain how metaphors work. She explains how metaphor, like lightening conductors, links abstract ideas to images and embodied sensations. This process makes those ideas more grounded and graspable.

George David Clark too offers a very poetic explanation for how metaphor works. The poet suggests that meanings, feelings and experiences are not necessarily conveyed by the mapping of a source onto a target domain, but rather (or also) by the tension that exists between those domains:

> A good metaphor mines the distance or dissimilarity between tenor and vehicle to gain a new perspective on that tenor. When the distance is significant and the comparison itself is still thoroughly persuasive, we experience a rich imaginative thrill as we examine our subject on surprising new grounds. I use them because their twisting of perspective offers me the possibility of fresh insight and because they're simply a great deal of fun.

Similar to Jason David Peterson's response which was discussed earlier in this chapter, George David Clark uses spatial metaphors to explain how good metaphors work. He suggests that poets create mines between source (vehicle) and target (tenor) domains for their readers to explore. Only if the distance between these domains is significant, readers will appreciate the subjects that they find on new grounds. Thus, in Clark's perspective, it is not only the end-result – the source domain being mapped onto the target domain – that readers enjoy when they read poetry. Instead, it is the "spaces", or dissonance, that poets create for their readers to explore and react to before they arrive at the actual understanding of the metaphor.

4.3   What would you call the origins or sources of your metaphors?

The third question in the survey was concerned with what poets would call the origins or sources of their metaphors. As Figure 2 shows, the sources that the poets mentioned range from works of art such as music, myths or other poetic narratives, to family stories, to emotions and feelings that the poet has experienced, or the poet's desire to express him-/herself:

language experiences
criticism art
feelings sound
poetry thoughts mind
natural-world
knowledge • natural
subconsciousness
imagination associations
human literature animals
world
emotions
everyday-life
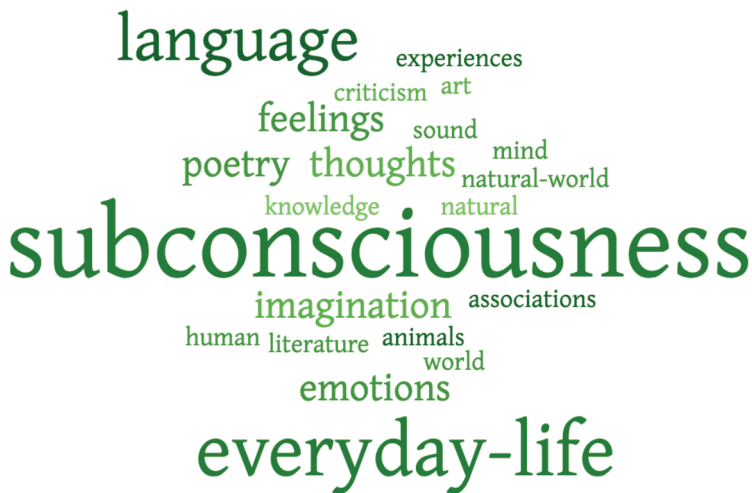
Figure 2. The word cloud reflects, in form of key terms which were found in the poets' responses, the most common sources that inspire poetry writing[24]

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24. The more often a key term appeared in the poets' responses, the bigger and bolder it appears in the word cloud.

In many cases, the poets said that metaphors come from many sources. These poets were also able to explain quite precisely where they get their inspirations from. Please consider Frank Beck's response as a first example:

> For a practicing poet, metaphors come from many sources, but the driving force in all of them is the human desire to look for meaning in the often contradictory world around us, which includes the other people in our lives. A poet is someone who has discovered that metaphor is very valuable in that effort and learns, largely from the poems, songs and other literature that they've encountered from childhood onwards, to respond to experience metaphorically. It sounds theoretical, but it quickly becomes nearly reflexive.

The poet's response points mainly to the communicative function of metaphors. He suggests that the main source of metaphors is the desire to look for meaning and to put into words how he experiences the world and the people around him. This is a skill that poets, as Frank explains, discover for themselves from childhood onward and apply this mode of meaning-making by turning exposure into practice.

Similar to Frank Beck, a few other poets see language – the urge to give meaning to abstract concepts and express oneself – as the origins of their metaphors. Adrian Grima for instance, names language and literature as the sources of metaphor: "I see metaphor essentially as a mechanism provided by language and literature to explore, to create reality. I'm always on the lookout for words I haven't used, or haven't often used in my poetry, or for words that I can place in unusual relations with other words to create the kind of magical tension that is metaphor". Similar to Beck, Grima gets inspired by other works of art that he absorbs; and like Clark, who talks about the "spaces" that readers find thrilling, Grima points to the "magical tension" that evolves when two concepts are put into a relationship and that readers are likely to enjoy.

Miriam Auer is another poet who seems very aware of the sources of her metaphors and why she uses them, as reflected in the following response: "Knowledge, thoughts, association, discovering truth, attempting social criticism, deprivation". Some other sources were found across the poets' response, such as visuals: "I think of a word and then see an image in my mind's eye of something which connects with it", Butt said; or feelings and emotions: "Feelings are so strong," as Franziska Ruprecht states, "that average wording would not fit"; or everyday-life, as Carrie Takahata says, "My metaphors come from – like my poetry – the obvious, everyday things that make life so complicated…and livable".

The responses discussed above imply that poets, at least to a certain degree, have particular (graspable) sources in their minds which they search for inspiration for their metaphors. Other responses from the questionnaire indicated that the roots of metaphor are in the subconscious. "My best metaphors come from the

subconscious", as Alenier explains. Catherine Hodges says that "the natural world and my subconscious mind are the two origins I'm aware of". Daniel Nester named "the place where [his] mind meets the mouth/pen" as his source of metaphor. And George Szirtes lists "instinct" as the origin of metaphors: "By instinct I mean that I don't spend time seeking metaphors, a number occur to me and I grab the one that seems most promising for reasons I don't articulate even to myself. It's a hunch". Szirtes' explanation for where his metaphors come from are, again, very similar to Hoagland's idea of the black sack that poets reach their hands into to get out a metaphor. First, poets often really know what they are grabbing there. Only when they see the metaphor on the page embedded in the poem, do the poets make their more conscious evaluation of whether to keep this metaphor or choose another one.

Overall, the responses have shown that some poets may claim to be aware of the sources of their metaphors. They seem to know what they have to draw upon in order to realize their communicative intention. The majority of the poets who participated in the study, though, could not say exactly where their metaphors come from but rather list their subconscious as the main source. This idea comes very close to the contention that the production of metaphor is shaped by many different factors that operate on different time-scales and which are nested within one another in a complex way such that people, when asked to explain how a specific metaphor comes into being, are not able to state explicitly how this happens.

4.4   Do you think that constructing metaphorical expressions is a very conscious, intentional process, or do you rather subconsciously place metaphors in your writing?

The question about the sources of metaphors links nicely to the next question of the survey, which was whether poets think that their construction of metaphor is a conscious process and intentional, or a subconscious and automatic process.

Figure 3 shows that more than the half of the poets say that their construction of poetic metaphors happens unconsciously. Four poets state that the production of metaphor is a conscious process, and four poets say that the production of metaphor is a combination of both conscious and unconscious processes.

Let me start with the discussion of those responses that indicated that the production of metaphor is a conscious process. Adrian Grima, for instance, writes the following:

> In my case, constructing metaphorical expressions is very much a conscious, intentional process. Because you are remodelling the language of literature; because you are reshaping the known, creating the unknown.

Is the construction of metaphors a conscious process?
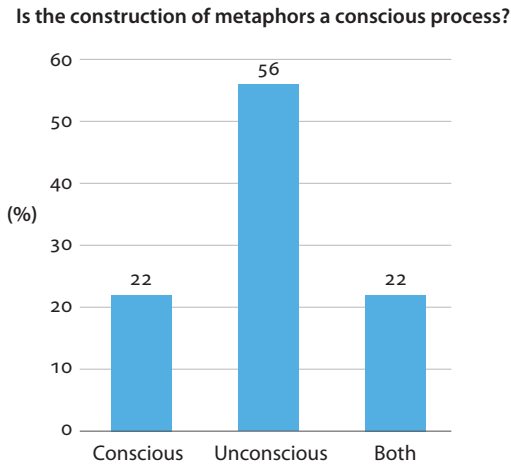
Figure 3. Shows that the production of poetic metaphors is usually an unconscious process

To Grima, the main sources of metaphors are language and works of literature. In his response to the previous question on the origins of metaphors, Grima stated that – whenever he writes poems – he reads other literary narratives that contain a lot of metaphors. He then remodels the words that he finds most interesting and places them in his poems. This process, according to Grima, is very conscious.

The second poet who states that his use of metaphors is very conscious is George David Clark. As opposed to Grima, though, Clark talks about the *use* of metaphors in this response; and not necessarily about how a metaphor comes into being. The processes which are involved in the construction of metaphorical expressions are, as Clark. Explained in a previous response, mostly unknown to the poet. A similar response was given by Lisa Angelella: "I like to feel I'm creating a context," as the poet explains, "in which everything means something specific (something complex and ambiguous but specific)". Similar to Clark, Angelella seems to talk about the (conscious) decisions of whether a metaphor makes it into the poem or not, rather than about how metaphor happens.

Other poets who filled out the questionnaire explain that certain processes are conscious while other are unconscious. Please consider Miriam Auer's response as an example:

> I do it in a state of awareness, because I have always been over-conscious of languages' multilayered effects on people ('s minds, actions, behavior, lives etc.). It might be happening subconsciously on occasion, but rather rarely.

This response depicts, most likely, Auer's reflection upon her production as well as her use of metaphors. The poet seems to be aware that metaphors may arise

unconsciously. Yet, as she thinks a lot about how her poems are understood by the readers, she probably places metaphors consciously in her work.

Similar to Auer, three other poets, who had participated in the study, explain that the construction of metaphors involves conscious and unconscious processes. Please consider the response by Liz Bahs as a further example:

> It's both, conscious and unconscious. I think the mind sometimes makes the connections before I know what I'm doing and then it appears like a truth later. But often they are intentional too.

The poet's reflection comes very close to what current psycholinguistic research says about the production of metaphorical language: First, the mapping between source and target domain usually happens automatically and unconsciously. Secondly, a writer or speaker does not have to have a specific thought or intention in mind before producing a particular metaphorical expression. Instead, metaphors arise within complex layers of desires and histories in the context of adaptive goals (e.g., to write a poem). The poet may only become aware of that metaphor once it is expressed verbally or once put into writing.

Poets are often conscious about their implementation of metaphors during revision processes, as Cate Lycurgus explains:

> I write predominantly by sound, first. I don't sit down to place or construct metaphors. The poem presents itself as it will – I get lines I cannot shake. Eventually, in revision I might change or alter (or more likely omit) a metaphor if it doesn't create something that the poem needs.

As in the previously discussed responses, Lycurgus points out that she does not consciously search for metaphors. Instead, they usually evolve during the thinking about and/or writing of the poem. Only the decisions which are made mostly during the revision processes of a poem are sometimes more conscious. Furthermore, Lycurgus' construction of a poem seems to be led by sound of the poem rather than imagery.

The idea of a metaphor "simply arriving" is central to many of the responses which were reflective of the idea that the production of metaphor is an entirely instinctive, subconscious process. Frank Beck, for example, states that "metaphor quickly becomes second-nature to a poet. I never remember consciously thinking, 'This part of the poem needs a metaphor'". Lycurgus writes that "the metaphors, when they appear, just appear", and Szirtes states that "if metaphor is intentional and conscious it is unlikely to be any good". Such responses support, as discussed in Chapter 2, conceptual metaphor theory in that the production and processing of metaphors is mainly shaped by unconscious processes and may be influenced by different factors (e.g., sound, current bodily position of the author, his/her thoughts,

feelings, past experiences etc.).[25] At the same time, they challenge Deliberate Metaphor Theory (DMT), which assumes that the construction of (poetic) metaphors is usually an intentional process (e.g. Shakespeare's "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"); and that readers only interpret metaphors as metaphors if they recognize that the poet meant that particular expression to be a metaphor. What seems to be conscious, as the results of the questionnaires show, is not the actual construction of a metaphor but a poet's decision (usually done during the revision process) on whether to keep a metaphor in the poem or not.

The British poet Maggie Butt shared a brief narrative with me in which she attempts to explain how metaphors may come into being:

> I'll give one example if I may – and this is about an initial metaphor building into a sustained image.
>
> In my humorous poem "Nylon Sheets"[26] I was writing the line 'the housekeeping purses flew wide,' and I was visualizing one of those old-fashioned coin-purses with a clip top, opened wide, and as I saw that image, it was overlaid in my mind by the image of the mouth of a baby bird, which is a similar shape, so I added that to the line. Perhaps the word 'flew' also suggested the idea of a bird to me, so it became:
>
> housekeeping purses flew wide
> as mouths of hungry baby birds
>
> Then I had birds in my head, (as well as women's liberation which is the subject of the poem). So when I got to remembering my mother heaving heavy sheets from the washer to the spin dryer, I saw these again in terms of birds: 'these flew like fledglings, chirruping.'
>
> And finally, when I was picturing the difference between the old fashioned white cotton sheets on the washing line, and the brightly coloured nylon sheets, ,gaudy parakeets' came to mind.

Butt's reflection upon her poem "Nylon Sheets" (2007) offers a nice example for how metaphors may emerge during the process of writing a poem. Doubtlessly, the poet's post-hoc reflection upon her use of metaphors does not reflect precisely what the poet was thinking or doing, or which processes or internal and/or external factors, shaped the actual emergence of a particular metaphor. Again, it is important to keep in mind that metaphors arise from different, interacting factors that exist on different time-scales of which people usually are not consciously aware. This makes it almost impossible for a writer or speaker to express what exactly motivated them

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25. Please refer to Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion on the factors that influence the production and processing of poetic metaphors.

26. The poem "Nylon Sheet" appeared in Butt's 2007 poetry collection *Lipstick* (Greenwich Exchange) and can also be found on the poet's website https://www.maggiebutt.co.uk.

to do what they did. Nonetheless, psycholinguistic research often has to rely on people's post-hoc reflections when they study what people were possibly thinking in a given situation. This is why asking a poet to reflect upon his/her use of metaphors in a poem may surely tell us something, even if not everything, about how (poetic) metaphors come into being.

The way Butt talks about the construction of metaphors suggests again that there are usually multiple layers of dynamically interacting motivations and communicative needs that lead poets to produce specific metaphors. Each decision that a poet makes while writing a poem is motivated by a layer of intentions that range from the use of specific rhyme or rhythm, images, to the use of a particular diction, the visual depiction of the poem, to the conveying of certain feelings. Some of these intentions and decisions are more conscious than others. In the end readers will interpret these metaphors in their own ways, no matter whether they were postulated entirely consciously or unconsciously.

4.5   To what extent do you think you can foresee, or even control, readers' reactions to the metaphors you use?

The fifth question of the survey asked poets to share their thoughts on whether they think that they can foresee, or even control, reader's reactions to their metaphors. The responses are summarized in Figure 4, which also shows the six categories, that I created, based on how the poets responded to the question:

Is it possible to control readers' reactions to poems?
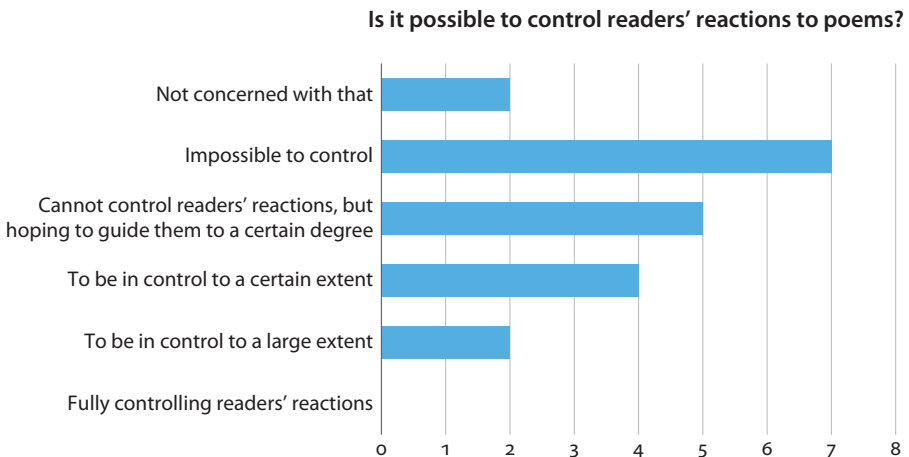
Figure 4. Displays the categories which I had postulated to summarize the responses to whether poets think that they control readers' interpretations of their poems or not; the numbers indicate frequencies

Figure 4 shows that none of the 20 poets said that they think they are fully in control of the readers' interpretations of their poems. Two poets said that they hope to be in control to a great extent. Miriam Auer, for instance, states the following: "Since my texts are designed to be thoroughly aware of their meta-linguistic function, I hope that I aim in control to a proper extent". And two poets claimed that they are not concerned with how readers react to their narratives.

Five poets explained that they cannot control readers' reactions to their poems, but they hope to guide and/or direct them to a certain extent. Let us consider Adrian Grima's response as a first example:

> The whole point about metaphor is that it creates uncharted territory (sorry, that's a cliché, a conventional conceptual metaphor), it explores uncharted territory. Especially synaesthetic metaphor. It's so overwhelming… so engrossing… so unsettling… I'd like to say that I leave readers completely free to read as they choose, but in reality I know that I want to direct them. BUT only insofar as you can direct your readers with new metaphor, because it's meant to be individual, unorthodox, unruly, unbridled.

The poet seems to be very aware of the fact that metaphors may have different effects on the readers, and that metaphors may be interpreted in different ways. He points out that his intention is to direct the readers to a certain extent, but also leave room for their individual interpretations. Wheeler offered a very similar response in that she said that she is trying to "nudge readers toward specific ideas, but part of the fun is that readers' responses can never be entirely predicted or controlled". And Mark Olival-Bartley makes an interesting point in that he claims that he is "occasionally surprised by readers' reactions, usually due to an unexpected echo of allusion", which once again supports the assumption that poets can never be in full control of the readers' responses to their poems. George Szirtes confirms this claim by saying that, "You can guess but you cannot know. You follow a hunch without knowing even what your own reaction might be ten minutes later. You trust the hunch".

Six more poets state that they cannot control a reader's reaction to their poems. Please consider Cate Lycurgus response as a further example:

> I would never, ever want to do this. That would be like telling someone how they should feel upon listening to a piece of music, what a painting should 'mean' to them. What does it evoke? How do they understand, newly? These are more important questions for me. This is not for me to manage, control, or even worry about. The words will work as they will, and will work uniquely for each reader.

Cate Lycurgus' response summarizes nicely the claims I have made earlier in this section as well as in previous chapters; namely that poets usually do not place metaphors with the intention that they are interpreted in a specific way by the reader, as DMT suggests. Instead, in most cases, poets allow readers to bring in their individual

sensibility, mood, and frame of reference, with the result that each reader forms an idiosyncratic interpretation of what is most important and arrives at a largely personal understanding of the poem.

The responses to the fifth question, overall, support the idea that poets have certain, often multiple intentions in mind when crafting their narratives. To some poets, it seems to be more important to be in control to a certain degree than to others. All poets of the study agreed, though, that it is impossible to fully control a reader's reaction to their poems. Some poets, like George Szirtes, point out that they sometimes even do not know how their own reaction to a metaphor would be when they, at some point, read their own works. "We are," as Gibbs (p.c. 2020) puts it, "moving masses of self-organized systems that are constantly changing and adaptive, which makes it difficult and at times impossible to introspect on what motivates us to do as we do. And whenever we do try to remember what we did earlier, this, as science shows, is a complete reconstruction of the past given the present. The present is always there to influence how we think about the past."

4.6   Please feel free to make any further remarks on the topic of metaphors in your poetry here

In the last question of the survey, I asked poets to add any further comments on poetic metaphors if they want to do so. Some of the poets elaborate further on issues that they had talked about in previous questions. George Szirtes, for example, who claims that the function of metaphor is to create "a further layering of the world", states in his last comment that "the point of metaphor is not to provide an alternative concrete meaning, but to indicate directions a mind might move". This observation goes well with the idea that poets usually do not intend their metaphors to be interpreted in a specific way but leave it up to the readers to find their own meanings in the narrative.

A further comment that many of the poets added to the last question was that they see metaphor as the main domain of poetry. Shirley Lim, for instance, says, "I consider metaphor as the chief defining character in my poetry. I could use the term 'quality' or 'attribute' but 'character' is closest to the notion of metaphor as the character of the Muse of Poetry herself". Or Mark Olival-Bartley suggests that "the use of metaphors occupies a singular place in poetry, and its effective use – not too clumsily nor obviously rendered – takes years of reading and practice". Metaphor is doubtlessly one of the key tools that poets use when they craft their narratives. Although it emerges, as discussed previously, most likely from unconscious processes, the effective and appropriate use of metaphor requires a good deal of practice and experience.

To conclude this section, I would like to discuss Matthew Smith's poem "A Poem Without Metaphors" (2020)[27] which the poet sent to me in one of our online conversations. In the first place, it gives a sense of how difficult it is to separate metaphor from poetry. In addition, it shows, to my mind, that readers' interpretations of poetry often go beyond the mere interpretation of linguistic expressions:

> Some days there are no other words for pain,
> And for the worst, the literal is best:
>
> The rain against the glass is only rain,
> Your heart is just a muscle in your chest,
>
> The book ends in a bookish sort of way,
> The moonlight stands for nothing but the moon,
>
> Your children carry half your DNA
> And will inherit all your savings soon,
>
> Somewhere a car is racing through the night
> No faster than a swiftly moving car,
>
> A brace of deer glance up at something bright–
> Gone still, exactly like the deer they are.
>
> And as for you, you could be anyone
> Who's done, who's said, the things you've said and done.

Smith explained to me that since he enjoys metaphors so much, he tried to write a poem in which none appear. "Whether or not I succeeded," as Smith stated, "probably depends on where you draw the line between the figurative operation of all language and the overt figures involved in metaphor". As an example, he talked about "a brace of" in the sixth stanza, which, as Smith explained, means "two" in common English parlance. Yet, as brace takes this sense from its etymological reference to a pair of arms, the metaphorical meaning is unavoidable.

Some further examples of words or expressions that contain metaphorical meanings but were probably not considered as metaphors by the author are "there are no words for", "carry half of your DNA", or "racing through the night". These expressions are so common and conventionalized that they are considered to have lost their metaphoricity over time. However, poetic metaphors are not solely words that transfer meaning through cross-domain mappings. Instead, poetic metaphors are closely related to various elements of the poem, such as diction, imagery, rhyme, or rhythm which, in a synergy, enable readers to interpret a poem's meaning and possibly react to it emotionally. Consider the line *The rain against the glass is only rain,/Your heart*

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27. Smith's poem was published in *The Beloit Poetry Journal* Vol 70. No.1 and I got permission from the author and the journal to include the poem in this book.

is just a muscle in your chest as an example. The poet suggested that he had intended these lines to be read literally. But do readers indeed only think of wet glass, or the heart as an organ when they read these lines? Or is it more likely that readers, even if there is no verbal metaphor for sadness or love, think of sadness and love; maybe of a failed relationship or a loved one who has passed away? Overall, what I am suggesting here, once again, is that readers' understanding of and their engagements with poetry is not solely shaped by the meaning that certain (metaphorical) words transfer. Instead, it is the genre and style that put the reader's mind into a frame of imaginatively interpreting the text. Metaphorical meaning in many cases is just the beginning of what poets intend and readers understand.

CHAPTER 5

An in-depth analysis of metaphors in six contemporary poems

The present chapter will introduce the six poems that were used in the empirical studies of this book. As explained in Chapter 3, the corpus consisted of Jason David Peterson's "How we got here", Rae Armantrout's "The Difficulty", Shirley Lim's "Night Vision", Frank Beck's "The Copper Husk Allegory", Robert Pinsky's, "The Hearts" and James Arthur's "Wind". As "The Hearts" and "The Copper Husk Allegory" are long poems, only selected fragments which matched in length with the other four poems that were used.

The chapter will be divided into six sub-sections. Each sub-section is dedicated to one of the six poems. It will start with a bio-blurb and personal note of the poet in which they talk about metaphors in a more general sense.[28] Here, I quote from the questionnaires and online interviews that I had conducted with the poets in 2017. After that, the poem will be discussed in terms of underlying conceptual metaphors. The postulation of conceptual metaphors is, on the one hand, based on my personal understanding of the poems.[29] On the other hand, the authors' reflections upon their use of metaphors in that particular poem will be taken into account for the postulation of further conceptual metaphors. The aim is to present a systematic analysis of poetic narratives for underlying conceptual metaphors.[30] The findings, in turn, will serve as a basis for further discussions on the readers' interpretations of the poems in Chapter 6 and the comparisons between the readers' and poets' responses in Chapter 7.

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28. Some of the poets' responses to the meanings and functions of metaphors were discussed in detail in Chapter 4. I include parts of the responses again in this chapter as I think that knowing how the poets define the concept of metaphors may help readers of this chapter to understand the meanings of individual metaphors which the poets use in their works.

29. As explained in Chapter 3, for identifying words in discourse that potentially convey metaphorical meaning, the basic steps of the metaphor identification procedure MIP were used (Pragglejaz Group, 2007; Steen et al., 2010). The MIP method was explained in detail in Chapter 2 of this book.

30. My postulation of conceptual metaphors was corroborated by Alexander Onysko, Herb Colston and Ray Gibbs. Our analysis overlapped in all the main conceptual metaphors, and I am grateful that I could also include those conceptual metaphors that I had not detected myself.

5.1   Jason D. Peterson's "How we got here"

Jason David Peterson was born and raised in Minnesota. He received his M.A. in English at the University of Wisconsin with an emphasis in creative writing. As an instructional designer by trade, a self-proclaimed psychoarcheologist, and author of two poetry books, his work explores identity formation, moral reasoning, existential uncertainty, and impulsive devotion to meaning- some of which has been recognized with scholarships, nominations, and awards in Canada and the U.S.[31]

When I asked Peterson in an email conversation in 2017 to define the meanings and functions of poetic metaphors, he wrote the following:

> I've used metaphor for many purposes in a poem, including: to add playfulness, create specific atmospheres, force unnatural logical/emotional connections, allude to other narratives for a more robust message, modify pacing, etc. etc. In all of these cases, the fundamental necessity is that the metaphor matters. To call a rock a dense ball of earth is mostly useless – there's no value creating a relationship between two things if it does not add to or alter the initial meaning (unless maybe the intention is a general satire of metaphor). Likewise, there's no value blending two concepts if the result is a concept that could be described well enough without a metaphor. In other words, metaphor is successful/appropriate when common language cannot accurately or intimately capture the meaning or emotion you're trying to express, in which case the art is pairing two ordinary concepts to evoke a new concept – born from the dissonance – that readers will be drawn to because of how it captures some relatable truth of their own that they haven't been able to express, or heard expressed, in common language [...]. I use metaphor as an expansion of language to say what cannot otherwise be succinctly or at all said, and needs saying   (Peterson, p.c. 2017).

In his poem "How we got here" (2017),[32] Peterson seems to expand our common knowledge of the concept of 'eating' by pairing it not only with 'food', but with different feelings and emotions, such as anger and love. This way, readers might find it easier to imagine how the couple, who are the narrators of the poem, feel in their relationship.

> We ate everything in the house.
> The yard picked clean –
> Nothing even that any
> Starving memory could hold out for.

---

31. More information about Jason D. Peterson can be found on his Facebook and Twitter profiles.

32. In 2017, the poem "How we got here" was first published on the author's personal webpage. In 2020, the poem was part of the collection "Poems on the Effects of 21st Century Populism" which appeared in the journal *disClosure* and is available here https://doi.org/10.13023/disclosure.29.02

> We ate our anger
> and soon our love
> and the patience of others.
> We ate our hunger and moaned
> as it grew heavier inside us.
> We ate the world raw
> and the bitter green
> and salty blue and endless
> black on black went down
> in a flush of burn and clay.
> We ate the future
> before it limped away.
> We ate the rules
> of all of this, and now
> it has no meaning.
> As if nothing was ever
> made or eaten–
> an infinite nothingness
> we cannot digest, and so
> there is only us.

The ambiguous meaning of 'eating' is central to the poem. Eating is usually understood as "putting food into one's mouth that is first chewed then swallowed" (macmillandictionary.com). Anger, love, patience and hunger are feelings which we cannot literally chew or swallow. Still, the notion that emotions and feelings are something that are inside our bodies is a common experience. Take, for instance, expressions like *He's a beautiful person inside* or to *swallow one's pride*. These statements show that we think of our bodies in terms of containers, and of emotions and feelings in terms of food. My assumption is that Peterson made use of these conceptualization when writing the poem. Thus, I postulated the conceptual metaphors EMOTIONS/FEELINGS ARE FOOD and THE BODY IS A CONTAINER.

Additionally, the metaphorical use of 'eating' throughout the poem gives rise to further conceptual metaphors at a local, immediate level. These conceptual metaphors depict the meaning of metaphorical words, expressions or imageries that the poet creates in the given context. For instance, in the lines *we ate the world raw, we ate the future* and *we ate the rules* are reflective of the conceptual metaphors WORLD IS FOOD, THE FUTURE IS FOOD and RULES ARE FOOD. These conceptual metaphors do not necessarily reflect the themes or topics of the poem but the metaphorical meaning of 'eating'. Further local conceptual metaphors are MEMORY IS A PERSON and THE BODY IS A CONTAINER.

Furthermore, my assumption is that "How we got here" could describe the act of craving excitement and enjoyment in different life situations; or it may criticize

human greed which often results in destruction and exploitation of other people as well as our habitat. The conceptual metaphors reflecting these themes are DESIRE IS HUNGER, GREED IS HUNGER and DESTROYING IS EATING.

Let us now have a look at what Peterson said about his poem:

> Regarding the poem "How We Got Here": I use the inherent tensions surrounding hunger, appetite, and insatiation as a way of exposing and discussing less identifiable parts of the tension inherent in the specific kind of relationship/lifestyle I'm communicating in the poem. One tension helps describe the other. Humans are designed to "want" as a motivating force in survival (not as a direct subject-object relationship), which bleeds into everything else we do. So I tend to think that eating is rather a form of "trying to get" and one that's equal in relation to "want" as taking, winning, creating, copulating, etc.   (Peterson, p.c. 2017)

With "less identifiable parts of the tension inherent in the specific kind of relationship/lifestyle", Peterson could indeed mean emotions and feelings. If this is the case, the conceptual metaphor EMOTIONS/FEELINGS ARE FOOD would be quite fitting. Furthermore, Peterson talks about his personal, specific understanding of the metaphor, by explaining that he sees "eating" as a form of "trying to get". Based on the poet's reflection, I postulated the conceptual metaphors WANTING IS EATING and DESIRE IS HUNGER.

Table 1. Conceptual metaphors for "How we got here"

Summary of conceptual metaphors with evidence from the poem and/or the poet's interpretation	
MEMORY IS A PERSON	*Nothing even that any* *Starving memory could hold out for*
EMOTIONS/FEELINGS ARE FOOD	*We ate our anger* *and soon our love* *and the patience of others.* *We ate our hunger and moaned*
THE BODY IS A CONTAINER	*as it [the hunger] grew heavier inside us*
WORLD IS FOOD	*We ate the world raw*
THE FUTURE IS FOOD	*We ate the future*
RULES ARE FOOD	*We ate the rules*
GREED IS HUNGER	*We ate everything*
DESTROYING IS EATING	*The yard picked clean*
	As if nothing was ever *made or eaten–* *an infinite nothingness* *we cannot digest*
DESIRE IS HUNGER WANTING IS EATING	"So I tend to think that eating is rather a form of 'trying to get' and one that's equal in relation to 'want'."

5.2   Rae Armantrout's "The Difficulty"

Rae Armantrout is a native Californian who earned her BA at the University of California, Berkeley, and her MA at San Francisco State University. She is author of sixteen poetry collections. Armantrout has also published a short memoir, *True* (1998). Her Collected Prose was published in 2007. Her collection *Versed* (2009) won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. Armantrout's poems are masterful contradictions. According to Robert Creeley, her poems have "a quiet and enabling signature". "I don't think there's another poet," says Creeley, " who is so consummate in authority and yet so generous to her readers and company alike" (see poets.org). She has taught writing at UCSD for over two decades.[33]

On the meanings and functions of metaphors, Armantrout (p.c. 2017) said the following:

> Metaphor isn't a special literary device; it's an ubiquitous part of our thinking, our language use. It is ubiquitous and unstable. As a writer, this makes me uncomfortable. Why is it necessary that one thing be another? It seems shifty. Some quantum physicists, such as Carlo Rovelli, argue that there is no such "thing" as "one thing," there are only relations. Perhaps that's why. Maybe we knew that all along – poets especially […]. Maybe metaphor points at an inherent fuzziness at the heart of things (2017). But so many metaphors have come and gone by now. Aren't we a bit tired of all this substitution? Where has it gotten us, we might ask. Who has any use now for "the golden chariot of the sun," for example? (I just made that up as far as I know, but I'm sure it does appear somewhere, maybe many places, in literature).
> Traditionally metaphor implies carrying one term off into the territory of another. (See how metaphorical this definition is?) When possible I'd rather set two terms vibrating with the same resonance without moving either of them from its natural habitat. In practice this means I prefer sneaky metaphor that (metaphorically) ambushes you or, on the other hand, honest metaphor that owns up to its own limitation and instability.

In the poem "The Difficulty" (2015),[34] Armantrout uses metaphors to bring the concept of cinema experiences into a relationship with real-world experiences.

> This film, like many others,
> claims we'll enjoy life
> now that we've come through

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33. More information on Rae Armantrout can be found on the faculty profile of the University of California, San Diego https://literature.ucsd.edu/people/faculty/emeriti/rarmantrout.html and on the Academy of American Poets website https://poets.org/poet/rae-armantrout;

34. Armantrout's poem "The Difficulty" first appeared in the journal *Poetry* in January 2015 and is also available on poetryfoundation.org

difficulties, dangers
so incredibly condensed
that they must be over.

If the hardship
was undergone by others,
we identified with them

and, if the danger was survived
by simpler life forms,
they're included in this moment

when the credits roll
and we don't know
when to stand

The poem describes how life can be like a film, and how we often identify with fictional characters. It may be seen as a criticism of how people often remain passive in difficult situations. The conceptual metaphor which structures the entire poem is LIFE IS A MOVE. It is reflective of the main theme of the poem and gives rise to numerous other conceptual metaphors, such as A FILM IS A PERSON which reflects the personification of the 'film' in the first two lines of the poem. In the second stanza, Armantrout writes that the "difficulties and dangers are condensed that they must be over". In this case, difficulties and dangers are seen as objects which are reduced in size to make them appear less relevant. To capture these conceptualizations, I postulated the two primary conceptual metaphors DIFFICULTIES/DANGERS ARE OBJECTS and RELEVANCE IS SIZE and the complex conceptual metaphor OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES/DANGERS IS REDUCING THEM IN SIZE. In the last two lines, Armantrout describes how the screen turns black and the names of all the people, who have contributed to the creation of the movie, roll down. This is usually associated with the movie being over. Based on this interpretation, I postulated the conceptual metaphor ENDINGS ARE ROLLING CREDITS.

Let us now consider what Armantrout said about her poem:

> I don't know if it matters, but I wrote "The Difficulty" after seeing the movie "Gravity." I guess you could say that the poem deals with the way we often seem to prefer vicarious experience and compressed time. Or we've gotten used to that. It's what films and games deliver. I see the "if" in "if the danger was survived/by simpler life forms.." as significant. That might refer to human arrogance. By bringing this in is I hope to broaden the scope of the poem and point to what's happening to the planet while humans have their (largely vicarious) adventures.   (p.c. 2017)

In her response, Armantrout implies that certain words, as in this case 'film' may have different meanings. On the one hand, Armantrout explains that she had written the poem after seeing the movie "Gravity". This suggests that the poem

was influenced by her experience of watching the movie. On the other hand, Armantrout talks about the metaphorical meaning of 'film' by saying that films and games deliver "vicarious experience and compressed time". This suggests that 'film', in the case of the poem, may stand for life, in general; or for more specific occurrences or experiences. Furthermore, Armantrout adds that the expression "if the danger was survived by simpler life forms" stands for human arrogance. Based on Armantrout's reflections, the previously postulated conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A MOVIE/FILM appears to work well. In addition, since the poets implies that "The Difficulty" depicts how people deal with various life experiences and situations – in particular difficult ones – they are confronted with, I postulated the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY and its entailment SUCCESS IN LIFE IS OVERCOMING OBSTACLES ALONG THE WAY.

Table 2. Conceptual metaphors for "The Difficulty"

Summary of conceptual metaphors with evidence from the poem and/or the poet's interpretation	
A FILM IS A PERSON	*This film, like many others, claims we'll enjoy life*
LIFE IS A MOVIE/FILM	*If the hardship was undergone by other*
LIFE IS A JOURNEY	*and, if the danger was survived by simpler life forms,*
SUCCESS IN LIFE IS OVERCOMING OBSTACLES ALONG THE WAY	*they're included in this moment*
	"I don't know if it matters, but I wrote 'The Difficulty' after seeing the movie 'Gravity'. I guess you could say that the poem deals with the way we often seem to prefer vicarious experience and compressed time."
ENDINGS ARE ROLLING CREDITS	*when the credits roll and we don't know when to stand*
RELEVANCE IS SIZE	*difficulties, dangers so incredibly condensed*
DIFFICULTIES/DANGERS ARE OBJECTS	*that they must be over*
OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES/DANGERS IS REDUCING THEM IN SIZE	

5.3   Frank Beck's "The Copper Husk Allegory"

Frank Beck is a New York-based writer, photographer and video producer. He reviews British poetry for The Manhattan Review, writes about music for *The Elgar Society Journal* and has published a blog about poetry and music called "On the wing". His photographs have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and he has produced more than a dozen videos for The New York Times and McGraw-Hill. Additionally, Beck has contributed to textbooks published by Prentice-Hall, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Oxford University Press.[35]

On the meanings and functions of poetic metaphors, Beck (p.c. 2017) said the following:

> To ask a poet how she or he thinks of metaphor is a little like asking a cabinetmaker what they think of glue. Without it, things wouldn't hold together. Poets look for connections – between feelings inside us and things outside, between our states of mind and those of other people and between inanimate objects and ourselves. We can state them explicitly, as a simile, or we can use metaphor, which is a kind of shorthand that allows the writing – and the reader – to move along more quickly.
>
> Aristotle said one sign of intelligence is to be able to see the similarities between disparate things. Metaphor puts those similarities into words.
>
> For a practicing poet, metaphors come from many sources, but the driving force in all of them is the human desire to look for meaning in the often contradictory world around us, which includes the other people in our lives. A poet is someone who has discovered that metaphor is very valuable in that effort and learns, largely from the poems, songs and other literature that they've encountered from childhood onwards, to respond to experience metaphorically. It sounds theoretical, but it quickly becomes nearly reflexive.

The metaphors in Beck's poem "The Copper Husk Allegory" (1971)[36] establish connections between abstract concepts like death, fear, isolation, loss and loneliness, sensuality and intimacy and concrete terms of the environment like the 'muffling sky', the 'still farmhouse', the 'voiceless hill' or the 'wind that rushes in through the open kitchen door'. The metaphorical language helps to create the gloomy scene and scary pictures. Additionally, it makes it easier for the readers to imagine in which state the farmers are.

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35. More information about Frank Beck can be found on his personal webpage https://www.torial.com/en/frank.beck/about

36. The poem "The Copper Husk Allegory" was originally published in the chapbook *The Copper Husk Allegory* (New York: Raw Sky Productions, 1971) and is also available through the author's blog https://poetry.diehoren.com/

> The sky is muffling
> The fields with flakes
> The farmhouse is still
> Against a voiceless hill
> The wind rushes in
> Through the open kitchen door,
> and snow drifts over the chairs
>
> One farmer is hanging in the loft;
> his limp neck stiffens in the cold.
> One is sitting in the darkened barn;
> the motor's singing him to sleep.

As Beck personifies the sky by describing it as 'muffling' and the hill by calling in 'voiceless' in the first stanza, I postulated the conceptual metaphors A HILL IS A PERSON and THE SKY IS A PERSON. For the second stanza, I postulated the conceptual metaphors DEATH IS SLEEP and DEATH IS WINTER. Thinking of 'death' in terms of the cold winter season is based on our common conception of the life cycle, in which springtime represents youth, summer maturity, autumn old age, and winter death (see Lakoff & Turner 1989: 18).

The DEATH IS SLEEP conceptual metaphor works similarly, Lakoff and Turner explain as follows:

> In the DEATH IS SLEEP metaphor, the corpse corresponds to the body of a sleeper, and the appearance of the corpse – inactive and inattentive – to the appearance of the sleeper. Optionally, the experience of the soul after death correspond to our mental experiences during sleep, namely dreaming. And just as death is a particular sort of departure, a one-way departure with no return, so death is a particular sort of sleep, an eternal sleep from which we never waken   (1989: 18–19).

This explanation perfectly fits the image that Beck created in his poem: A farmer is sitting hopelessly in a dark room. The motor is on, poisonous gas is filling the room. The farmer is inactive and inattentive, about to fall asleep; or, if we draw on the DEATH IS SLEEP conceptual metaphor, to die.

When I asked Frank Beck to talk about the overall meaning of the poem, he said, "in 'The Copper Husk Allegory', I wanted to express my sense of the way in which conventional American life represses sensuality and intimacy" (p.c. 2017). These two metaphorical themes are, at least to a certain degree,[37] reflected in the

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37. As explained earlier, only the first two stanzas of "The Copper Husk Allegory", which match in length with the other poems, were used in the present project. Thus, some of themes and topics that Beck points to in his interpretation would be more obvious if we considered the poem as a whole.

description of the winter scene in the first stanza. Based on the poet's reflection, the conceptual metaphors SENSUALITY IS WINTER/FALLING SNOW/DRIFTING WIND and INTIMACY IS WINTER/FALLING SNOW/DRIFTING WIND can be postulated. Furthermore, I asked Beck to reflect upon the lines *The farmhouse is still / Against a voiceless hill*, as I was particularly interested in what the 'voiceless hill' means to the poet. Beck responded: "It was astute of you to recognise the use of personification here: I'm not sure I was aware of it when I wrote the poem" (p.c. 2017). Since Beck did not say that I had misinterpreted the metaphor, the A HILL IS A PERSON conceptual metaphor seems to be appropriate.

Table 3. Conceptual metaphors for "The Copper Husk Allegory"

Summary of conceptual metaphors with evidence from the poem and/or the poet's interpretation	
THE SKY IS A PERSON	*The sky is muffling* *The fields with flakes*
A HILL IS A PERSON	*The farmhouse is still* *Against a voiceless hill*
DEATH IS WINTER / DARKNESS / COLDNESS / SILENCE	*One farmer is hanging in the loft;* *his limp neck stiffens in the cold*
DEATH IS SLEEP	*One is sitting in the darkened barn;* *the motor's singing him to sleep*
SENSUALITY IS WINTER/FALLING SNOW/ DRIFTING WIND	"In 'The Copper Husk Allegory', I wanted to express my sense of the way in which conventional American life represses sensuality and intimacy"
INTIMACY IS WINTER/FALLING SNOW/ DRIFTING WIND	

5.4   Shirley Geok-Lin Lim's "Night Vision"

Shirley Geok-Lin Lim was born in Malacca, Malaysia, and raised by her Chinese father. Her first languages were Malay and the Hokkin dialect of Chinese. Shirley Lim earned her BA from the University of Malaya and her PhD from Brandeis University, and considers herself primarily a poet. Lim, though, has also written books of short stories, criticism, a novel, and a memoir. Her debut collection, *Crossing the Peninsula and Other Poems* (1980), won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize. Her other collections include *Ars Poetica for the Day* (2015), *The Irreversible Sun* (2015), *Do You Live In?* (2015), and *Embracing the Angel: Hong Kong Poems* (2014). Some of the awards and honors that Shirley Lim received are the Fulbright Distinguished Lecturer award, two American Book Awards, and the Society for the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature of

the United States Lifetime Achievement Award. Shirley Lim is a Professor in the English Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara.[38]

Please consider what Lim said about the origins and functions of metaphors:

> Metaphors signify the core, foundation, central engine, inspiring breath of all poetry. They are how the Muse muses, how Imagination flies, how readers absorb the poet's "thoughts too deep for human tears.
>
> The Metaphor does not possess a "function." It is the Spirit of poetry, presides over the functions that power and regulate poems, such as the breaths that dictate and insinuate rhythm, line breaks, moveable feet, and the eye that teases form and stanzas, and more. I do not "use" metaphors; they arrive as gifts. To work for them is a fanciful notion, and when I "work" for metaphors, I end up only with fancies, not metaphors.
>
> Simply, Metaphor's origin is the Imagination. But the Imagination has various sources just as the Ocean does – the earth of home, the heat of passion, the tears of loss, and more.   (2017)

The metaphors in Shirley Lim's poem "Night Vision" (1980)[39] seem to have their origin in how we imagine human mortality, and the feelings that are associated with it (e.g., fear, isolation, loss). "Night Vision" is a retrospective on the speaker's youth, reminiscence of what he or she had and what it has now decayed to. Similar to Beck's "The Copper Husk Allegory" and Peterson's "How we got here", the description of the environment reflects the speaker's thoughts and feelings. At first, when the narrator thinks back to her childhood, the feelings towards the house seem to be warm and welcoming (e.g. 'I lie awake, in the deep enclosing heart of the household'). When the speaker has grown up, she sees that the house is neglected and no longer a happy place ('Dust falling in the dark, in the house').

> Years later, I lie awake
> In the deep enclosing heart of a household.
> Years later than in a crib,
> Floating among the white moon faces that beam and grasp.

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38. More information about Shirley Lim can be found on the faculty profile of the University of California, Santa Barbara https://www.english.ucsb.edu/people/lim-shirley-geok-lin; as well as on poetryfoundation.org.

39. The poem "Night Vision" was first published in Lim's poetry collection *Crossing the Peninsula and Other Poems* (Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980) and then served as the opening to her book *Among the White Moon Faces* (1996). The first chapter of the book, and thus also the poem "Night Vision" was made available online by The Washington Post https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/books/chap1/amongthewhitemoonfaces.htm

> Years later, flecking the eyes,
> Faces like spheres wheeling, savoring my self.
> Years later, I awaken to see
> Dust falling in the dark, in the house

The first stanza depicts how the narrators, as a baby, is lying in the crib. She is surrounded by people and feels safe and secure. For the first two lines, four conceptual metaphors could be postulated. One is AFFECTION IS CONTAINMENT. Container metaphors shape many different understandings of abstract concepts, such as visual fields (e.g. The ship is *coming into* my view) or various kinds of states, such as love (e.g. He's *in* love), trouble (e.g. We're *out of* trouble now) or depression (She *fell into* a depression) (see Lakoff & Johnson 1989: 31–32). The reason why container metaphors are so prominent in thought, speech and action is that we see our bodies as containers. "We are physical beings," explain Lakoff and Johnson, "bounded and set off from the rest of the world by the surface of our skins, and we experience the rest of the world as outside us. Each of us is a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation" (1989: 29). In "Night Vision", Lim works with these conceptualizations. Consider the line *In the deep enclosing heart of the household*, which suggests that the speaker finds herself *in* the household and evokes the image of a container. Furthermore, the poet depicts the idea of being loved is being in the location of the heart, which is reflective of the conceptual metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS and AFFECTION IS A HEART. Eventually, one could combine the three conceptual metaphors and postulate a complex one, such as BEING CARED FOR IS BEING SHELTERED which reflects the image of a baby feeling safe.

Another conceptualization, both of a metaphorical and a metonymical nature, are the "white moon faces" in the fourth line of the poem where faces stand for people and the image metaphoric mapping of roundedness and whiteness (also reinforced by the preceding adjective) on the shape of the faces interact. The metaphorical similarity between the shape of the moon and the face are conventional (see Gleason 2009: 446) and can be depicted by the image metaphor A FACE IS A WHITE MOON.

In the second stanza, the image of the faces reappears; this time, though, they appear like wheeling spheres (A FACE IS A ROUND SPHERE), which suggests that the image of the faces is blurred. The narrator, after she has grown up, seems to have a less clear picture of the faces that (used to) surround her; also the "flecks in the eyes" prevent her from focusing on something. One could interpret this stanza as depicting how details in memory get lost when time passes, which would be reflective of the conceptual metaphor FADING MEMORIES ARE FLECKS IN THE EYE and also depicts a main theme of the poem.

Further central themes of the poem are life and death. The poem starts with the image of the baby in the crib surrounded by bright faces; the repeated mentioning of "years later", suggests the passing of time; and the poem ends with the narrator

awakening to see / dust falling in the dark, in the house. Since day and light are associated with life and the concept of falling and darkness with death, I postulated the conceptual metaphors A LIFETIME IS A DAY and DEATH IS NIGHT as thematic metaphors and FALLING DUST IS DEATH to capture the immediate image that the final two lines evoke.

Let us now consider Lim's interpretation for a very detailed explanation of the metaphorical conceptualizations of this topic:

> It [the poem] was composed years ago and appears in my very first collection, *Crossing the Peninsula*, in 1980! The metaphors work across two stanzas I'm a rather formalist poet, and as such, my metaphoric imagination works itself out, plays with and is generated and organized via a kind of cat's cradle braiding with formal shapes. Also, my poems play with rhetorical devices – here it is anaphora, the repetition of the phrase, "years later," which begins every third line in the two unrhymed quatrains. The metaphor of passing years – inescapable mortality – follows the sequence of the narrator's wakeful recounting of her life, from infancy "in a crib,/ Floating among the white moon faces that beam and grasp' – the baby surrounded by round faces that appear like bright moons that hold/comfort the baby in their light – to the present moment as an adult "in the deep enclosing heart of a household" – secure within the domestic family, surrounded by loving faces; and concluding with a vision ("night vision" – foreboding) of a future when moon and faces are now "dust" (an allusion to the well-known Biblical text [Genesis 3:19, King James Version]: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.") The metaphors move through a sequence of family and communal security and comfort to the isolation of the single individual alone in a house to "to see/ Dust falling in the dark," i.e. facing death. On one level, the metaphors generate a universal story of human mortality, but the loss of the family and community to my mind is less "universal" and more a modern tragedy of the ways in which isolated loneliness has become the condition of life for many old folks, and is particularly the tragedy for immigrants who in leaving their original communities can expect growing old and dying alone. This poem expresses my fear for my future in the US.   (Lim, p.c. 2017)

Lim's response basically reflects the previously established metaphorical themes and topics of the poem, giving support to the postulated conceptual and image metaphors. What is particularly interesting about the poet's response are her detailed explanations for how some of the metaphors came into being and what they mean to her personally. For instance, to explain the metaphorical meaning of 'dust', Lim quotes a passage from the Bible that recounts the biblical notion of the human body as coming from the earth ("And God made man from the dust of the earth"; Gen. 2.7) and eventually returning to it ("They dye and they return to their own dust"; Ps. 104, 29). Dust can thus be taken literally as the matter that a human body turns into when it dies. But it may also metaphorically stand for 'decay' and 'death'. Thus, the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS FALLING DUST appears to be fitting.

Beside the "universal story of human mortality", the poem also, as Lim explains, depicts the tragedy of immigrants that are often left alone when they leave their original community. Leaving one's parents' home as a young adult, or moving into another country could thus be considered a further theme that "Night Vision" discusses. Primarily, this theme is reflected in the metaphorical meaning to the use of 'house' where, in the first stanza, the house stands for a secure place – this is where the life of the narrator begins. In the final stanza, the house is an isolated, abandoned place where the narrator is worried about dying alone. A possible conceptual metaphor that captures this interpretation is DEATH IS ABANDONMENT/ISOLATION.

Table 4. Conceptual metaphors for"Night Vision"

	Summary of conceptual metaphors with evidence from the poem and/or the poet's interpretation
AFFECTION IS CONTAINMENT STATES ARE LOCATIONS	*Years later, I lie awake In the deep enclosing heart of a household*
AFFECTION IS A HEART	"in the deep enclosing heart of a household – secure within the domestic family, surrounded by loving faces"
BEING CARED FOR IS BEING SHELTERED	
A FACE IS A WHITE MOON	*Years later than in a crib,* *Floating among the white moon faces that beam and grasp*
LIFETIME IS A DAY	"the baby [is] surrounded by round faces that appear like bright moons that hold/comfort the baby in their light"
FADING MEMORIES ARE FLECKS IN THE EYE	*Years later, flecking the eyes,*
A FACE IS A ROUND SPHERE	*Faces like spheres wheeling, savoring my self.*
DEATH IS NIGHT	*Years later, I awaken to see*
DEATH IS FALLING DUST	*Dust falling in the dark, in the house*
	"The metaphors move through a sequence of family and communal security and comfort to the isolation of the single individual alone in a house 'to see/ Dust falling in the dark,' i.e. facing death."
DEATH IS ABANDONMENT/ ISOLATION	"On one level, the metaphors generate a universal story of human mortality, but the loss of the family and community to my mind is less "universal" and more a modern tragedy of the ways in which isolated loneliness has become the condition of life for many old folks, and is particularly the tragedy for immigrants who in leaving their original communities can expect growing old and dying alone."

5.5   Robert Pinsky's "The Hearts"

Robert Pinsky is a poet, essayist, translator and teacher. He was born in 1940 in Long Branch, New Jersey. Pinsky received a BA from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and earned both an MA and PhD in Philosophy from Stanford University. Pinsky is the author of several collections of poetry, including *Selected Poems* (2011), *Gulf Music: Poems* (2007) and *The Figured Wheel: New and Collected Poems 1966–1996* (1996), which received the 1997 Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize and was a Pulitzer Prize nominee.

From 1997 to 2000, Pinsky served as the United States Poet Laureate and Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress. During that time, he founded the Favorite Poem Project, a program dedicated to celebrating, documenting and encouraging poetry's role in Americans' lives. Pinsky is a professor of English and creative writing in the graduate writing program at Boston University.[40]

Pinsky's (p.c. 2017) reflection upon the meanings and functions of metaphors was rather concise. What I found particularly interesting is Pinsky's mentioning of other forms of art, in particular music, as a source of inspiration:

> Metaphors, tropes, schemes, similes, figures, images – all worth thinking about I guess, but there's a lot of foofaraw about the special nature of these in or by the poet.
>
> Everybody uses metaphors, etc. and the poet is maybe not as mysteriously special as academic writing sometimes makes it seem.
>
> Inspiration for art comes from art. From music and truth: one feels those in works of art, remembers them, and feels . . . inspired.

The notion that poetry and music are similar in many regards and closely connected is central to a project entitled POEMJAZZ. It was established by Pinsky and Grammy Award-winning pianist Laurence Hobgood. On November 4, 2012, the two artists presented their project in the Sala Musica at the Villa Aurelia in Rome. Pinsky read his poems, amongst them "The Hearts", and various translations while Hobgood improvised songs on the piano. "This is not a reading with a mere piano accompaniment", stated Pinsky in an interview, "but rather an equal dialogue between voice and piano, between poetry and music" (Pinsky 2012).[41] Even though the performances per se are not relevant to this present project, it is, to my mind,

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40. More information on Robert Pinsky can be found on the Academy of American Poets website https://poets.org/poet/robert-pinsky, on poetryfoundation.org and on the author's personal webpage robertpinskypoet.com.

41. Pinsky's project "The Art of Poetry" is also introduced on his website https://robertpinsky-poet.com/the-art-of-poetry/

still helpful to know that for Pinsky meaning resides not only in what the words convey, but in the ways words sound.

Below are the first three stanzas of "The Hearts" (1990)[42] which I used in my empirical investigation:

> The legendary muscle that wants and grieves,
> The organ of attachment, the pump of thrills
> And troubles, clinging in stubborn colonies
>
> Like pulpy shore-life battened on a jetty.
> Slashed by the little deaths of sleep and pleasure,
> They swell in the nurturing spasms of the waves,
>
> Sucking to cling; and even in death itself–
> Baked, frozen – they shrink to grip the granite harder.

When I asked Pinsky to reflect upon his use of metaphors in "The Hearts", he did not say what inspired him to write the poem or what it means to him personally. Instead, he commented on the specific function of what are called metaphorical verbs (see e.g. Desai et al., 2011; Boulenger et al., 2012; Lauro et al., 2013):

> What strikes me about metaphor, in the first three stanzas of "The Hearts" and as a general matter, is how much metaphoric power inheres in verbs and nouns: Wants, grieves, pumps, thrills, clings, battens, jetties, slashes, swells, nurtures, sucks, clings, shrinks, grips, rids . . . the energy of metaphor churns through syntax. There's maybe a lazy inclination to think of metaphors as "images." In a way yes, but in poetry that energy is not so much pictorial as kinetic   (Pinsky, p.c. 2019).

Pinsky's poem "The Hearts" can be read as a metaphorized depiction of the physiological image of the heart. The use of metaphors allows the poet to establish connections between the circulatory system and the ocean, between blood and water, heart beats and waves. This interpretation of the poem is reflective of numerous conceptual metaphors.

For instance, in the first line, Pinsky personifies the heart (THE HEART IS PERSON) by describing it as a "legendary muscle that wants and grieves". In the second line, the heart is called the "pump of thrills" which is reflective of the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS A MACHINE. The following lines may be interpreted as a metaphorical description of how the heart deals – poetically and scientifically – with troubles. In a poetic, metaphorical context, the troubles are understood as "pulpy shore-life battened on a jetty" that do not lose grip despite the power of the

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42. Robert Pinsky's "The Hearts" was first published in his collection *The Want Bone* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990) and is now available online on poetryfoundation.org.

reoccurring waves that strike them, the hot sun that bakes them or the wind and coldness that freeze them. They seem to become stronger and stronger as they are nurtured by the waves, and cling to the surface even harder as they are exposed to life-threatening situations. In a more scientific, yet still metaphorical context, Pinsky's line may reflect how the heart functions; how it repeatedly pumps blood through the veins that nurtures the body and keeps us humans alive. There might, however, be blood clots that grow in size like the swelling "pulpy shore-life on a jetty" and prevent the heart from working properly. These troubles may, eventually, force to heart to stop working; but even when the body is dead, these particles will still be there. This metaphorized medical description of the human circulatory system and the heart are reflective of various conceptual metaphors, such as BLOOD IS WATER, RHYTHM IS WAVES, NURTURANCE IS WATER, TROUBLES ARE BLOOD CLOTS and DEATH IS BEING BAKED/FROZEN

There is yet another possible metaphorical dimension to the poem which has not yet been considered; namely, the common understanding of the heart as being a symbol of love.[43] Pinsky's description of how the heart behaves may be reflective of the ways people act when they are in love. Like the heart, people experience grief and pleasure; they sometimes cannot let go of things or people like the heart that is 'sucking to cling; even in death itself'. The previously established conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS A PERSON works also in this context. In addition, I postulated the conceptual metaphor THE CENTER OF EMOTION IS THE HEART to capture the idea of the heart being "the organ of attachment". For the lines *And troubles, clinging in stubborn colonies/Like pulpy shore-life battened on a jetty,* I postulated the conceptual metaphor PERSISTENCE IS CLINGING ENTITIES. It is based on the common thought of emotional stability being represented by the body having contact to the ground (see Lakoff, Espenson, & Schwartz, 1991). In Pinsky's poem, it is the abstract concept of troubles that is conceptualized as an object clinging to a jetty. My assumption is that some readers might see a connection between entities sticking to the ground and feelings that are persistent, such as a person being hopeful despite the difficulties that he/she is facing. Finally, the lines *Slashed by the little deaths of sleep and pleasure / They swell in the nurturing spasms of the waves* may refer to hardships that the heart or people face. Thus, I postulated the conceptual metaphor HARDSHIPS ARE SLASHINGS and NURTURANCE IS GROWTH.

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43. In a follow-up email, I asked Robert Pinsky whether he sees his poem as metaphorically depicting the physiological image of the heart or if he rather intended the poem to discuss topics such as love, loss, or relationships. He said that both interpretations are true.

Table 5. Conceptual metaphors for "The Hearts"[44]

Summary of conceptual metaphors with evidence from the poem[44]	
THE HEART IS PERSON	*The legendary muscle that wants and grieves*
THE CENTER OF EMOTION IS THE HEART	*The organ of attachment*
THE HEART IS A MACHINE	*The pump of thrills*
TROUBLES ARE BLOOD CLOTS	*And troubles, clinging in stubborn colonies*
PERSISTENCE IS CLINGING ENTITIES	*Like pulpy shore-life battened on a jetty*
WAVES ARE RHYTHM	*Slashed by the little deaths of sleep and pleasure,*
NURTURANCE IS WATER	*They swell in the nurturing spasms of the waves*
WATER IS BLOOD	
HARDSHIPS ARE SLASHINGS	
DEATH IS BEING BAKED/FROZEN	*Sucking to cling; and even in death itself –* *Baked, frozen – they shrink to grip the granite harder*

5.6   James Arthur's "Wind"

Canadian-American poet James Arthur holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature from the University of Toronto, an M.A. in Creative Writing (fiction) from the University of New Brunswick and M.F.A. Creative Writing (poetry) from the University of Washington. Arthur is the author of *The Suicide's Son* (Véhicule Press 2019) and *Charms Against Lightning* (Copper Canyon Press, 2012). His poems have also appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The American Poetry Review*, *The New Republic*, and *The London Review of Books*. He has received the Amy Lowell Travelling Poetry Scholarship, a Hodder Fellowship, a Stegner Fellowship, a Discovery/*The Nation* Prize, a Fulbright Scholarship to Northern Ireland, and a Visiting Fellowship at Exeter College, Oxford. Arthur lives in Baltimore, where he teaches in the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University.[45]

When I asked James Arthur to talk about the meanings and functions of metaphors in poetry, he said the following:

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44. Since Robert Pinsky did not explain the meanings of any specific metaphors, the table only includes the lines from the poem and not the poet's commentary.

45. More information on James Arthur and his poems can be found on his webpage jamesarthurpoetry.com.

For me, poems originate in questions, or in feelings that I want to explain to myself through the act of writing. We all have this experience, no doubt – the experience of being full of many different moods, thoughts, wants, all present simultaneously, jostling against one another, contradicting one another – and consciously or not, we sense that if only we can sort out our feelings and name them, we'll be better able to live with them.

[…] I want other people to find their own meanings in my poems, so when developing a metaphor I have to stop short of explaining everything. I explore associations, and I identify or guess at some of the subtext that people might discover in the poem, perhaps strengthening those implications that to me seem richest, and most interesting … but if I want readers to be able to make the poem their own, I have to leave its essential ambiguity intact, so that readers can have the sense that they too are forming connections, and therefore discovering something.

[…] I feel that what metaphor does in poetry is create enough ambiguity & unfamiliarity that readers are forced to encounter the poem imaginatively, without knowing for certain what, if anything, is meant.   (p.c. 2017)[46]

In his poem "Wind" (2017),[47] Arthur creates a sense of ambiguity by personifying the wind. We usually imagine the wind as a natural phenomenon; as a summer breeze that smoothly touches one's skin on a chilly evening. We might also think of a stronger wind that tosses around the colorful autumn leaves; or a storm that brings rain or snow. What is striking about the poem, though, is that Arthur invites the readers to identify with the wind, to imagine what it must be like to act like the wind or to see the world through its eyes. Additionally, through the use of metaphors, Arthur makes his readers wonder whether the character that he describes really is the wind or maybe a human being.

> it's true sometimes I cannot
> stop myself from spilling
> the recycling
>
> unpetalling apple blossoms raiding
> a picnic
> making off with napkins I'm nothing
> until I happen
> flipping an umbrella outside-in

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46. I also discussed Arthur's interpretation of his poem in an earlier article (see Rasse 2018).

47. Arthur's poem "Wind" was first published in Poem-a-Day on September 21, 2017, by the Academy of American Poets. It was also published in his poetry chapbook *Hundred Acre Wood* (Toronto: Anstruther Press, 2018). James Arthur and Anstruther have given me permission to include the poem in this project.

> throwing its owner
> into a fumble
> pelting the avenue with sleet or dust
>
> at times downtown
> riding over galleries of air
> so full of high excitement howling
> I borrow an old woman's hat
> and fling it into the road
>
> arriving with news of the larkspur
> and the bumblebee
> at times embracing you so lightly
> in ways you don't even register
> as touch

The very obvious and most prominent conceptual metaphor that underlies the meaning of the whole poem is WIND IS A PERSON. Expressions like *stop myself from spilling, making off with napkins, I borrow an old woman's hat, embracing you so lightly* suggest that the narrator in the poem could be a human being reflecting upon their actions. Whom exactly people associate with the wind, and how they interpret its actions, will most likely vary from individual to individual. I imagine that some people will think of their partners or close friends based on the intimacy expressed in Arthur's poetic imagery. Readers might also think of a person that is impulsive and sometimes careless. In addition, if people interpret the actions of the wind metaphorically, they might think of topics such as tolerance, respect or acceptance based on the implied message nobody is perfect, and everyone messes up sometimes; and that should be respected.

Let us now consider what Arthur said about his poem:

> In the specific case of "Wind," I wanted to allow joy, even giddiness, to enter the poem. I tried to play off the idea of the wind being mischievous and impulsive, but intangible too, so I used a number of trochaic words, feminine line endings, and enjambment (plus the lack of punctuation) to try to capture the persona of wind, as I imagine it: careless, graceful, fey.

> And yet, for all the poem's playfulness, I think there's a dark element to "Wind" too, because the wind disavows all responsibility for its actions. It's saying, in effect, "I do what I feel like doing in the moment, and I can't help it! It's who I am!" I've always wrestled against this impulsiveness in myself – probably everyone does – and I tried to give voice to that part of myself, without making the poem so ethically troubled that all sense of fun would be lost.

> Perhaps the wind also offers a kind of consolation. I think that in the last lines, the wind is saying that it sees us, faults and all, and is always with us, loving us, tending to us, keeping us company, even if we are unaware of its presence.   (p.c. 2017)

In his response, Arthur does not say explicitly that he has personified the wind. Yet, the way he describes the wind's behavior and its character support the postulation of the WIND IS A PERSON conceptual metaphor. Other metaphors could be seen as spawning off from this metaphor, such as THE WIND IS AN IRRESPONSIBLE PERSON, THE WIND IS A MISCHIEVOUS PERSON, THE WIND IS A PERSON RIDING ENTHUSIASTICALLY ON A HORSE, which are specifications of the main metaphorical theme. Moreover, since Arthur suggests that "in the last lines, the wind is saying that it sees us, faults and all, and is always with us, loving us, tending to us, keeping us company, even if we are unaware of its presence", I postulated the conceptual metaphor CONSOLATION IS TOUCH and AFFECTION IS TOUCH.

Table 6. Conceptual metaphors for "Wind"

Summary of conceptual metaphors with evidence from the poem and/or the poet's interpretation	
THE WIND IS A PERSON	"I used a number of trochaic words, feminine line endings, and enjambment (plus the lack of punctuation) to try to capture the persona of wind, as I imagine it: careless, graceful, fey."
THE WIND IS AN IRRESPONSIBLE PERSON	*it's true sometimes I cannot*
	stop myself from spilling the recycling unpetalling
THE WIND IS A MISCHIEVOUS PERSON	*apple blossoms raiding a picnic*
	making off with napkins I'm nothing until I happen
	flipping an umbrella outside-in throwing its owner
	into a fumble
	"I tried to play off the idea of the wind being mischievous and impulsive, but intangible too […]. And yet, for all the poem's playfulness, I think there's a dark element to "Wind" too, because the wind disavows all responsibility for its actions."
THE WIND IS A PERSON RIDING ENTHUSIASTICALLY ON A HORSE	*riding over galleries of air*
	so full of high excitement howling
CONSOLATION IS TOUCH	*at times embracing you so lightly*
AFFECTION IS TOUCH	*in ways you don't even register as touch*
	"Perhaps the wind also offers a kind of consolation. I think that in the last lines, the wind is saying that it sees us, faults and all, and is always with us, loving us, tending to us, keeping us company, even if we are unaware of its presence."

5.7   Chapter summary

The aim of the present chapter was to introduce the poems and their authors and to analyze the poems for underlying conceptual metaphors. The analysis was, on the one hand, based on my personal interpretation of the poems. On the other hand, I took the poets' reflections upon the meanings and functions of their metaphors into account. The intention was to broaden the understandings of the poems by presenting different dimensions of (metaphorical) meanings, feelings and experiences that the poems convey. The lists of postulated conceptual metaphors for each of the six poems will, in the following chapters, serve as the basis for further discussions on metaphor production and understanding.

Before I turn to the readers' interpretations of the poems in Chapter 6, I would like to highlight an interesting, and so far unexplored finding that the analysis of conceptual metaphors in the six poems has pointed to; namely, that metaphors in poetry work on at least[48] three different, though often closely connected, levels.[49] On the micro or, "**immediate level**", the conceptual metaphors reflect the meaning of local metaphorical expressions and/or the immediate imageries that the poem creates. For instance, in Rae Armantrout's "The Difficulty", the conceptual metaphor ENDINGS ARE ROLLING CREDITS are reflective of the immediate meaning of the last three lines of in poem (*when the credits roll /and we don't know /when to stand*). Some other examples are TROUBLES ARE BLOOD CLOTS for the line *and troubles/ clinging in stubborn colonies* in Pinsky's poem "The Hearts" or RULES ARE FOOD for the line *we ate the rules raw* in Peterson's "How we got here".

Other conceptual metaphors work on the meso, or "**thematic level**". If we again take Armantrout's poem as an example, we know from the poet's interpretation that one of the poem's themes are difficulties and how to overcome them. The conceptual metaphors which reflect this theme are DIFFICULTIES ARE OBJECTS and SUCCESS IN

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48. At this point, let me point out again that my postulation of conceptual metaphors, and thus the definitions of the three levels (immediate, thematic, thematic-structural), reflect the meanings and experiences that a poem conveys through written language. In other words, I was looking for linguistic evidence – either in the poems themselves or in the poets' interpretations of their poems – to postulate underlying conceptual metaphors. In poetry, though, metaphoricity may also lie in rhyme and rhythm; in the ways individual words or the entire narrative sound when a poet or reader reads the poem out aloud; in pauses and lines breaks, or in a poem's visual appearance on the paper. Thus, it is very likely that conceptual metaphors work on levels other than the three discussed in this chapter. Future research shall shed light on this assumption.

49. I am very grateful to Alexander Onysko for helping me define these levels on which conceptual metaphors may work, and to Herb Colston for applying these categories to other poems as well. In Chapter 7, these levels will be applied to more excerpts of poetry.

LIFE IS OVERCOMING OBSTACLES ALONG THE WAY. The entire poem, though, is structured by the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A MOVIE; it is prominent throughout the poem and may give rise to other conceptual metaphors. Thus, I propose that the LIFE IS A MOVIE conceptual metaphor works on a macro, or "**thematic-structural level**".

If we consider the analyses of the poems in the present chapter, it becomes apparent that different poems show different instances of conceptual metaphors working on different levels. Some poems may show conceptual metaphors that work primarily on one level while other poems are reflective of multiple conceptual metaphors that work on different levels. My contention is that each level may help readers or researchers to better understand the metaphorical dimensions that a poem depicts. More precisely, the conceptual metaphors on the immediate level may reveal what individual metaphorical expressions and imageries mean. On the thematic level, paying attention to underlying conceptual metaphors may help researchers or readers to understand what themes and topics a poem depicts. And on the thematic-structural level, analyzing a poem for underlying conceptual metaphors reveals whether the poem has one particularly prominent theme around which the entire narrative is structured.

To my knowledge, there is hardly any other investigations into metaphors in poetry that have studied how conceptual metaphors work on different levels. Researchers in the past have successfully shown that conceptual metaphors structure poetic narratives, and that conceptual metaphors play an important role in poetry interpretation as they enable readers to understand and enjoy poetic metaphors (c.f., Lakoff & Turner 1989; Gibbs 1994; Stockwell 2003). However, the application of conceptual metaphor theory in these studies happened primarily on a general level. This could mean that the postulated conceptual metaphors only reflected the most obvious meaning of the poem, or that researchers selected specific conceptual metaphors that supported their claims while other conceptual metaphors were not taken into account.

An exception is Kövecses' (2018) discussion of "Metaphor Universals in Literature". There, the author differentiates between the situational context, the discourse context, the conceptual-cognitive context, and the bodily context when he talks about factors that possibly influenced a poet's use of (conceptual) metaphors in his/her work. As an example for the situational context, Kövecses (2018: np) quotes Matthew Arnold's poem "Dover Beach" and suggests that the lines *The sea is calm to-night / The tide is full, the moon lies fair / The sea of Faith / Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore* were possibly prompted by the immediate situation in which the poet found himself in when he was writing the poem (e.g., watching the physical event of the ebb and flow of the sea). As discourse context, Kövecses understands the immediate linguistic context, the previous discourses on the same topic, and the dominant forms of discourse related to a particular subject matter;

the bodily context is a particular state or condition of the body which can produce particular metaphorical conceptualizations in specific cases, such as a poet's or writer's illness; and the conceptual-cognitive context includes the metaphorical conceptual system at large, knowledge about the elements of discourse, ideology, knowledge about past events, interests and concerns.

Similar to Kövecses and based on the general shortcomings in this route of investigations, I propose that studying poetry for underlying conceptual metaphors *and* investigating on which level(s) they work will give a more accurate and multi-faceted picture on the role of metaphors in poetry in contrast to what previous studies did. Researchers would be encouraged to pay attention to details by, for instance, asking themselves what individual words and phrases mean, what themes and topics the poem conveys, and whether there is a central theme that structures the entire poem. Additionally, their findings would be based on systematic analyses of metaphors that work in and across various dimensions of the poem.

Beside enlarging the understanding of how (conceptual) metaphors structure a poem on different levels, a systematic application of CMT, as Chapter 6 will show, may also broaden our understanding of how readers interpret the meaning of a poem, how they describe their emotional engagements with a poem, and how they talk about an author's intention in writing a poem. Chapter 7, then, will compare the poets' interpretations of the poems to the readers' and propose that the levels may, to a certain degree, point to the spaces in which conceptual metaphors underlying the poets' and readers' responses overlap or vary.[50]

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50. For instance, the data has shown that the responses primarily overlap on the thematic-structural level; thus, when readers and poets talk about the main theme of the poem, their responses will be quite similar. By contrast, various differences can be found on the immediate level, which is when readers and poets talk about the meanings of specific poetic metaphors.

On readers' engagements with poetry

The previous chapters introduced the concept of metaphor, surveyed the main components of conceptual metaphor theory, and explored how poets talk about the meanings and functions of metaphors in poetry. The present chapter focuses on the readers' perspectives.

As explained in detail in Chapter 3, a written think-aloud-protocol study was used to explore how readers interpret the meanings of a poem, how they define their emotional engagements with a poem, and how they talk about the author's intention in writing the poem. The focus of this investigation lies on whether people are more likely to use literal or metaphorical language when they talk about these aspects, and if conceptual metaphor shapes readers' responses to poetic narratives.

Participants of the study were sixty-two students at the University of Alberta, all native English speakers. The participants were divided into two groups. One group (31 participants) was asked to read the poems "The Copper Husk Allegory", "How we got here", and "Night Vision". The second group (again 31 participants) was asked to read "Wind", "Hearts" and "The Difficulty". In writing out their responses to the individual poems, participants were encouraged to respond to the following three questions:

a. What is the meaning of the poem?
b. How does reading the poem make you feel?
c. What could have been the author's communicative intention in writing this poem?

Most of the participants did not answer the questions systematically but wrote essay-like responses in which the questions were answered; sometimes indirectly. Particular signal words or expressions, though, such as "the poem describes," "I felt happy reading the poem, "I think the author was trying to say that…" revealed which part of the response belonged to which of the three questions. The responses to the individual questions (meaning, feeling and intention) were analyzed for whether they are literal and metaphorical; and if they are structured by underlying conceptual metaphors or not. The following section will explain in detail how the data was analyzed.

6.1   Data analysis and coding

To explore the nuances and dynamics of metaphor interpretation, the narrative responses of all participants to each of the six poems are analyzed in three stages.

In the first stage, each of the total of 186 interpretations are divided in terms of whether they refer to the meaning, feeling, or the poets' communicative intention. After that, each response is coded for whether the language that the participants use to answer the questions shows instances of conceptual metaphors or not.[51] The aim is to give an overall picture of how readers respond to the meaning, feeling, and intention questions respectively.

In the second stage of analysis, a list of conceptual metaphors is created for each of the poems that reflects which conceptual metaphors participants use when they respond to the meaning, feeling, and communicative intent questions. In this context, I only consider those conceptual metaphors which actually relate to the given question. For instance, if a participant describes the meaning of the poem and uses a conventional metaphorical expression such as "I turn a blind eye", it will not be analyzed further. This is because this particular metaphorical statement ("I turn a blind eye") does not give any information on whether the poem was interpreted metaphorically or not. The aim of the second analysis and interpretation is to investigate how conceptual metaphors structure readers' responses to the meaning, feeling, and communicative intent questions.

Finally, in the third stage of data analysis, the metaphorical responses to the three questions are further analyzed to see whether the participants' use of conceptual metaphor is explicit, implicit or incomplete. In the case of explicit references to underlying conceptual metaphors, participants quote lines from the poem or point to a target domain and explain precisely how they arrived at this understanding. Implicit references to conceptual metaphors are also reflective of a reader's metaphorical understanding of the poem. In such cases, though, the participant only mentions a target domain or a metaphorical theme or topic that the poem depicts without explaining what has influenced this interpretation. Finally, in some responses, the participants' metaphorical interpretations are incomplete and/or incoherent so that a postulation of proper conceptual metaphors is not possible.[52] This

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51. For the identification of whether a word was used in its literal or metaphorical sense, the basic steps of the metaphor identification procedure MIP were applied. The MIP method was explained in detail in Chapter 2.

52. Examples for explicit, implicit and incomplete references to conceptual metaphors are presented and discussed on p. 20 and onwards.

investigation aims to present some nuances in the ways readers (metaphorically) interpret poems.

To illustrate an example for how the data was coded, please consider the following response to Shirley Lim's poem "Night Vision":

> The poem is about venturing through certain stages of life. Life comes full circle – where you begin is where you end. This comes from my interpretation of the narrator starting "in the deep enclosing heart" and ending in the "dark house". The poem makes me feel sad. Intention: no matter what you do in your life, ambition, career family etc. you will eventually end off right where you started.   (P31)

As explained previously, the first stage of data analysis focuses on whether the responses to the meaning, feeling, and communicative intent question show instances of literal or metaphorical interpretations. Consider how the participant suggests that the poem "is about venturing through certain stages of life" and that "life comes full circle – where you begin is where you end". The poem itself does not describe how a person leads her life, and that life can be compared to journeys or a circle. The participant still interprets it as such, which means that the poem was interpreted metaphorically. The description of how reading the poem makes the participant feel is literal ("sad"), while the comment on the author's intention is metaphorical. Similar to the meaning interpretation, the way the participant talks about the author's intention implies that life is seen as a journey or a circle ("you will eventually end off right where you started").

In the second stage, the responses are coded for underlying conceptual metaphors. The metaphorical meaning interpretation is reflective of the conceptual metaphors LIFE IS A JOURNEY ("venturing through certain stages") and LIFE IS A CIRCLE ("life comes full circle – where you begin is where you end"), including the metaphorical entailments of BEGINNING/ENDING IS A CONTAINER to which the participant explicitly points to by explaining the meanings of the expressions "in the deep enclosing heart" and "ending in the dark house". The response to how reading the poem makes the participant feel has no underlying conceptual metaphor. And the comment on the author's intention is again reflective of to the LIFE IS A CIRCLE conceptual metaphor.

In the third stage, the references to underlying conceptual metaphors are analyzed for whether they are explicit, implicit or incomplete. The LIFE IS A JOURNEY and LIFE IS A CIRCLE conceptual metaphors in the meaning interpretation are considered to be implicit since the participant suggests that the poem is about venturing through certain stages of life without explaining what in the poem has prompted this understanding. The conceptual metaphors BEGINNINGS ARE ENCLOSED CONTAINERS and ENDINGS ARE DARK CONTAINERS are, by contrast, explicit because the

participant explains that the 'enclosing heart' makes him/her think of beginnings, and the 'dark house' of endings. The LIFE IS A CIRCLE conceptual metaphor in the response to the author's intent is, again, explicit because the respondent mentions explicitly the crucial components that constitute this metaphor.

This three-step procedure is applied to all the 186 responses to the six poems used in the think-aloud study. To present and discuss the results, the chapter is structured as follows:

Section 6.2 presents an overview of how readers respond to the meaning, feeling and communicative intent questions across the narrative responses. The focus is on which of the questions is more likely to trigger metaphorical, and which is more likely to trigger literal responses.

Section 6.3 zooms in and studies the interpretations of the individual poems. Each poem is discussed in a separate sub-section which presents examples for literal and metaphorical interpretations, and discusses what factors (e.g. particular themes and topics that participants talk about, patterns in the ways readers react emotionally to a poem) stand out in the participants' interpretations of that particular poem.

Section 6.4 zooms out again and explores the role of conceptual metaphors in the participants' responses to the meaning, feeling and communicative intent questions. This section is divided into three sub-sections. Each of the sub-sections is dedicated to one of the three questions and explores how conceptual metaphors structure the readers' responses to these questions.

Section 6.5 no longer focuses on the participants' responses to the individual questions but looks at complete interpretations of the poems. It shows how responses to the meaning, feeling, and communicative intent questions are often intertwined; how readers often go beyond what the poem depicts metaphorically by detecting deeper, more symbolic meanings in the poetic narratives. This way, this section points again to the dynamics and complexities involved in poetry interpretation.

6.2   Overall results

This section presents the overall results for the investigations into how people respond to the meaning, feeling and communicative intention questions. The focus is on whether participants use literal or metaphorical language to respond to the three questions respectively. As explained earlier, each poem was interpreted by 31 participants. Table 7 lists the six poems which were used in the study and shows the proportions of how many of the 31 participants responded to the questions literally, metaphorically or not at all.

Table 7. Overview of participants' interpretation strategies (metaphorical, literal, no response) per poem

Poem	Meaning	Numbers	Proportions (%)	Feeling	Numbers	Proportions (%)	Intention	Numbers	Propotions (%)
Copper	literal	7	23	literal	13	42	literal	7	23
	metaphorical	24	77	metaphorical	17	55	metaphorical	22	71
	no response	0	0	no response	1	3	no response	2	6
How we	literal	2	6	literal	13	42	literal	4	13
	metaphorical	29	94	metaphorical	18	58	metaphorical	24	77
	no response	0	0	no response	0	0	no response	3	10
Difficulty	literal	10	32	literal	15	48	literal	7	23
	metaphorical	21	68	metaphorical	6	19	metaphorical	11	35
	no response	0	0	no response	10	33	no response	13	42
Hearts	literal	4	13	literal	10	32	literal	7	23
	metaphorical	27	87	metaphorical	16	62	metaphorical	18	58
	no response	0	0	no response	5	16	no response	6	19
Night	literal	6	19	literal	17	55	literal	4	13
Vision	metaphorical	25	81	metaphorical	13	42	metaphorical	24	77
	no response	0	0	no response	1	3	no response	3	10
Wind	literal	2	7	literal	10	32	literal	5	16
	metaphorical	29	93	metaphorical	17	55	metaphorical	22	71
	no response	0	0	no response	4	13	no response	4	13

For instance, in the case of the poem "The Copper Husk Allegory", seven participants (23% out of the total number of 31 responses to the meaning question) interpreted the meaning of the poem literally and twenty-four (77%) metaphorically. The feeling question was interpreted literally by thirteen participants (42%); seventeen (55%) used metaphorical language, and one participant (3%) skipped this question. As response to the communicative intent questions, seven participants (23%) presented a literal response, twenty-two (71%) a metaphorical response, and two (6%) did not answer the question. The following pages will focus on the three questions respectively to see whether any patterns can be found.

The meaning question, as Table 7 shows, was predominately interpreted metaphorically. This was the case for all six poems in the study. Only the poem "Difficulty" showed a higher number of literal meaning interpretations than the other poems. Such responses were probably evoked by the poet's ambiguous use of 'film'. The majority of the participants suggested that the poem depicts life in terms of a movie in

which, for instance, people, like the characters in a movie, face difficulties, undergo hardships or solve problems. If participants stated explicitly, or indicated implicitly, that the poem compares movies to life, the responses were coded as being metaphorical. By contrast, ten participants suggested that the poem talks about movies or movie experiences in general terms without referring to any possible metaphorical concept. In such cases, interpretations were coded as being literal.

In their description of how reading the poems made them feel, participants used both literal and metaphorical language more evenly. As shown in Table 7, in the responses to the poems "Difficulty" and "Night Vision", more participants used literal than metaphorical language. Interestingly, in their responses to "Difficulty", ten participants skipped the feeling question. This could either mean that participants found it hard to talk about their emotional reaction to the poem, or they did not want to express their emotive response to this poem, or it might be the case that the poem has not elicited any emotional reactions at all. In the other four poems, the majority of the participants used metaphorical language to respond to the feeling question. Overall, the rather even use of literal and metaphorical responses to the feeling question is unexpected as one might think that talking about one's emotions and feelings – being abstract concepts – require the use metaphors. The results of this study, though, suggest that many people talk in literal terms about how reading a poem makes them feel since the actual expressions such as sad, happy, worried or unbothered are used in their literal emotionally evaluative senses.

Lastly, in their responses to the communicative intention question, participants predominately used metaphorical language. The number of literal interpretations was very small (< 8 in each poem). This finding was expected since, in general, poetry is considered to be symbolic. It is written to move the readers emotionally, to convey experiences rather than facts, and to talk about abstract themes and topics, such as love, the passing of time, human greed and so on. Thus, the participants were expected to go beyond the surface form of the poem when they speculated about the poet's possible intention in writing the poem. To do so, the use of metaphorical language was almost unavoidable. A rather interesting finding in regard to the third question, though, was that sometimes participants used metaphorical language to talk about the intention of the poem although they used literal language to talk about the meaning of the poem. This pattern was most apparent in participants' responses to "Difficulty" and "Night Vision" and suggests that encouraging readers to think about the author's intention in writing a poem may help them to recognize some metaphorical, maybe hidden messages that poems often embody.

In sum, the first discussion of the "interpretation styles" across the poems has shown that participants predominately used metaphorical language to talk about the meanings of the poems, and about the authors' intentions in writing the poems

while they do so less when writing describing their emotional reactions to the poem. Table 8 summarizes numbers and proportions of how (metaphorically, literally, skipped the question) participants responded to the meaning, feeling, and communicative intent questions across the whole data set.

Table 8. Poets' responses to three the questions across the whole data set.

	Meaning	Feeling	Intention
metaphorical	155 (83%)	87 (47%)	121 (65%)
literal	31 (17%)	78 (42%)	34 (18%)
no response	0	21 (11%)	31 (17%)

The meaning question prompted the highest number (83%) of metaphorical interpretations across all 186 responses to the six poems. Also the responses to the intention question were primarily metaphorical (121 out of the in total considered 186 responses, which equals 65%). In these two cases, the difference between the use of metaphorical and literal language was big. In the responses to the feeling question, though, the difference between metaphorical and literal responses across the entire data set was relatively small. One might expect that talking about one's emotional engagement with a poem requires the use of figurative language. The results, though, suggest that, in many cases, participants use literal language to talk about how reading the poem makes them feel.

6.3 Individual poems and interpretation patterns

After discussing the general tendencies of how participants respond to the meaning, feeling, and communicative intent questions, the present section explores whether there are any interesting patterns within the responses to the individual poems. The responses to each of the six poems are discussed in separate sub-sections. Each sub-section first displays the numbers of literal and metaphorical responses to the meaning, feeling, and communicative intention question. This is followed by examples for literal and metaphorical responses and critical discussions of those. The sub-sections also once again present the poem and display what themes and topics participants predominately talk about when interpreting the individual poems.

6.3.1   Analyses of participants' responses to Frank Beck's "The Copper Husk Allegory"

In the case of Frank Beck's "The Copper Husk Allegory", the majority of participants responded metaphorically to the three questions. Seven participants talked literally about the meaning of the poem, and seven about the author's intention in writing the poem. The highest number of literal responses, as displayed in Table 9, were prompted by the question on how reading the poem makes the participants feel.

Table 9. Numbers and proportions of participants' responses to "The Copper Husk Allegory"

Meaning		Feeling		Intention	
literal	2 (6%)	literal	10 (32%)	literal	5 (16%)
metaphorical	29 (94%)	metaphorical	17 (55%)	metaphorical	22 (71%)
no response	0	no response	4 (13%)	no response	4 (13%)

The literal meaning interpretations focus predominately on the poet's depiction of the environment and the abandoned farmhouse. For instance, one participant writes that "the poem describes a cold winter night on a farm on which the man is hung" (P6). This response suggests that lines in the poem, such as *the sky is muffling / the fields with flakes / the farmhouse is still / against a voiceless hill;* or *one farmer is hanging in the loft / his neck stiffened in the cold* were interpreted literally by some of the participants. However, the literal comments do not suggest that the entire poem was interpreted in literal terms.

The metaphorical meaning interpretations go beyond the surface form of the poem. For instance, one participant explains that "the poem is about death and abandonment. The limp neck, the open door and snow on the chair lead me for this" (P27). This response is a good example for how the poet's description of the winter scene and the abandoned farmhouse can make readers think of metaphorical themes and topics such as isolation and death.
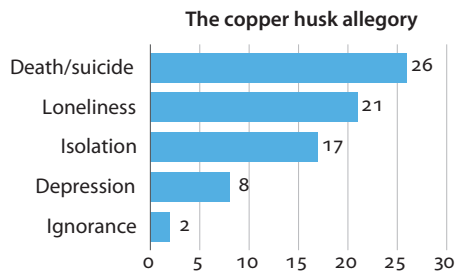
Another participant suggests that "the poem conveys a sense of decay, and suggest that human institutions will wither, and effort is fruitless" (P22). This response shows how the participant compares, without stating it explicitly, humans to plans that wither; and that human effort maybe be fruitless under the conditions that the poet describes, just as plants that are fruitless if they do not grow in a proper environment. This response is clearly metaphorical since the poet does not make any references to plants and how they may be compared to human action in the poem.

Figure 5 displays the five most frequently mentioned metaphorical themes and topics of "The Copper Husk Allegory". Please mind that one participant could refer to more than one topic/theme.

The sky is muffling
The fields with flakes
The farmhouse is still
Against a voiceless hill
The wind rushes in
Through the open kitchen door,
and snow drifts over the chairs

One farmer is hanging in the loft;
his limp neck stiffens in the cold.
One is sitting in the darkened barn;
the motor's singing him to sleep. (Beck 1971)

The copper husk allegory

Theme	Value
Death/suicide	26
Loneliness	21
Isolation	17
Depression	8
Ignorance	2

Figure 5. Numbers of references to the outlined themes (e.g. death, loneliness etc.) found in interpretations of "The Copper Husk Allegory"

Figure 5 shows that the majority of the participants suggest that the poem talks about death and suicide. Frequently, these interpretations were prompted by the author's description of the winter scene and the imagery of the farmers committing suicide. Consider as example how one participant explains that "poem is drawing connection between cold, bleak environment of a farm in winter and the suicide of the farmers of that farm" (P26). The second most frequently mentioned metaphorical theme is loneliness and isolation. For instance, one participant writes that "winter signifies death. Ending of the year means loneliness" (P13) in response to the meaning question. This interpretation is also an example for how participants often talk about multiple metaphorical themes and topics that the poem depicts.

Let us now turn to the responses to the feeling question. In the case of "The Copper Husk Allegory", the responses were mainly metaphorical. A very obvious example is the following: "The poem makes me feel sad, dark, but also reflective as it makes me think more about the cycle of life and how it affects everyone" (P29). In this response, 'dark' is used metaphorically to reflect negative feelings that the participant associates with the poem. In addition, the response is reflective of a metaphorical theme that the poem depicts, namely the cycle of life.

Some examples for literal responses are:

– "the poem makes me feel uncomfortable" (P5)
– "reading this made me feel unbothered" (P7)
– "I feel shocked when reading the poem carefully" (P12)
– "it makes me feel empathy for the farmers" (P19)

Finally, the responses to the intentionality question are similar to the meaning question. Twenty-two out of 31 participants describe metaphorically what they think the author's intention was in writing the poem "The Copper Husk Allegory". For instance, one participant writes: "I think the author was trying to metaphorically portray suicide" (P9).

When a person talks metaphorically about the author's intention, it does not necessarily mean that he/she also talks metaphorically about the meaning of the poem. For instance, in response to the meaning question, one participant writes that "the poem describes a cold winter night on a farm" (P2). This response is coded as being literal. In response to the intention question, though, the same participant suggests that "the author's intention was to set a mood of death. He is showing the parallels between a cold dark night and a dead body (e.g. both are cold, everything is quiet and still, stiff body is like something frozen)" (P2). Here, the participant goes beyond the surface form of the poem and even describes explicitly how death is metaphorically conceptualized through the description of a cold dark night. This is clearly metaphorical. Similar patterns are found in participants' interpretations of other poems too.

6.3.2   Analyses of participants' responses to Jason David Peterson's "How we got here"

The second poem to be considered in greater detail is Peterson's "How we got here". Similar to "The Copper Husky Allegory", the majority of the participants interpreted the poem metaphorically, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Numbers and proportions of participants' responses to "How we got here"

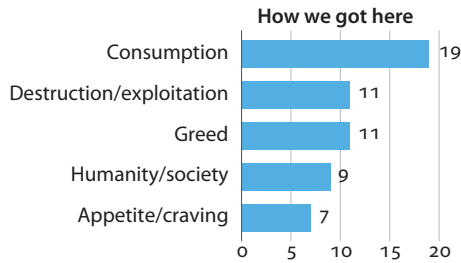| Meaning		Feeling		Intention	
literal	2 (6%)	literal	13 (42%)	literal	4 (13%)
metaphorical	29 (94%)	metaphorical	18 (58%)	metaphorical	24 (77%)
no response	0	no response	0	no response	3 (10%)

As an example for a metaphorical interpretation, please consider the following response: "The poem is discussing how humans process (consume) the world and the emotions which surround us" (P19). This meaning interpretation is clearly metaphorical since emotions do not literally surround us, and they cannot be literally consumed like food. This participant, though, adds an explanation for what "consume" means to him/her in the context of the poem; namely "to process".

Numerous other metaphorical interpretations discuss how emotions can be seen as food which is eaten, consumed and digested. These interpretations were most likely prompted by lines in the poem such as *we ate our hunger/and soon our love/and the patience of others.* Other metaphorical interpretations show how some of the participants not only understand that greedy behavior that Peterson describes in terms of greedy eating, as suggested in lines such as *we ate everything in the house;* but also related such metaphorical expression to broader, more abstract themes, such as exploitation, overconsumption or selfishness. Figure 6 displays the most frequently mentioned metaphorical themes that participants mentioned in their interpretations of the poem:

> We ate everything in the house.
> The yard picked clean –
> Nothing even that any
> Starving memory could hold out for.
> We ate our anger
> and soon our love
> and the patience of others.
> We ate our hunger and moaned
> as it grew heavier inside us.
> We ate the world raw
> and the bitter green
> and salty blue and endless
> black on black went down
> in a flush of burn and clay.
> We ate the future
> before it limped away.
> We ate the rules
> of all of this, and now
> it has no meaning.
> As if nothing was ever
> made or eaten –
> an infinite nothingness
> we cannot digest, and so
> there is only us.   (Peterson 2020)

How we got here

Theme	Value
Consumption	19
Destruction/exploitation	11
Greed	11
Humanity/society	9
Appetite/craving	7

Figure 6. Numbers of references to the outlined themes (e.g., consumption) found in the interpretations of "How we got here"

The metaphorical comparison between eating and consuming structured 60% of the meaning interpretations. Participants, for instance, suggest that "the poem claims that we've consumed (eaten) everything (greed) and now suffer the consequences" (P18), or that "the poem presents how people are quick to consume things but do not stop to think of the consequences" (P21). The topics greed and destruction appeared in 30% of the responses respectively and showed that Peterson's description of "everything being eaten" makes people think of greed, in more general terms, and about its consequences. Please consider the following interpretation as an example:

> greed leaves us with nothing in the end, trying to gain material possession at first leads to even more greed for other things. Greed fuels our lives and how we live our lives. Reading it makes me reflect on our consumer society, how people always try to get more stuff, like power, wealth, houses, cars (P24).

This participant not only talks about what the poem describes but draws connections to real-world situations and experiences, such as living in a consumer society and the effects of greedy behavior.

The responses to the feeling question are also similar to those of "The Copper Husk Allegory". Thirteen participants talk literally, and eighteen use metaphorical language to talk about how reading the poem makes them feel. Some of the literal examples are "the poem makes me feel helpless" (P9), "it makes me feel intimidated and overwhelmed", or "reading it makes me feel pity" (25). Such responses show that the emotional reactions that the poem evokes are rather negative. The interesting point here is that some of the participants state that, as a consequence of these negative emotions, the poem makes them reflect upon their behavior, as the following statement shows: "reading the poem kind of makes me feel guilty like I am aware of my consumption of things and its effects but I turn a blind eye" (25). This comment is also an example for how people may use metaphorical language to talk about their emotional reaction to the poem (e.g., "The poem makes me feel uncomfortable, dark" (P14)).

In some cases, participants link their reflections upon how reading a poem makes them feel to their meaning interpretation of the poem. For instance, one participant writes, "I feel scared for the future of the climate as people refuse to change and keep 'eating' – taking advantage of – the things around us without caring for the consequences" (P28). This response is metaphorical as it points to some of the themes and topics (e.g., destruction, climate change) that the poem depicts.

Finally, in their responses to the intention question, participants predominately used metaphorical language. An interesting observation is that some participant re-used the poet's metaphorical use of eating to explain what they think the author's intention is. For instance, one participant writes: "The author's intent was to make the reader realize that we go where we are in society because of our hunger for things that don't really matter" (P9). This participant uses hunger in a non-conventional, metaphorical context (not related to food but to "things that don't really matter"); but the way he/she puts it appears so natural and fitting. Another participant suggests that "the author is trying to convey a sense of emptiness after everything has been eaten" (P13). Also this response is coded as being metaphorical since, in its literal sense, it is not possible to "convey a sense of emptiness"; and "eating" was used in its metaphorical sense as well. And yet another participant explains explicitly what he/she thinks "hunger" means: "I think the author wanted to use hunger as a metaphor for our over-consumption of almost every facet in society, emotions etc." (P13).

In some of the responses to the intention question, participants went beyond what appears on the surface of the poem. More concretely, this means that in their responses, participants point to symbolic messages that the poem conveys. For instance, one participant writes, "I believe the author intended this as a cautionary tale, drawing mankind's attention to its self-destructive greed" (P7). The understanding of the poem "How we got here" being a cautionary tale implies that the participant not only interprets the meaning of the poem but draws connections between what the poem depicts and what happens in real life. Similarly, one participant writes, "the intent was to remind society to be humble, be thankful for what we have and don't be too greedy. The author wants to warn us before we get to a point where we're all left with an 'infinite nothingness'" (P21). Again, the participant clearly considers the poem having a deeper message that should serve as a reminder for people to be humble and thankful. Such interpretations suggest that encouraging readers to think of the author's intention in writing a poem may make them discover some of the deeper, symbolic meanings that a poem conveys.

6.3.3   Analyses of participants' responses to Rae Armantrout's "Difficulty"

The next poem to be discussed is Armantrout's "Difficulty". From all the poems used in the study, "Difficulty" shows the highest number of literal meaning interpretations (ten out of thirty-one). For instance, one participant writes that "the poem is trying to show that we identify with fictional characters" (P22). Another participant suggests that "the poem discusses stereotypes which are present in movies" (P1). These interpretations are mere reflections upon poetic lines such as *this film / like many others / claims that we will enjoy life* that do not go beyond the surface form of the poem.

Table 11. Numbers and proportions of participants' responses to "The Difficulty"

Meaning		Feeling		Intention	
literal	10 (32%)	literal	15 (49%)	literal	7 (23%)
metaphorical	21 (68%)	metaphorical	6 (19%)	metaphorical	11 (35%)
no response	0	no response	10 (32%)	no response	13 (42%)

As outlined in Table 11, twenty-one participants interpreted the poem metaphorically. For instance, one participant states explicitly that "the poem compares life to a film's plot which usually includes hardship but also has a happy ending" (p7). Another participant offers a similar interpretation, saying that "the poem suggests that life's struggles, or plot, are continuous, varied and relatable" (P13). In this case, the participant points to the similarities between life and a movie's plot, which suggests that the poem was understood metaphorically. Across the narrative responses, the understanding of life being like a movie was the most prominent metaphorical theme that readers pointed to. Some other topics are summarized in Figure 7:

> This film, like many others,
> claims we'll enjoy life
> now that we've come through
>
> difficulties, dangers
> so incredibly condensed
> that they must be over.
>
> If the hardship
> was undergone by others,
> we identified with them
>
> and, if the danger was survived
> by simpler life forms,
> they're included in this moment
>
> when the credits roll
> and we don't know
> when to stand
>
> (Armantrout 2015)

The Difficulty

Life	24
Struggles	15
Relationships	10
Endings	10
Humanity	5
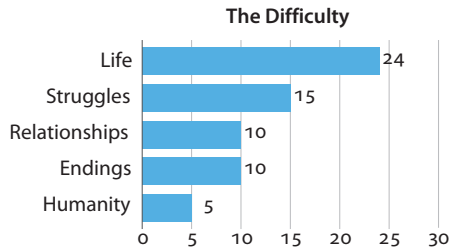
Figure 7. Numbers of references to the outlined themes (e.g., life) found in the interpretations of "The Difficulty"

Beside highlighting the conceptualization of life in terms of movies, many participants suggest that the poem depicts various struggles that people face in their lives. Furthermore, the poem was often interpreted as talking about relationships or connections, in a more general sense, that that are important to people. As discussed previously, readers sometimes pick out and re-use metaphorical expressions from the poems to formulate their responses. This was also the case in some of the meaning interpretations of "Difficulty". For instance, one participant writes:

> The poem talks about how life can be like a film, and that once all the hardship we have done, we feel like there must be something rewarding later on, but maybe as the credits are rolling and death approaches, we don't know when to stand and applaud because it was difficult to reach happiness (P6).

This is a more complex meaning interpretation that shows various instances of metaphorical interpretations. The participant first points out explicitly that the poem discusses how life can be like a film. He/she then re-uses Armantrout's expressions *when the credits roll/and we don't know when to stand* and offers a personal interpretation of these metaphors: according to the participant, the rolling credits represent death. At the same time, the participant personifies death by saying that 'it approaches'. Finally, the participant incorporates the line *we don't know when to stand* in his/her interpretation and metonymically extends it by adding "to applaud". However, he/she does not give an explanation for the meaning of this metaphorical expression. On the one hand, it may depict a (literal) scene in which people, when a movie ends, do not know when to stand up from their seats. On the other hand, it is clearly metaphorical since the participant says that these people are struggling because it was "difficult to reach happiness". How the participant has arrived at this understanding, though, is not clear.

When it comes to talking about how reading the poem "The Difficulty" makes the participants feel, the majority uses literal language. For instance, one participant says that "reading the poem makes me sad" (P2). Another participant explains that he/she feels "confused reading it because it was ambiguous" (P8). And yet another

participant claims that "it makes me feel hopeful". Overall, the poem elicited nega-tive (e.g. sad, hopeless, confused) rather than positive (hopeful, happy) emotional reactions. And only five out of the thirty-one responses to the feeling question were considered to be metaphorical. For instance, one participant writes "the poem makes me think of how society empathizes with people who struggle as long as they live their life in the public eye. There is darkness and sadness in the real world even after there is a happy ending in the movie you just watched" (P10). This response is clearly metaphorical since 'darkness' is used metaphorically to represent negative emotions. Additionally, life is implicitly compared to movies. The expression "pub-lic eye" is also metaphorical, and society is used metonymically to talk about people who empathize with others who struggle. Eventually, a relatively high number (10) skipped this question, which might suggest that these participants did not relate emotionally to the poem; or maybe they could not put into words how reading the poem makes them feel and thus decided to skip the question.

Also the question on what the author's intention is in writing the poem was skipped by 13 participants. Seven responded literally and eleven metaphorically. An example for a literal response is the following: "Maybe the author's intent was to find a reason why films have become so popular" (P17). The majority of the met-aphorical responses to the intention question were extensions of the participants' metaphorical meaning interpretations. For instance, in the meaning interpretation, one participant suggests that "the poem discusses how we watch things happen around us and we are able to identify the challenges in these things, whether they are movies or real life events" (P15) This interpretation is reflective of the concep-tual metaphor LIFE IS A MOVIE. In response to the intention question, the same participant says that "the author's intention may have been to say that life is difficult and there are many obstacles and hardships to overcome or that have been over-come when we 'replay' our lives like a movie." (P15). Again, the response is reflective of the LIFE IS A MOVIE conceptual metaphor. The participant even describes the metaphor explicitly by saying that, for instance, that difficulties and hardships are obstacles that need to be overcome, or that the feeling of starting one's life from the beginning is like pressing "replay" when a movie ends. Overall, this participant's interpretation shows that readers often elaborate further on their metaphorical understanding of the poem when they are encouraged to talk about the author's intention. In such cases, the responses to the meaning and intention question are often shaped by the same conceptual metaphors.

6.3.4   Analyses of participants' responses to Robert Pinsky's "Hearts"

Similar to the previously discussed poems, the meaning interpretations of Pinsky's poem "Hearts" are predominately metaphorical. There is only a small number of participants who interpreted the poem literally. For instance, one participant writes that the poem "describes the heart in an unfamiliar and specific way" (P25) but does not elaborate further on his/her understanding of the poem.

Table 12. Numbers and proportions of participants' responses to "Hearts"

Meaning		Feeling		Intention	
literal	4 (13%)	literal	10 (32%)	literal	7 (23%)
metaphorical	27 (87%)	metaphorical	16 (52%)	metaphorical	18 (58%)
no response	0	no response	5 (16%)	no response	6 (19%)

In their metaphorical meaning interpretations, most participants suggest that the heart is personified. For instance, one participant writes: "the poem describes how the heart itself is like a person with feelings" (P28). This response indicates that Pinsky's description of the heart as being *a legendary muscle that wants and grieves / the organ of attachment / the pump of thrills* makes participants think of people.

Another participant states explicitly that the heart may represent people. He/she writes: "I don't know, maybe the poem claims that 'hearts' or people will care till their heart breaks. But even then they keep on caring" (P1). The use of quotation marks indicates that the participant knows that the heart is used metaphorically in this context. He/she also suggests that people will "care till their heart breaks". The image of the broken heart may stand for lost love and being lovesick.

The most frequently mentioned metaphorical themes and topics in the participants' meanings interpretations of the poem are displayed in Figure 8:
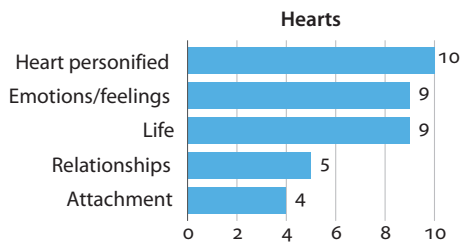
Figure 8. Numbers of references to the outlined themes (e.g., life) found in the interpretations of "Hearts"

> The legendary muscle that wants and grieves,
> The organ of attachment, the pump of thrills
> And troubles, clinging in stubborn colonies
> Like pulpy shore-life battened on a jetty.
> Slashed by the little deaths of sleep and pleasure, They swell in the nurturing spasms of the waves,
> Sucking to cling; and even in death itself –
> Baked, frozen – they shrink to grip the granite harder.   (Pinsky 1990)

Figure 8 shows that the majority of the participants think that the heart has been personified and that the poet's descriptions of how the heart thinks, feels and acts in given situations reflect how people think, feel and act in similar situations. The second most often mentioned metaphorical themes are emotions, life and relationships. Many participants explain how the description of the heart as being *the organ of attachment,* or the image of entities, *clinging in stubborn colonies / Like pulpy shore-life battened on a jetty* makes them think of being close – physically as well as emotionally – to other people. Please consider the following response as an example for a metaphorical meaning interpretation of the poem that is reflective of the topics closeness, relationships, as well as love, grief and the difficulty of letting go:

> many words mentioning attachment, clinging grip, sucking. Our hearts allow us to form connections and even cause us to become attached to others. Made me feel the love I have for my friends, family and boyfriend. Made me feel the grief of people who have passed away. Author is illustrating that "the heart" – our feelings and emotions – are what allow us to form strong and tight relationships with other people. Sometimes we don't have control to let go of the things we have lost (clinging in stubborn colonies).   P(9)

This participant talks about different metaphorical themes and topics that the poem depicts. He/she also explains very explicitly how he/she has arrived at the various metaphorical understandings. This interpretation shows nicely how readers often find different sources for their metaphorical interpretations of the poem; such as "words mentioning attachment, clinging grip, sucking", as this participant explains. Other participants suggested, for instance, that the depictions of the heart first *wanting and grieving*, and later in the poem *Sucking to cling; and even in death itself* makes them think of the heart being on a journey in which falling or being in love is conceptualized as the beginning, and separation or the loss of a loved one is seen as the ending.

The responses to the feeling and communicative intent questions were often closely related to the participants' meaning interpretations of the poem. For instance, one participant suggests that "the poem depicts the life cycle of a heart. It depicts the love and loss and it further engages the idea of death and what takes place after the end of life" (P18). And in his/her comment on how reading the poem makes him/her feel, the participant builds on this metaphorical understanding of the heart being a person living a life that is compared to a journey/circle, saying

that "the poem causes [him/her] to reflect on the tolls and changes that have been placed upon [his/her] own heart. [He/she] has faced love and loss and heartbreak recently and this sort of delivers into this for [him/her]". (P18). Some examples for literal descriptions of how reading the poem "Hearts" makes the participants feel are listed below:

–   "I feel confused" (P5)
–   "Poem's imagery makes me feel uncomfortable as it creates a somewhat grue-some image in my head" (P12).
–   "It is a good poem. Very accurate and nice images. I like it" (P16).
–   "The poem makes me feel a bit worried" (P22).

Overall, the literal reflections upon how reading the poem makes the participants feel were often shaped by the image that the poem depicts. Some consider it as being gruesome which, in turn, makes the participant feel uncomfortable. Others explain how the depiction of the heart struggling till the end makes them feel hopeful as they can identify with the strength of the heart.

Finally, the comments on the author's intent were also closely related to the poem's imagery. For instance, one participant suggests that "the author's intention was to give a message about human nature and how we act in good and bad times. Author states that even when we die we are sucking to cling somebody or some-things; which means that we always want attachment" (P31). Here, the participant again picks up the image of the heart *Sucking to cling; and even in death itself* to suggest that the author's intention is to describe how people, even when they die, strive for connections. Examples for literal responses to the intention question are: "The author wishes to highlight how after all hearts are a symbol of love" (P26) or "I think the author is attempting to describe the heart in a more logical and scientific manner" (P19). The latter observation is interesting as, in the meaning interpreta-tion, the participant suggests that the poem depicts how people experience love and loss; thus, he/she talks about the metaphorical meaning of the poem. The comment on the author's intent, though, reflects what can be considered the literal meaning of the poem – a scientific description of the heart. The majority of the participants, though, uses metaphorical language to talk about the author's intent.

### 6.3.5   Analyses of participants' responses to Shirley Lim's "Night Vision"

The meaning interpretations of Lim's poem "Night Vision" were, as in all the po-ems discussed before, predominately metaphorical. Some examples for responses that were codes as being literal are "I don't know what the poem is about" (P7), "The poem describes how a person is lying awake at night" (P17) or "This poem is confusing" (P21).

Table 13. Numbers and proportions of participants' responses to "Night Vision"

Meaning		Feeling		Intention	
literal	6 (19%)	literal	17 (54%)	literal	4 (13%)
metaphorical	25 (81%)	metaphorical	13 (42%)	metaphorical	24 (77%)
no response	0	no response	1 (3%)	no response	3 (10%)

The metaphorical meaning interpretations have revealed that the image of the narrator lying awake and thinking about her past encouraged many of the participants to see the poem being a reflection upon a person's life. For instance, one participant suggests that "the poem seems to depict how a person thinks about her life and realizes her loss of innocence, possible loss of other's as well" (P13). Another participant says that "the poem is retrospective on the speaker's youth, reminiscence of what he had and what it has now decayed to" (P16). Lim's repetitive use of the expression 'years later' apparently conveys a sense of movement and indicates the passing of time. This understanding is reflective in responses like "The description of a baby observing it with warmth but as time passes there is nothing there anymore" (P23), or "the poem depicts the passage of time through images experienced at night in the house. From being in the crib with moonlit faces reaching in, to a time where all they can see is darkness" (P27). The sources of these two metaphorical responses are, most likely, not only Lim's depiction of a person lying awake and the use of 'years later', but also the kinesthetic aspects that the poem depicts. In the first response (P23), one can see how the participant draws connections between warmth and babyhood, and darkness and loss. The second response (P27) is similar. Light, even if the participant does not state it explicitly, is associated with something positive; with the baby being in a secure place, which is the crib. Darkness, by contrast, is associated with something negative.

Across the meaning interpretations of "Night Vision", the following themes and topics were found:
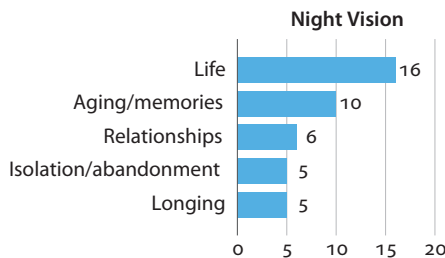
Figure 9. Numbers of references to the outlined themes (e.g., life) found in the interpretations of "Night Vision"

Years later, I lie awake
In the deep enclosing heart of a household.
Years later than in a crib,
Floating among the white moon faces that beam and grasp.

Years later, flecking the eyes,
Faces like spheres wheeling, savoring my self.
Years later, I awaken to see
Dust falling in the dark, in the house   (Lim 1980)

The most prominent metaphorical themes across the participants' meaning interpretations are life and death, which incorporate aging, going through life stages and seeing life as a circle. These interpretations are, on the one hand, shaped by the metaphorical understanding of light and darkness, in which light, as explained previously, stands for beginnings and darkness for death. On the other hand, many participants consider the "deep enclosing heart of the household" as being representative of beginnings, and the "dust falling in the dark, in the house" as endings. Please consider the following interpretation as an example:

> The poem follows the timeline of a person in different stages of life in a house and other things. Feelings towards the house initially feel warm and welcoming, inclusive with the metaphor of "deep enclosing heart". The poem then goes to describe later years, where they are more self-centered. Finally the speaker awakens to see that the house is neglected and no longer a happy place; it represents the end of life.   (P25)

This participant explains nicely the meanings of specific metaphors, and how he/ she has arrived at this understanding. Furthermore, this interpretation shows – as many other examples discussed earlier in this section – that one response may be reflective of multiple metaphorical themes. In this case, the participant suggests that the poem is about life and death, about feelings associated with a welcoming place as compared to a dark and neglected place, and about the passing of time and its effects on the narrator of the poem.

The number of literal meaning interpretations of Lim's poem was small. Some examples of literal meaning interpretations are:

– someone who is awake at night and struggles to sleep and what they think about while lying there (P20)
– I have no idea what it's supposed to be about (P9)
– The poem depicts how nightmares are the reason for why the person can't sleep (P17)

These literal meaning interpretations show how participants sometimes stay on the surface level of the poem without considering its deeper meaning when they describe how reading the poem makes them feel. In some cases, but that was rather

rare, a participant responded literally to the feeling, as well as to the meaning and communicative intent question. Consider as an example the first literal response quoted above (P20). The participant suggests that the poem depicts how "someone who is awake at night and struggles to sleep and what they think about while lying there". He/she then continues by explaining that "the poem makes [him/her] feel curious about why that person is unable to sleep", which is literal too. And in response to the intention question, the participant says "the author's intention is to show how a person's past events affect them in what are supposed to be easy tasks, like falling asleep". Also this response is considered to be literal.

Overall, the responses to the feeling question have shown that, as it was the case with some poems discussed earlier, reading "Night Vision" elicited contrasting responses. Fifteen out of 31 participants had a rather negative reaction towards the images that the poem conveys. They explain that the poem makes them feel uneasy, sad, lonely, worried, melancholic, or nostalgic. Five participants said that reading the poem makes them feel puzzled, curious or confused; or they stated that they did not feel anything at all. Ten said that the poem gives them a feeling of calmness, warmth, peacefulness and somberness, and one participant skipped the question. Such responses show, once again, how different readers' reactions to poetic narratives may be. Many questions of interpretation cannot be definitively settled, because each reader brings to the poem an individual sensibility, mood, and frame of reference, with the result that readers often arrive at a largely personal understanding. The language that the participants used to talk about their emotional engagements with Lim's poem was more literal (17 instances) than metaphorical (13 instances).

Eventually, in their responses to the intention question, the majority of the participants used metaphorical language. Again, as in the previously discussed poems, the comments on the author's intent were, in most cases, very closely related to the participants' meaning interpretations of the poem.

The response quoted below shows this link very clearly:

> The poem depicts the process of life and death, with an emphasis on "years later" suggesting how life is continuous […]. The author intended to depict the cycle of life and death.   (P1)

This participant talks about the meaning as well as the intentionality aspect in terms of life being a cycle. Also the conceptual metaphors a lifetime is a day and death is night structure the participant's interpretation.

What is interesting about the participants' responses to the intention question are their depictions of how the narrator of the poem possibly feels. One participant, for instance, states that "the author is trying to convey the floating of time and how the subject of the poem feels while aging" (P19); another participant suggests that

"the author wanted to convey the degradation of hope over time and with age and life experience, and display how the speaker feels in such situations" (P26). The use of Lim's first person narrator has apparently encouraged some of the participants to imagine how it must feel like to be in the situation of the narrator. A similar pattern is found in participants' interpretations of Arthur's poem "Wind" which is discussed in the following section.

6.3.6 Analyses of participants' responses to James Arthur's "Wind"

The last poem to be discussed in greater detail is Arthur's "Wind". As Table 8 shows, the meaning interpretations are primarily metaphorical. The majority of the interpretations are reflective of the wind is a person conceptual metaphor, most likely because of the very obvious personification of the wind, in lines such as *flipping an umbrella outside-in, throwing its owner into a fumble, borrowing an old woman's hat,* or *embracing you so lightly in ways you don't even register as touch.*

Table 14. Numbers and proportions of participants' responses to "Wind"

Meaning		Feeling		Intention	
literal	2 (6%)	literal	10 (32%)	literal	5 (16%)
metaphorical	29 (94%)	metaphorical	17 (54%)	metaphorical	22 (71%)
no response	0	no response	4 (13%)	no response	4 (13%)

Many of the participants' interpretations overlap in the ways the participants talk about the embodied features of the wind (e.g. how it feels, sounds, moves), the relatability of its actions (e.g. causing trouble, annoying people), and the characteristics and personality traits it represents (e.g. being clumsy, a bit selfish but loving). In such responses, the metaphorical aspect lies in the participant drawing relations between the ways the wind acts in the poem and how people act in real life. The following response can be taken as an example for such a metaphorical interpretation:

> The poem uses wind as a metaphor for something, maybe a person who is struggling or can't seem to do something right in their life. It suggests that despite their clumsy nature and chaotic nature, there is someone they are gentle and careful with.
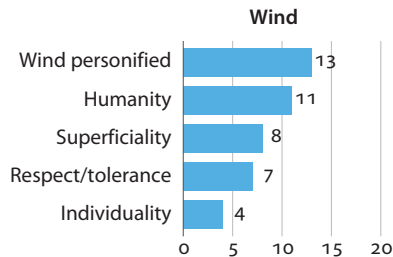> (P13)

This participant states explicitly that wind is used metaphorically to show how people act and feel in certain situations. In some cases, the wind is a person metaphor was extended in a sense that participants explain more specifically what the 'person' domain stands for. For instance, for one participant, the personification of the wind represents individuality:

The poem depicts the idea of individuality and integrity. It made me feel a sense of loss. People have their own individuality and should be accepted for who they are, even if it discommodes others.   (P28)

For another participant, the wind stands for humanity:

The poem presents the beauty of humanity much like the wind, we do things that can be harmful and mostly unintentionally messy, we are flawed, but in the end we also do things to help and care. We are not all bad.   (P9)

Interestingly, not a single participant says that the wind stands for a specific person, like a friend or a partner. The poem was either interpreted as standing for people, how they behave, think and feel; or for other related metaphorical themes and topics such as society, humanity, individuality, or relationships, as displayed in Figure 10.

Wind

Theme	Value
Wind personified	13
Humanity	11
Superficiality	8
Respect/tolerance	7
Individuality	4

Figure 10. Numbers of references to the outlined themes (e.g., humanity) found in the interpretations of "Wind"

it's true sometimes I cannot
stop myself from spilling
        the recycling

unpetalling apple blossoms raiding
a picnic
making off with napkins I'm nothing
        until I happen
flipping an umbrella outside-in
            throwing its owner
        into a fumble
pelting the avenue with sleet or dust

at times downtown
        riding over galleries of air
so full of high excitement howling
I borrow an old woman's hat
        and fling it into the road

> arriving with news of the larkspur
> > and the bumblebee
> at times embracing you so lightly
> in ways you don't even register
> > as touch   (Arthur 2018)

Figure 10 shows that the personification of wind was the most frequently mentioned metaphorical topic, followed by humanity, including human behavior and action, in a more general sense, in turn followed by superficiality (e.g. judging people from their appearance without taking their characters into account), tolerance and individuality.

The interpretation below shows that some of the participants also interpreted specific metaphorical expressions in the poem:

> The meaning represented in poem is human behavior and how sometimes one can act differently but that's ok because everyone has a different personality. With "embracing you so lightly" Arthur means that the person in the poem doesn't take things seriously. He is just trying to enjoy and live life his own way.   (P31)

This response shows a very personal understanding of the metaphorical use of 'to embrace'. The participant states that 'embracing lightly' means to her that the narrator in the poem does not take things seriously. This metaphorical interpretation stems, most likely, from our understanding of heavy things as being important, and light things as being less important.

Another participant offers a different interpretation of the narrative and, in particular, the final two lines of Arthur's poem (*embracing you so lightly/in ways you don't even register as touch*):

> [...] Everything in life is fleeting or hard to keep hold of, full of funny mishaps of natural inconveniences. The use of homely images and little things is meant to convey a delicacy and groundedness in the poet. Obviously the big unhappy is the passing touch of the final stanza. This represents that emotions and our experiences are in a lot of ways invisible, and that it is meant to get us to reflect on our intentions, and everything that is or is not moved, in both senses of the word. I feel appreciative of silence and subtlety, and at ease with the sometimes grand expectation of physical manifestation   (P116)

This interpretation seems to be built on our knowledge that physically graspable objects and things that we see are also things that we understand and can, as further step, appreciate. For instance, if an object is out of your reach, you cannot grasp it. Via the conceptual mapping, we understand that if an idea is *beyond you*, you cannot understand it. The conceptual metaphor that reflects this understanding is understanding is grasping/seeing. In the response above, the participant claims

that emotions and experiences, which are something that we cannot literally grasp or see, remain often unrecognized.

In his poem, Arthur, similar to Lim, uses a first-person narrative voice, which results in the fact that participants, when they talk about the meaning of the poem or about how reading "Wind" makes them feel often describe how they attempted to imagine how it must be like to be in the position of the narrator and to see the world through his/her perspective. Many of the responses were also linked to personal experiences or instances in the participants' lives, such as being hugged by a friend as a response to Arthur's depiction of the wind that is embracing somebody. Below is an example for how a reader may link his or her interpretation of the poem to a personal experience:

> The poem describes how the wind can be destructive or like a warm hug. It can appear out of nowhere and you don't think of it when its gone. This poem made me reminisce of windy days. The author was trying to convey that there is good and bad in everything. It made me think of how you mostly notice the bad in wind and when its gone you don't remember it. The author is trying to remind us to look for the good in things   (P9).

This participant interprets parts of the poem literally by pointing to some general characteristics of the wind, such as it being destructive or appearing out of nowhere. The expression "like a warm hug", though, alludes to the participant's metaphorical interpretation. Once the participant starts to speculate about the author's intention, it becomes even more apparent that he/she knows that the poem has a deeper meaning: "The author was trying to convey that there is good and bad in everything". This statement implies that the participant understands Arthur's description of the wind – the way it acts and behaves – as being representative of other things, and maybe also living beings, that may first be annoying but, once they are gone, they are quickly forgotten.

Another interesting point about this interpretation is that the participant says that the poem makes him/her "reminisce of windy days". This is a good example for how readers may get immersed into the story world and imagine what it "must be like" to experience what is being described in the poem and link this experience to a real-world scenario. The following response to "Wind" offers another example for a reader's embodied engagement with the poem:

> The poem makes me imagine being outside in the wind, which is an enjoyable and satisfying feeling. Poem is personifying the wind and describing ways in interacts with people. I think author intentionally spaced the poem inconsistently because it conveys a sense of disorder and movement that is reflective of the wind. The poem also makes me feel connected to the wind as if it is a living entity, cause the author writes the wind as living character in the poem, even saying it "embraces you". (P21)

This response shows nicely how dynamic a response to poetry may be, and how the different components of a poem (e.g. its visual appearance, the language that it uses, the narrative voice etc.) may contribute to the construction of its meaning. Consider how the participant first talks about the emotional and bodily responses to the poem; how he/she imagines being outside and experiences the wind. The participant then points out that the poem's formal characteristics (e.g. the inconsistently spaced stanzas) convey "a sense of disorder and movement that is reflective of the wind". The metaphorical understanding of the poem is also reflected in the fact that the participant points out that Arthur personifies the wind which, as the participant nicely points out, makes him/her sympathize with the wind.

Overall, the majority of the participants talk metaphorically about how reading the poem "Wind" makes them feel. Similar to "Night Vision", "Wind" too has elicited different, sometimes contradictory emotions. A few participants use literal language, such as "reading the poem makes me feel confused but happy" (P1) or "the poem makes me think of the color blue" (P2). Examples for metaphorical responses are: "the poem makes me feel rebellious and more open to my surroundings" (P25), or "This poem make me feel like there is always something out there that is near me, looking out for me" (P12), which is again reflective of how a reader may link what is described in the poem to personal thoughts and experiences.

An interesting aspect about the responses to "Wind" is that in no other poem, were there so many precise descriptions of bodily actions that were linked to the meaning interpretations and to the descriptions of how the poem made the readers feel. It seems as if people are simulating what the poet describes (e.g. feeling the wind, hugging somebody or being hugged), forming mental imageries (picturing a summer day), and imagining themselves in the shoes of the narrator. Such interpretations show that people usually do not simply map static or relational features of source onto target domains, Instead, when people interpret poetry, they are often constructing simulations of the events and experiences that the poet describes. This information is then used to further constrain what the metaphors imply.

Finally, the responses to the question on the author's intent are also predominately metaphorical. The wind is a person conceptual metaphor is, as in the meaning interpretations, the most prominent one. Participants, for instance, state that the intention of the author is to "present wind in a loving and innocent way" (P1), or to "describe wind in a non-threatening way to take the blame off the wind" (P4), or "to make people relate with the wind, and feel as though it is not the wind's fault that it does these things" (P5). One interpretation is interesting as the participant's metaphorical response to the author's intent was prompted by the way the poem appears visually:

> I think the author intentionally spaced the poem inconsistently because it conveys a sense of disorder and movement that is reflective of the wind. The poem also makes me feel connected to the wind as if it is a living entity, cause the author writes the wind as living character in the poem, even saying it "embraces you"   (P21)

This response shows how the visual appearance of the poem may also shape a metaphorical understanding and thus be reflective of conceptual metaphors. In this case, the underlying conceptual metaphor is inconsistency is disorder which is not based on what the poet states verbally in his narrative, but on how the poem is structured.

Finally, the participants' reflections upon the author's intent in writing the poem have, as already discussed previously, shown that participants sometimes talk literally about the meaning of the poem and metaphorically about the author's intent. For instance, in response to the meaning question, one participant writes that "the poem is a description of the wind" (P2). This response is considered to be literal. In response to the intention question, though, the same participant says that "the author's purpose may have been to show that even a natural force such as the wind experiences struggles, doubt – just as humans". Here, one can see that the participant goes beyond the surface form of the poem and suggests that the action that the poem describes is not only reflective of the wind but may represent how people act and feel in different situations. Thus, encouraging people to think of the author's intent may make them detect some of the deeper, metaphorical meanings of a poem that may first go unnoticed.

Overall, the discussion of the individual poems has shown that each poem is, to a certain degree, unique in the responses that it prompts. For instance, in Beck's poem "The Copper Husky Allegory" and in Pinsky's "Hearts", the main sources of metaphorical interpretations were the poets' detailed descriptions of the environment in which the narrative was set. Participants, for instance, associated coldness and falling snow with death; and the ocean shore with the imagery of the heart. An unexpected finding of Peterson's "How we got here" was that it has elicited very little bodily feelings in the readers, despite the poet's very explicit use of various embodied source domains (e.g. hunger, container, motion) and their elements in their depiction of the emotions and feelings of the narrators (e.g. starving memory). What many participants did, instead, was to describe how reading the poem makes them reflect upon their own behavior. The responses to Armantrout's "Difficulty" were special in that the majority of the participants used a single conceptual metaphor, which was life is a journey. Usually, readers' interpretations of poems are structured by multiple conceptual metaphors. And lastly, the poems "Wind" and "Night Vision" have shown many interesting, particularly idiosyncratic responses as participants explained how they attempted to imagine how it must be like to be in the position of the narrator and to see the world through his/her perspective.

Doubtlessly, there were also similarities in the ways readers responded to the poems. For instance, the majority of the meaning interpretations were structured by multiple conceptual metaphors. Or the responses to how reading a poem makes the participants feel were, in some cases, structured by the same conceptual metaphor as the meaning interpretation. In other cases, participants used more conventional metaphorical expressions, such as "reading the poem made me feel dark", to talk about their emotional engagement with the poem. Focusing specifically on the role of conceptual metaphor in people's interpretations of poetic narratives shall point to more of such overlapping across the narrative data.

6.4 Focus on conceptual metaphors

The previous two sections explored whether the participants' responses to the meaning, feeling and communicative intent question were literal or metaphorical. First, the tendencies across the narrative data were presented. After that, the chapter discussed how participants interpreted the individual poems and which factors stood out. The current section looks again at the overall data. It discusses instances of literal and metaphorical interpretations and explores how people use conceptual metaphors to respond to the meaning, feeling, and communicative intent question respectively. But the following questions will additionally be explored in separate sections below: Do readers use one or more conceptual metaphor(s) to talk about the meaning of the poem? Are readers' responses to how reading the poem makes them feel related to the conceptual metaphors that structure their meaning interpretation, or do they come up with new conceptual metaphors? And are there overlappings between the metaphorical meaning interpretations and the ways readers talk about the intention of the author?

6.4.1 Conceptual metaphors in meaning interpretations of poems

As discussed previously, 80% of the participants interpreted the six poems metaphorically. This section will analyze their metaphorical interpretations in terms of underlying conceptual metaphors and differentiate between explicit, implicit, or incomplete references to conceptual metaphors. Before that, though, it will present some examples for literal meaning interpretations.

6.4.1.1 *Literal meaning interpretations*

Out of the 186 responses, 31 meaning interpretations were coded as being literal. Some examples were given in the previous section in which the literal meaning interpretations were discussed poem per poem. Please consider the following response to Shirley Lim's poem "Night Vision" as a further example for a literal meaning interpretation:

> The poem depicts someone who is awake at night and struggles to sleep and what they think about while lying there.   (P20)

This participant suggests that the poem describes how a person is lying awake and thinking about something. The interpretation of the poem's meaning is related to the surface form of the poem – to the act of sleeping or being unable to sleep. This participant neither tries to interpret metaphors which constitute the poem (e.g., "deep enclosing heart of the household"), nor does the participant talk about possible metaphorical themes that the poem depicts. Thus, the response is considered to have an overall literal interpretation strategy.

Some other literal responses to the poems which were found across the data are:

–   "The poem ['How we got here'] shows that after you've tried everything there doesn't seem to be a solution". (P12)
–   "The poem ['Wind'] shows that the wind can be chaotic but also a comfortable phenomenon". (P17)
–   "I don't think it ['Hearts'] has a meaning". (P5)
–   "The poem ['Hearts'] describes the heart in an extensive, unfamiliar, and specific way". (P25)
–   "It ['Night Vision'] depicts a restless person who is unable to sleep". (P25)
–   " The poem 'Difficulty' shows how life is difficult and humans endure many hardships". (P11)
–   "The poem ['The Copper Husk Allegory'] describes a cold winter night on a farm on which the man is hung". (P6)

The literal responses focus on the surface form of the poems rather than depicting abstract, metaphorical themes that are embedded in the narratives. As the examples above show, it was not always one particular person who interpreted a poem literally. Instead, different participants sometimes interpreted a poem literally. The majority of interpretations was clearly metaphorical, though.

Overall, the small number of literal interpretations across the entire data set supports the findings of several other studies (e.g., Gibbs 1994; Jacobs & Kinder 2017) in that that people predominantly infer metaphorical meanings from poems rather than talking exclusively about the literal aspects of a narrative. In one study, Gibbs and Okonski (2018) explored specifically whether it is possible to get people

to only see the poem in its literal terms. In the study, students were given a long story about scuba diving before they read and interpreted Adrienne Rich's poem "Diving into the Wreck". The poem depicts how a scuba diver explores a wrecked ship by describing various physical actions related to scuba diving. At the same time, it invites readers to interpret the poem allegorically by seeing the investigation of a wrecked ship as being representative of a person's look back at a past failed romantic relationship. The study revealed that, despite being prompted to read the poem literally, people interpreted the poem in allegorical ways, referring to larger symbolic themes about seeking goals, overcoming obstacles, and finding meaning from more mundane physical experiences.

One might claim that people see any poem as having deeper messages, regardless of the context in which they read it. Still, it is quite impressive to observe how consistent participants were – in both Gibbs and Okonski's as well as my study – in alluding to metaphorical and allegorical themes when interpreting poetry. In very general terms, this observation shows that people *are* able to make sense of poetic narratives, even if this medium is often considered to be difficult to comprehend. Participants of the present study did very well in formulating their interpretation of the poems. Even if some have possibly misunderstood the main message that the poem conveys, participants were still able to express convincing justifications for their interpretation.

6.4.1.2 *Metaphorical meaning interpretations*

The reason for why people understand poetry has, as discussed previously, much to do with the ability to interpret metaphors. The production and processing of metaphorical language – in both poetic and non-poetic contexts – does not require a special skill but happens mostly automatically and unconsciously. This is partly because of conceptual metaphors that poets use to craft their narratives, and which readers access or "re-use" to some degree when they structure their metaphorical interpretations of the poems.[53]

The present study has shown that the majority of meaning interpretations were structured by conceptual metaphors that were prompted by the poems. This means that those conceptual metaphors, which were postulated to reflect the themes and topics that a poem depicts (see Chapter 4), indeed reappeared in various forms in the subjects' responses to the poems.

Please consider the following interpretation of Beck's poem "The Copper Husk Allegory" as a first example for a metaphorical meaning interpretation:

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53. In Chapter 7, the differences/similarities between readers and poets in terms of CMs underlying their meaning interpretations will be discussed.

> The poem depicts the idea of not being able to see things behind closed doors. Which is revealed when the "wind rushes in" and therefore gives us insight on what we don't see. Throughout the poem there is a growing sense of suspense, as everything is quiet yet feels scary. The dead farmer gives a shock. The fact that the other does not realize what has happened connects to the idea of not knowing.
>
> (P13)

The participant's interpretation of the poem is primarily shaped by the embodied, metaphorical understanding of not seeing as corresponding to not knowing. The participant first suggests, using metaphorical language ("seeing things behind closed doors"), that the main topic of the poem is ignorance, and explicitly reinforces this idea in the last sentence. Imagining what it is like to see behind or through a visual hindrance serves as an embodied source domain to define things people can, or cannot, be aware of; or the conceptual metaphor (NOT) SEEING IS (NOT) KNOWING.

A reader's response to a poem may be structured by one conceptual metaphor, as it was the case in the interpretation just discussed. In other instances, participants incorporate multiple source and target domains, which they often blended dynamically, when they talk about the meaning of the poem, as the following response to Beck's poem shows:

> The first stanza clearly depicts a place that is empty, lifeless and deserted. Both the house and the land surrounding it. This could be signifying the isolation and loneliness of the farmers. The second stanza could mean that the farmers have killed themselves in order to escape from their meaningless lives.   (P31)

This participant first talks about the surface form of the poem – the literal description of the environment – before suggesting what it may represent metaphorically; namely isolation and loneliness. The main conceptual metaphor that is reflective of the meaning interpretation is DEATH IS WINTER in which an empty, deserted place – as the participant explains – represents loneliness or death. When the participant interprets the second stanza, he/she mentions suicide as a further metaphorical theme. In this case, one cannot say what exactly in the poem has prompted this interpretation because the participant does not explain it. It is very likely, though, that the description of the farmer's 'limp neck' which 'stiffens in the cold', or the other farmer, who is 'sitting in the darkened barn' and the 'motor's singing him to sleep' makes the participant think of suicide and death. Some possible conceptual metaphors which underlie these interpretations are SUICIDE/DEATH IS THE INABILITY TO MOVE, SUICIDE/DEATH IS DARKNESS, SUICIDE/DEATH IS SLEEP.

Meaning often emerges from the ability to engage multiple source and target domains simultaneously. Please consider the following response to Lim's poem

"Night Vision" as a further example for how multiple conceptual metaphors may structure a reader's interpretation:

> The poem is about venturing through certain stages of life. Life comes full circle – where you begin is where you end. This comes from my interpretation of the narrator starting "in the deep enclosing heart" and ending the "dark house".   (P31)

This response reflects a metaphorical interpretation as no references to the poem's literal meaning (e.g. a person lying in bed) are found. The participant suggests that the poem depicts how a person goes through different life stages, which is reflective of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY / LIFE IS A CYCLE conceptual metaphors. The participant understands the "deep enclosing heart" as being the starting point on the journey, or the beginning of life, and the "dark house" as the final destination or end of life. This interpretation is reflective of the LIFE IS LIGHT and DEATH IS DARKNESS conceptual metaphors.

In some cases, participants talk about both the literal surface form of the poem as well as about the deeper, metaphorical meaning. In such cases, the meaning interpretations are also structured by conceptual metaphors. Please consider the following response of a participant who interpreted Rae Armantrout's poem "The Difficulty" by first talking about the literal meaning of 'film' and then using 'film' as a source domain to structure his/her metaphorical interpretation of the poem:

> This poem is critical of films and the cliché happily ever after which goes with many movies. Poem presents a bleak outlook on life as it criticizes the false concept in movies of facing all difficulties and once and living an easy life, when in reality the difficulties often never end and life is not always going to be happy.   (P12)

This participant starts off by talking about the more general, literal concept of films (e.g., "the cliché happily ever after") before discussing the poem's metaphorical meaning (the comparison between what movies represent and what happens in real life). In the last sentence, the participant seems to have blurred both the metaphorical and the literal meaning of the poem. It is no longer clear whether with "the bleak outlook", the participant talks about movies or life or maybe about both.

This interpretation shows well how readers may smoothly move between the literal and metaphorical meaning of a poem which, in turn, points to the dynamics involved in poetry interpretation. In addition, it suggests that readers do not have to first access or articulate a word's literal meaning before interpreting it metaphorically. Instead, readers may use source domains found in the poem to construct their meaning interpretations of a poem.

The metaphorical meaning interpretations of the poems vary in that, as shown previously, some are structured by one, and other by more than one conceptual

metaphor. In addition, in some cases, the metaphorical mapping is stated explicitly whereas in other cases the mapping is implicit or even incomplete. Table 15 displays the different ways of how conceptual metaphors structured the meaning interpretations of all participants across the poems.[54]

Table 15. Summary of explicit, implicit and incomplete references to conceptual metaphors underlying the participants' interpretations of the individual poems

	Explicit	Implicit	Incomplete
Copper	16	7	3
How we	7	11	13
Difficulty	10	4	10
Hearts	6	24	6
Night Vision	8	15	8
Wind	13	12	6

Across the meaning interpretations of all poems, participants primarily made implicit references to underlying conceptual metaphors (73 instances). Sixty instances of explicit references to conceptual mapping were found, and 46 references were incomplete.

As Table 9 shows, the numbers of explicit/implicit/incomplete references also varied across the poems. This, to my mind, can be explained by the fact that, in some of the poems, particular conceptual metaphors structured a high number of the responses; and the references to those underlying conceptual metaphors were, predominately, explicit across the participants' responses. For instance, one prominent conceptual metaphor in the participants' meaning interpretations of the poem "The Copper Husk Allegory" was DEATH IS WINTER. It structured 11 out of 31 meaning interpretations. And out of these eleven references to the DEATH IS WINTER conceptual metaphor, nine were explicit. A similar pattern was found in "The Difficulty" and in "Wind"; and these two poems, too, had one conceptual metaphor that stood out. In the case of "The Difficulty", it was LIFE IS A MOVIE and in the case of "Wind" it was WIND IS A PERSON. This finding suggests that if a poem prompts one particular conceptual metaphor particularly strongly, many readers will recognize and talk explicitly about that conceptual mapping. If a poem, by contrast, has multiple underlying conceptual metaphors, readers are more likely

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54. One meaning interpretation could include more than one explicit reference, or explicit as well as implicit references to conceptual metaphors. This is why the number of references to conceptual metaphors exceeds, in some cases, the number of metaphorical meaning interpretations displayed in Table 15.

to mention them implicitly. The following pages will discuss instances of explicit, implicit, and incomplete references to conceptual metaphor in greater detail.

Explicit references to conceptual mappings. Across the 186 meaning interpretations of the poems, 73 responses show explicit references to conceptual mappings. More concretely, this means that the participant explains what the meaning of a particular metaphor is by pointing to both the source and target domain of the underlying conceptual metaphor. For instance, one participant suggests that Beck's poem "The Copper Husk Allegory is "about death and how it's quiet and cold. These relate to dying" (P17). Here, the participant explains how quietness and coldness, which Beck depicts in his first stanza by describing a winter scene and the abandoned farmhouse, make him/her think of death. The postulation of the underlying conceptual metaphor DEATH IS COLDNESS and DEATH IS STILLNESS is straightforward.

In some cases of explicit references to conceptual metaphors, participants quote (metaphorical) lines from the poem and explain their meaning(s). For instance, in his/her response to Peterson's "How we got here", one participant writes, "The poem is about how people destroy the earth. "Eat the world raw" and "ate the future" symbolize destruction of the earth" (P9). The participant directly quotes two lines from the poem and explains that 'eating', in the context of the poem, means 'destroying'. The underlying conceptual metaphor is DESTRUCTION IS EATING.

Some other participants not only mention a metaphorical theme or topic or re-use a line from the poem, but even express their recognition of a metaphorically used word or concept. For instance, in response to Pinsky's "Heart", one participant suggests that "the author uses the heart as a metaphor for a person with emotions and feelings" (P28). This response shows clearly that the participant recognized the personification of the heart (HEART IS A PERSON).

These explicit and detailed meaning interpretations of metaphors make it easy for the researcher to postulate conceptual metaphors. They also show clearly that conceptual metaphor(s) were run when the participants interpreted the poems. Not all responses show such clear references to conceptual mappings as the following two sections will show.

Implicit references to conceptual mappings. References to conceptual metaphors are considered to be implicit if the participant names the target domain in his/her meaning interpretation but does not explain how he/she has arrived at this understanding. For instance, one participant writes that Lim's poem "Night Vision" is "about inevitability of life and death, how aging cannot be paused. It is retrospective on the speaker's youth, reminiscence of what he had and what it has now decayed to" (P16). This participant suggests that the poem depicts different (abstract) themes and topics, such as life, death, passing of time, human morality, and loss. From the meaning interpretation alone, though, it is not clear how the

participant has arrived at this understanding. In such cases, the researcher needs to find the fitting conceptual metaphors by taking a close look at what in the poem might have prompted those particular interpretations. For instance, in the response to "Night Vision" quoted above, one can assume that Lim's depiction of the narrator "lying in the deep enclosing heart of the household" makes the participant think of a person who is thinking about his/her past; the image of the crib and the "white moon faces" in the first stanza, and the "dust falling in the dark, in the house", in the last stanza, could have prompted the participant to think of life and death (based on our common knowledge of crib and light standing for beginnings/childhood and darkness and falling for death); and the repetitive use of "years later" throughout the poem could represent the passing of time. The possible conceptual metaphors underlying this response are AGING IS FORWARD MOVEMENT, DEATH IS DARKNESS, THE HEART IS A SHELTER. Additionally, it is likely that the heart as representing affection and its symbolic quality as standing for life have also shaped the participant's understanding of the poem. Some other examples for implicit references to conceptual metaphors are listed below:

– "The poem [Night Vision] makes me think of time passing and peacefulness" (P15) Underlying conceptual metaphor: TIME IS MOTION IS SPACE
– "The poem [How we got here] presents how people are quick to consume things but do not stop to think of the consequences" (P21). CONSUMING IS EATING
– "The poem [Copper Husk Allegory] is about death, or the taking of one's life" (P19). DEATH IS WINTER
– "Nothing is worse than a broken heart. The heart is emotional. The poem [Hearts] is about how the heart can be so deeply attached to someone or something. Through intense passion or love for something. The heart wants what it wants. The heart will continue to love, show emotions, despite death. AFFECTION IS A HEART, THE HEART IS A PERSON

The last interpretation, in particular, shows that the references to underlying conceptual metaphors may vary in terms of their concreteness. Besides this type of implicit metaphors, the narrative data consists of meaning interpretations that are incoherent and/or incomplete. This renders the postulation of the appropriate source and/or target domains impossible. Such cases will be discussed in the following section.

Incomplete references to conceptual mappings; Numerous meaning interpretations of the poems used in the study showed instances of incompleteness or incoherence. Please consider the following response to Beck's "Copper Husky Allegory" as a first example:

> The poem depicts how people in modern times feel lost in the expanse of the world. Even to the point of suicide. They feel as if they can't connect to others, can't be heard and are lost not because there is nothing there, but because there is too much.
>
> (P16)

This meaning interpretation is clearly metaphorical. On the one hand, the participant uses metaphorical language to interpret the poem, such as 'modern times', 'feeling lost', 'expanse of the world', and 'up to the point'. On the other hand, the response itself reflects that the poem itself was understood metaphorically. The participant structures the entire response around the reasons for and consequences of being lost (in its metaphorical sense). The meaning interpretation is in itself coherent; yet, since the participant does not refer to any passages from the poem or explains what has evoked that particular understanding, it is not clear what has prompted that interpretation. Why does the depiction of the farmers' lives make the participant think of modern times? Why does the participant think that the poem talks about the inability of connecting with others? In retrospect, one can only guess the answers to these questions.

A further example for an incomplete reference to conceptual metaphors is the following response to Lim's "Night Vision":

> represents circle of life for an individual. Goes from happiness towards sadness. Adult life of being in a home – hospital (crib, white) after being hurt – old age (senior home?) – house (dark) = death   (P29)

As opposed to the previously discussed example, this participant explains clearly some of the metaphors in the poem and their meanings, which makes it easy to postulate the conceptual metaphors LIFE IS A CIRCLE. What is not clear, though, is why the participant thinks that the poem "goes from happiness towards sadness". This expression could be seen as an entailment of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY / LIFE IS A CIRCLE conceptual metaphors, in which happiness is the beginning and sadness the end. One cannot be sure, though, whether this conceptual metaphor was accessed.

Other examples that fall into the category of incomplete references to conceptual metaphors are responses which are built like a stream of consciousness in which the participant lists different thoughts that came to his/her mind without explaining them further. The following interpretation of "Difficulty" can be taken as an example: "I see the meaning as being life events are so common, someone would not know when to relate to them because they are unsure if society deems them as important" (P25). The participant talks about how people deal with certain events in their lives without explaining what has prompted this understanding.

Overall, the analyses of the participants' meaning interpretations of the six poems has shown that the ways readers refer to underlying conceptual metaphors

when they interpret poems may vary. People may refer explicitly to underlying conceptual mappings. In this case, it is relatively easy for researchers to postulate proper conceptual metaphors. At the same time, such explicit interpretations offer valid evidence for the assumption that conceptual metaphors were accessed. In some cases, people refer implicitly to underlying conceptual metaphors. In such cases, it is more challenging to define the source and target domains since the participant does not explain what has influenced his/her interpretation. And finally, some responses to poetry are incoherent or incomplete, which makes it simply impossible to postulate underlying conceptual metaphors. In such cases, the analyst should be transparent in how he/she coded the data. And sometimes one just has to accept that not every response can be assigned to a pre-defined category; this not only applies to meaning interpretations, but also to the ways participants talk about their emotional engagements with the poems and about what they think an author's intention is in wiring a poem. These aspects will be discussed in the following two sections of this chapter.

6.4.2   How participants talk about their emotional engagements with the poems

Across the entire data set, 87 instances were found in which participants refer to conceptual metaphors when talking about how reading the poem made them feel. In 31 out of the 87 cases, the same conceptual metaphor that was used in the participants' meaning interpretations appeared in the participants' reflections upon how reading the poem makes them feel. In 56 responses to the feeling question, participants came up with new conceptualizations. The following pages will discuss the various instances in detail.

Responses to meaning and emotional reaction questions shaped by same CMs
Let us first consider an example for how the conceptual metaphor underlying the meaning of the poem also structures the participant's emotional reaction to the poem:

> The meaning of the poem is that the heart goes through so much and that sometimes it is just trying to hang on to whatever it can to stay afloat. Reading it makes me feel sad because it is easy to relate to this poem as we all have a heart that has beaten on and gone through tough times.   (P27)

This participant interprets Pinsky's poem "Hearts" as being about a heart that goes through life and faces difficulties. This observation is representative of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor in which the heart has been personified and faced with difficulties/obstacles along its journey. In addition, the participant explains

how the heart "tries to hang on to whatever it can to stay afloat". This observation is underlined by the conceptual metaphor EMOTIONAL RELATION IS PHYSICAL BOND-ING as well as the metaphor SURVIVAL IS REMAINING ON THE SURFACE OF A BODY OF WATER. If we now consider how the subject talks about her emotional reaction to the poem, we see that he/she starts with a literal description of his/her feelings ("read-ing the poem made me feel sad") before reusing the LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor ("the heart has gone through tough times") to explain why reading the poem made him/her feel that way.

Across the narrative responses, numerous other examples for how the same conceptual metaphor shapes both the participants' meaning interpretations as well as their description of how reading the poem made them feel were found. For instance, one participant states that Arthur's poem "Wind" is "describing actions of the wind by personifying it"; and that reading the poem makes him/her feel "unnerved if wind was to be acting and thinking like people do" (P14). Both state-ments are underlined by THE WIND IS A PERSON conceptual metaphor. In one of the responses to Lim's poem "Night Vision", one participant explains that the poem "depicts the cycle of life in which an individual goes from happiness toward sadness; from childhood (crib) to death (dark house)" P(29). This meaning interpretation is structured by the LIFE IS A JOURNEY and DARKNESS IS DEATH conceptual metaphors and various metonymies, such as LIFE HAPPINESS and CRIB for BIRTH/CHILDHOOD. In the participant's description of how reading the poem made him/her feel, the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY reappears in that the participant claims that it "makes me feel sad to read that the person is going through stages of life" (P 29), which again is reflective of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor.

For some of the interpretations, it was more complex to postulate one specific conceptual metaphor that structures the responses to both the meaning and feel-ing questions because the participant uses various source and target domains to structure his/her responses. Please consider the following interpretation of Lim's "Night Vision" as an example:

> meaning: talking about the past through a person's eyes, growing up through detail in the night, recollection of how others see them. Made me feel like I was watching the scene occur before my eyes, seeing the narrator grow and how then interact with them. The poem displays a juxtaposition between being young and old and the way in which our perspectives change. They go from observing simply to noting how the others savor seeing them, to seeing things as how they truly are.   (P18)

This response is interesting as its meaning interpretation as well as the description of how reading the poem makes him/her feel are shaped by the ways the participant uses/applies the concept of sight and perspectives. It shows how the participant goes smoothly back and forth between the description of an embodied, metaphorical

experience of "seeing" the story through the eyes of the character, to the recollection of how others "see" the narrator – either in its literal (e.g. being physically in a room with the narrator and watching the person) or in its metaphorical sense (e.g. having an opinion about the person); to describing how the narrator "sees" the world differently when he or she grows up, to "seeing how things truly are". In this response, the embodied source domain 'seeing', with all its different facets, enables the participant to talk about the meaning of the poem as well as about how reading the poem made him/her feel. The fact that the participant sometimes talks about his/her interpretative and emotional responses to the poem in one and the same sentence shows how intertwined these responses often are.

Responses to meaning and emotional reaction questions shaped by different CMs
In 56 out of the 87 cases, the participants' reflections upon how reading a poem makes them feel was structured by conceptual metaphors that were different from the metaphorical meaning interpretation of the poem. In such cases, participants either came up with new conceptual metaphors which were still prompted by the poem's metaphorical meaning, or their responses were structured by conceptual metaphors that were unrelated to the meaning of the poem. Please consider the two interpretations below as examples for the two ways of how different conceptual metaphors structured the response to the meaning and feeling questions:

> Meaning of the poem is to show that humans are never satisfied with what they have. We're always hungry for more. The poem made me feel slightly upset at the way humanity and our society is constructed. We are destroying what matters most (planet, relationship) because we are striving for things like status and money. (P15)
>
> The poem presents a commentary on consumerism and climate change, we consume everything until there is nothing left. Reading it makes me feel down. (P23)

In the first response (P15), the meaning interpretation of Peterson's poem is structured by an implicit reference to the conceptual metaphor GREED IS HUNGER. This is reflected in the participant's understanding of the poem being about people's greedy behavior or, in metaphorical terms, their hunger for more. The comment on how reading the poem makes the participant feel is prompted by the same metaphorical theme; the conceptual metaphor that the participant uses, though, is different. The participant explains that the reason for why reading the poem makes him/her feel slightly upset is his/her realization of "the way humanity and our society is structured". This metaphorical description is reflective of the conceptual metaphor SOCIETY IS A BUILDING.

Different to the first response, the second reflection (P23) upon how reading the poem makes the participant feel is not prompted by the metaphorical meaning of the poem. The meaning interpretation is reflective of an implicit reference to the conceptual metaphor CONSUMING IS EATING ("we consume everything until

there is nothing left"). The response to the feeling question, though, is reflective of a conceptual metaphor which is unrelated to the meaning of the poem, namely BAD IS DOWN ("reading it makes me feel down").

Across the responses to the six poems used in the study, some other conventional metaphorical expressions were found that are not linked to the underlying meaning of the poem but reflected the participants' emotions and feelings associated with reading the poem. Some examples are "it made me feel on the edge" (P30), "it made me feel uncomfortable, dark, kind of freaked out" (P14), or "it opened my eyes on some issues" (P7). Other participants came up with very personal, metaphorical comparisons, such as "I felt like a teenager reading this poem full of angst and impulsive" (P1), "it kind of makes me feel guilty like I am aware of my consumption of things and its effects but I turn a blind eye" (P21), or "the mood is kind of melancholic and has that feeling of when you listen to a sad song when it's raining outside" (P25).

Such very personal explanations of how reading a poem makes a reader feel are often particularly rich in metaphors. This is not an unexpected observation since a detailed description of one's emotions and feelings often requires the use of figurative language. Across the narrative data, some responses were found in which participants report on how they attempt to imagine how it must be like to be in the position of the narrator and to see the world through his/her perspective. This was particularly true, as explained earlier in this chapter, for poems that use first-person narrators, such as Arthur's "Wind" and Lim's "Night Vision". They give readers a more immediate, first-hand access to the thoughts and feelings of the character than poems that use third-person narrators. Below is an example for a metaphorical, very personal response to "Wind":

> meaning: from the perspective of wind itself maybe speaking to the variety, or specifically breeze – summer times, giving it sympathy, turning wind (usually a less liked weather form) into something nice, something a little more glorified. Feeling: I like it! Reminds me of sun and good days; also a bit wistful reg. the final stanza (I am very touch-starved today ;((P15)

This participant clearly describes the many cognitive and bodily experiences that have contributed to her/his interpretation of the poem. He/She first talks about the surface form of the poem; about the wind being a weather form which usually is unpleasant but is turned into something nice in the poem. When the participant talks about reading the poem, he/she says that he/she likes it and that it makes him/her think of sunny and good days, supporting the idea that metaphorical language is rooted in bodily experience (e.g. AFFECTION IS WARMTH, GOODNESS IS LIGHT). He/she also adds that the poem makes him/her feel a bit wistful when he/she reads the final stanza of the poem (*at times embracing you so lightly / in ways you don't even register / as touch*), and makes a very personal, idiosyncratic comment, saying that he/she feels "very touch-starved today".

Talking literally about how reading a poem makes one feel. Not all depictions of emotional reactions to poetic narratives are metaphorical. Across the narrative data, 78 instances were found in which participants use literal language to describe their feelings and emotions associated with reading a poem. Some examples were already given in 6.4., in which literal reflections upon the participants' interpretations were discussed poem per poem. This section will present some more examples and discuss them in greater detail.

Consider the following example in which the participant draws on various conceptual metaphors to talk about the meaning of the poem. The comment on how reading the poem "Difficulty" makes him/her feel, though, is literal:

> meaning: life is difficult and humans endure many hardships. Poem made me feel somewhat sad. The poem says that life is difficult and there are many obstacles and hardships to overcome or that have been overcome when we "replay" our lives like a movie.   (P11)

This participant's metaphorical meaning interpretation is structured by the LIFE IS A JOURNEY and LIFE IS A MOVIE conceptual metaphors while the statement on the feeling component is literal ("the poem made me feel somewhat sad")

Arthur's poem "Wind" is one of the poems to which participants show different, even contradictory emotional reactions. Consider how the following participant uses both literal and metaphorical language to explain his/her positive reaction to the poem:

> I think the meaning is that the speaker is trying to convey that despite their clumsy and chaotic nature, there is someone they are gentle and careful with. It makes me feel happy as I am able to identify and relate to the idea the author is conveying so strongly. I feel warm.   (P13)

This participant first comments on the wind's behavior. The fact that he/she refers to the wind as a speaker and talks about its clumsy and chaotic nature implies that the participant considers the wind as being representative of people. When the participant talks about his/her emotional reaction to the poem, he/she first explains, in literal terms, that he/she "feel happy and is able to identify and relate to the idea the author is conveying so strongly", and then adds that he/she "feels warm", which is reflective of the AFFECTION IS WARMTH conceptual metaphor.

In a different case, reading "Wind" has elicited negative emotions in participants:

> from the perspective of wind, and that wind can do all these different things because its powerful. Makes me feel sad because the wind almost seems upset that it cannot control itself from causing chaos in the lives of others. Author might have been trying to communicate that sometimes our difficulties are too much for us to control and that we sometimes have a difficult time trying to come to terms with that.   (P11)

This participant claims that the poem is about the wind which, like a person, sometimes cannot control its actions. In response to this interpretation, the participant says, using literal language, that it makes him/her feel sad to read how the wind behaves.

Most generally, the narrative data across all poems suggests that participants often use literal language to talk about their emotions and feelings associated with the poem when they do not explain *what exactly* about the poem made them feel that way. If they talk about their emotional engagements in greater detail, though, their responses are usually reflective of both literal and metaphorical language, as the following example shows:

> The poem depicts the life cycle of a heart. It depicts the love and loss and it further engages the idea of death and what takes place after the end of life. Poem causes me to reflect on the tolls and changes that have been placed upon my own heart. I have experienced love and loss and heartbreak recently and this sort of delivers into this for me. It feels hopeless and sad and presents, for me, how we are all heading towards the end and death. No matter what all of our hearts will eventually stop. I believed the author is attempting to explain life in a more logical and scientific manner.
>
> (P18)

This interpretation of Pinsky's poem "The Hearts" is a great example of just how multi-faceted responses to poetic narratives may be. Consider how the participant first explains how the poem depicts "the life cycle of a heart". The heart is probably seen as a person going through life which is structured by the conceptual metaphors HEART IS A PERSON and LIFE IS A JOURNEY, as well as the metonymy BODY PART FOR PERSON. The participant then talks about the emotions that the heart experiences. This may either reflect the HEART IS A PERSON or THE HEART IS A CONTAINER OF EMOTIONS conceptual metaphor.

The participant's reflection upon how reading the poem makes him/her feel is, on the one hand, literal in that the participant explains that he/she has "experienced love and loss" and that he/she "feels hopeless and sad". On the other hand, the response is structured by various metaphors such as the "broken heart" being considered as a fragile object and also reflective of people's feelings and emotions.

What is particularly interesting about this response is that the participant seems to go beyond the themes and topics that the poem itself depicts. He/she links what is described in the poem to his/her personal thoughts and experiences as well as to life, in general. This is particularly apparent in the last part of the response in which the participant says that we all are "heading towards the end and death" and that "no matter what all of our hearts will eventually stop". These statements are reflective of a symbolic, allegorical reading of the poem.[55] In such complex interpretations, it is

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55. Instances of allegorical readings will be discussed in detail in the final section of this chapter.

difficult to make a clear distinction of which figure of speech shapes which part of the interpretation. It is rather a co-existence of metaphor, allegory, and literal meaning interpretations that, as in this case, structures a reader's response to the poem.

6.4.3   How participants talk about authorial intention

Across the entire data set, 121 instances were found in which subjects referred to conceptual metaphors when talking about authorial intention. The majority used the same conceptual metaphor that also structured the meaning interpretation of the poem, when talking about the author's intention. In some cases, subjects elaborated further on that mapping which resulted in the response on the author's intention being structured by more than one conceptual metaphor. In only a few comments on the author's intention, the conceptual metaphor was different and totally unrelated from the one used in the subject's response to the poem's meaning. In 34 cases, the participant's comment on the author's intention was non-metaphorical. The following pages will discuss some examples for each of these cases.

Consider, as a first example, the following short response to Beck's poem "The Copper Husk Allegory". It shows how closely connected a participant's meaning interpretation and the comment on the author's intention may be:

> meaning: winter signifies death. Ending of the year means loneliness. Intention: an attempt for audience to contemplate loneliness and the feeling of everything around you ending.   (P18)

Based on a metaphorical depiction of A LIFETIME IS FOUR SEASONS, the participant evokes the DEATH IS WINTER conceptual metaphor and extends that to the metaphorical description of loneliness (LONELINESS IS WINTER). When the participant talks about the meaning of the poem, he/she again draws on the DEATH IS WINTER and LONELINESS IS WINTER conceptual metaphors. The latter is reused when the participant talks about the author's intention in writing the poem.

The next interpretation of Pinsky's poem "The Hearts" is another example for how both the meaning interpretation was well as the comment on the author's intention may be structured by the same conceptual metaphor. This time, though, the participant elaborates further on the main mapping and refers to a further conceptual mapping:

> meaning: to emphasize the journey of life and the struggle it entails, through the metaphorical comparison of a heart. I feel slightly confused. It was a little difficult to grasp the underlying meaning. I think the author is trying to communicate the physical heart's journey through life and could be compared to a person as they try to grasp and hold on to life at certain times in their life.   (P11)

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY structures the participant's entire response. When talking about the meaning of the poem, the participant makes an explicit reference to the LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor and implies that the heart is the "traveler". When talking about the author's intention, the participant explains more clearly that the heart represents the person going through different life stages. These life stages could be seen as locations that the traveler either passes or remains at during his journey/life. The expression "hold on to life" is reflective of another conceptual metaphor, which is LIFE IS AN OBJECT.

The next interpretation of Arthur's poem "Wind" is an example for how one conceptual metaphor may structure a reader's meaning interpretation, and another conceptual metaphor the reader's understanding of the author's intention:

> The poem depicts a series of thoughts and actions; could be showing how someone's brain thinks when they are in love. Makes me feel confused yet happy. Intent seems wind is loving and innocent.   (P2)

This participant understands the poem as depicting the thoughts of somebody being in love. A possible underlying conceptual metaphor is LOVE IS CONFUSION. In his/her comment on the author's intent, though, the participant no longer talks about how people think and feel when they are in love. Instead, the focus is on the description of the wind, who is the narrator of the poem. As the participant assigns the wind human characteristics (loving and innocent), the WIND IS A PERSON can be seen as the conceptual metaphor underlying the participant's comment on the author's intention in writing the poem.

Across the responses to the poems, some cases were found in which participants talk in literal terms about the author's intention. Please consider the following interpretation of Arthur's poem "Wind" as an example:

> The poem presents the beauty of humanity; much like the wind, we do things that can be harmful and mostly unintentionally messy, we are flawed, but in the end we also do things to help and care. We are not all bad.
>
> The poem evokes a feeling of flawed beauty. The wind is many things and it can do things we don't necessarily like, but it can also be gentle and caring. The author was probably just trying to capture his experience with wind in a love/hate kind of way.   (P19)

In this interpretation, the participant describes the meaning of the poem by relying on metaphorical conceptualizations of WIND. Consider the first observation in which the participant says that the poem talks about "the beauty of humanity". Since Arthur never talks about people but solely about the wind in his poem, it is very likely that the participant understands the WIND as a metaphor for people. This conceptualization is reinforced by the comparison that the reader lists between the

wind and people (both are messy, flawed, but also do things to help and care). Also the statement "the wind is many things and it can do things we don't necessarily like, but it can also be gentle and caring" is reflective of the conceptual metaphor WIND IS A PERSON as the wind is assigned human characteristics, such as being gentle and caring. In the final comment, the participant states that "the author was probably just trying to capture his experience with wind in a love/hate kind of way". From the surface of the textual evidence that is presented here, the comment on the author's intent is literal.

Beside the metaphorical and partly literal understanding, the participant seems to also have inferred an allegorical meaning from the poem. Consider how the participant suggests that the poem depicts humanity, how people often act thoughtlessly but are eventually not all bad. These observations go beyond the mere understanding of the wind being representative of people, or the wind acting like a person, but are a comment on how people lead their lives in a broader, more symbolic sense.

Overall, the participants' responses to the poems discussed so far have already indicated that poetry interpretation is often complex and dynamic. Many of the comments on the author's intentions were closely linked to the meaning interpretation. In some cases, when the participants talked about the author's intention, they elaborated further on what they discussed in response to the meaning questions, which resulted in allegorical readings of the poem. The results, in general, have shown that participants usually do not interpret single metaphorical expressions and present possible source and target domains in their responses. Instead, it is often an interplay between various words and concepts, different images that the poet creates, the mood that a poem evokes, the experiences that it conveys, the memories that it triggers, and much more, which makes a reader arrive at a very personal understanding of a poem.

6.5   Allegorical readings as examples of the complexities involved in poetry interpretation

The last part of this chapter will present some more examples for poetry readings that are reflective of the complex and dynamic processes which are often at play when readers respond to poetry. This time, the entire set of responses to a poem; including the responses to the meaning, feeling, and communicative intent questions, will be analyzed for underlying conceptual metaphors. The focus of the discussion will be on allegorical readings of poems, in particular on interpretations that are metaphorical but more symbolic and clearly go beyond what is depicted in the poem itself.[56]

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56. The many conversations with Ray Gibbs have inspired the discussion on allegorical readings of poetry.

Allegory refers to a narrative that reveals an additional layer of symbolic meaning beyond what appears on the surface. "Most allegorical messages," as Gibbs (2020: 13) explains, "are expressed through extended metaphors in which an entire narrative introduces and elaborates upon a metaphorical source domain (e.g., a specific physical journey) to evoke symbolic life (e.g., how to live one's life)". The poet's omission of the target domain allows readers to decide for themselves how to map certain elements from the source domain.

For instance, in his poem "How we got here", Peterson did not link the domain 'eating' and its elements (e.g., hunger, digestion, consumption) to any particular target domain. Participants still recognized that the poem is not meant to be read literally. All participants in the study recognized that "How we got here" does not talk about how the narrators are literally "eating everything in the house", as stated in the opening line to the poem, but rather depicts symbolic, allegorical themes such as human greed, arrogance, or consumerism. Consider the following response in which the participant re-used, and extended, the metaphorical meaning of "eating" to craft the interpretation of the poem:

> meaning is a couple who was greedy and "ate" everything around them until they were left with nothing but themselves. Poem makes me feel kind of confused. Author's intention was to say that we can't take and take expecting to not be left alone at the end. (P20)

This participant clearly recognized the poem's metaphorical meaning. He/She even put quotation marks around the term 'eating' to point to its metaphorical understanding, which is reflective of the conceptual metaphor GREED IS WANTING TO CONSUME EVERYTHING. Since the participant did not only talk about human greed as depicted in the poem but also about its consequences on people, in more general terms, (e.g. "we can't take and take expecting to not be left alone at the end"), one can assume that the participant also understood the poem allegorically.

Gibbs explains that allegory in literature, as well as in human life, emerges from a fundamental human disposition called "The Allegorical Impulse" (Gibbs 2020: 124):

> Allegory is a fundamental property of human cognition in which we continually seek diverse connections between the immediate here and now with more abstract, enduring symbolic themes. The evocation of these symbolic themes creates rich, diverse networks of meaning that are metaphoric, deeply embodied, and give rise to multiple affective and aesthetic reactions.

The responses to the poem "How we got here" reflect exactly what Gibbs says about allegorical interpretations of literary narratives. Across the responses to the poems, numerous instances were found in which participants have drawn connections between "the immediate here and now" and the more abstract themes that

they discerned from the poems (e.g., the effect of greedy, careless behavior on the climate). Such interpretations have metaphorical meanings (e.g., understanding 'eating' in terms of 'consuming', 'wanting', or 'taking advantage of'), are embodied (sense of satisfaction that we experience if we literally eat something and if we finally get something that we really wanted to have), and give rise to multiple affective reactions (e.g., feeling satisfied, confused, scared, happy) to the poem.

Let us consider another example for an allegorical reading of Pinsky's poem "Hearts:

> I think that the poem describes a grand journey of the human heart organ. It makes me feel content in the strength of the heart. The author probably wanted to chronicle the adventures of the heart as it goes through life. By expressing the manners of the heart in such a grandiose way maybe we can better appreciate the struggles of the heart. (P14)

The depiction of a heart going on a journey is, quite obviously, metaphorical. This participant seemed to have conceived of the heart as a person who goes through life. Life, like a journey, has its difficulties (obstacles) that the heart (traveler) encounters along the path. The personification of the heart was probably prompted by the poet's depiction of the heart as being 'a muscle that wants and grieves'. The conceptual metaphors THE HEART IS A PERSON and LIFE IS A JOURNEY helped the participant make sense of such poetic observations/descriptions. Yet, the ways the participant interpreted the poem suggest that her understanding has gone beyond the metaphorical idea of a heart living a life like a person which might be compared to a journey. It seemed like the participant also recognized that the heart embodies emotions and some internal or spiritual qualities, which is reflected in the statement: "It makes me feel content in the strength of the heart". This allegorical reading can be captured by the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS A CONTAINER OF EMOTIONS.

Below is a further example for an allegorical reading of Peterson's poem "How we got here" that is structured by multiple conceptual metaphors:

> meaning of the poem is to show that humans are never satisfied with what they have. We're always hungry for more. It shows how we must stop that and look at the fact that *more*. It is only us and our relationships that will matter in the end. The poem made me feel slightly upset at the way humanity and our society is constructed. We are destroying what matters most (planet, relationship) because we are striving for things like status and money. The author's intent was to make the reader realize that we go where we are in society because of our hunger for things that don't really matter. (P15)

This participant suggested that the poem depicts how people are never satisfied with what they have. Here, the concept of possession is combined with the concept of hunger to describe people's constant striving for more. Beside criticizing people's greedy behavior, the participant also pointed out that the poem depicts

how humanity and society are constructed, and how people are destroying the planet and the relationships that are important to them. These allegorical readings show numerous underlying conceptual metaphors, such as DESIRE IS HUNGER, RELATIONSHIPS ARE OBJECTS and SOCIETY IS A BUILDING. Finally, in talking about the author's intention, the 'hunger' domain was re-used and seemed to represent a force that makes people move to a certain place in society. This response shows again how meaning often emerges from the ability to engage multiple source domains simultaneously. Furthermore, it points to the fact that a participant may recognize different allegorical themes in one poem which are underlined by a set of conceptual metaphors.

To conclude this section, let us consider this beautiful, complex interpretation that shows how various source and target domains are combined dynamically to form a metaphorical interpretation of the poem as well as to infer allegorical meaning:

> The poem makes me turn attention inward to memories that match what it describes – grief, love and excitement. It also brings up thoughts of the human spirit, which is tenacious like the shore life clinging to rocks that the poem describes. I think the author is using contrasting language of a muscle/organ/pump and the emotions and experiences that are associated with the concept of a heart. It is not actually the muscle that "wants and griefs" but as a reader I am compelled to suspend my disbelief while reading that section of the poem. I think intent of using ocean shore is of imagery of the heart – both the ocean and the heart have rhythmic and intense waves of activity. Also just like the sea life, we cling to our emotions and beliefs which are often associated with the heart even when faced with hardships. (P21)

This interpretation reads like a diary entry in which the writer carefully puts down every impression, thought and emotion that he/she experienced while being exposed to the poem. The first sentence reflects the participant's emotional and bodily engagement with the poem. He/she describes how the poem makes him/her turn his/her "attention inward" which reflects the metaphorical conceptualization of the body as a container. Inside the body, we find memories which are depicted as objects in a container. These memories are supposed to "match what the poem describes – grief, love and excitement", which reflects the participant's understanding of the heart being a container for emotions.

The participant then explains how the poem makes him/her think of the "human spirit, which is tenacious like the shore life clinging to rocks". This single statement embodies a metaphorical as well as an allegorical reading, and shows how intertwined these are: The image of the shore life clinging to rocks was seen as a metaphorical depiction of persistence. Persistence or, more generally, a person's longing and the experiencing of emotions, was then used to describe the human spirit. And the idea of the poem depicting the human spirit has probably arisen from the different metaphorical conceptualizations of the heart throughout the poem.

When the participant proceeds in his/her interpretation, he/she again claims that the poem depicts the heart and the emotions that are associated with it. Yet, in the next sentence, he/she points out that he/she thinks that "it is not the heart that wants and griefs". This statement is reflective of the personification of the heart (HEART IS A PERSON). When talking about the author's intention, the participant goes back to the image of the shore life to point the similarities between the ocean and the heart, how both "have rhythmic and intense waves of activity". The image of 'shore life' is no longer associated with one particular state of being, like persistence, but is representative of human emotions in more general terms. The final comment of the participant, in which he/she stated that "just like the sea life, we cling to our emotions and beliefs which are often associated with the heart even when faced with hardships", seems to be a mesh of the different conceptualizations and allegorical readings that have been elicited by the poem.

Overall, certainly not all interpretations are as detailed and complex as the one which has just been discussed. Readers may express a singular metaphorical theme that they consider being depicted by the poem. Or some may not infer allegorical meaning from reading the poem. Yet, the results have shown that in every interpretation of the poem, there was at least one reference to a conceptual metaphor that was prompted by the poem. This high degree of consistency suggests that conceptual mappings, beside other internal and external processes are central to how readers interpreted the meanings of the poem as well as how they comment on the author's intent and describe how reading the poem makes them feel.[57]

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57. A limitation of this study is that it mainly focuses on readers' post-hoc reflections upon their engagements with a poem rather than on the exploration of the immediate, online processes that shape poetry interpretation. Furthermore, a possible criticism might be that asking readers to respond to the meaning, feeling and communicative intent questions, as done in the present study, has prompted them to think, more consciously, about aspects of poetry interpretation that, in a non-experimental setting, might not have been considered. Due to this set-up, some of the readers' responses could have been shaped by less, or different conceptual metaphors than presented in this study. Nonetheless, I consider the current method to be appropriate since poetry interpretation and appreciation are, in general, both a conscious and unconscious process. Readers may, for instance, perform certain cross-domain mappings or react to rhymes and rhythm without being consciously aware of the underlying cognitive and embodied processes. At the same time, a poem also gives readers the space to discover different layers of meanings or experiences more intentionally, or to appreciate clever wordings, or to share their thoughts on the poem with other people.

Comparing poets' and readers' responses to poetry

The previous chapters studied the production and processing of metaphors in six contemporary poems from a three-fold perspective. Chapter 5 was dedicated to the analysis of the poems and the postulation of conceptual metaphors which was based on my (the analyst's) perspective. In addition the postulated conceptual metaphors were also aligned with the poets' personal interpretations of the metaphors in their works. In Chapter 6, the results of the think-aloud-protocols revealed how readers interpreted these six poems, and how conceptual metaphors shaped their meaning interpretations. Furthermore, the participants' answers indicated the ways in which they talked about their emotional engagements with the poems, and how they speculated about the authors' intentions in writing the poems. The present chapter will explore to which extent these three perspectives overlap.

Each of the following sections will be dedicated to one of the six poems and to the comparisons of the poets' and the readers' responses to this poem.[58] The aim is to reveal patterns in the ways the responses of the poets and readers overlap or vary. The comparisons will be done by close analyses of the conceptual metaphors underlying the different responses. My contention is that considering the different types of underlying conceptual metaphors (e.g., CMs that reflect the theme of the poem or the meanings of individual metaphors), paying attention to variations in source and target domains, and even considering the number of conceptual metaphors which were postulated for individual responses allows for a more nuanced analysis of the similarities and differences in the interpretation of poetic narratives than a simple comparison between a poet's and a reader's narrative response would do.

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58. Please mind that, to reflect the readers' responses to the poems, only the five most frequent conceptual metaphors will be discussed in this chapter.

7.1   Comparisons in "How we got here"

Jason David Peterson's poem "How we got here" discusses how emotions, like food, can be eaten, swallowed, and digested. Through metaphorical conceptualizations that draw on common bodily experiences, readers may find it easy to understand the poem and to imagine how the narrators of the poem feel in the given situation. The two central themes of the poem – greed and destruction – motivated the postulation of the conceptual metaphors GREED IS HUNGER and DESTROYING IS EATING. These two metaphors work on the thematic-structural level, as defined in Chapter 5, which means that they reflect the central themes of the poem. Moreover, to depict the immediate meaning of context-specific metaphors, I postulated the conceptual metaphors WORLD IS FOOD, THE FUTURE IS FOOD, RULES ARE FOOD, EMOTIONS/ FEELINGS ARE FOOD and MEMORY IS A PERSON. These conceptual metaphors work on the immediate level. Thus, they reflect the meanings of specific metaphorical expression or poetic lines (e.g., *we ate the world raw*).

In his reflection upon the use of metaphors, Peterson first talks about the overall meaning of the poem:

> In this poem, I use the inherent tensions surrounding hunger, appetite, and insatiation as a way of exposing and discussing less identifiable parts of the tension inherent in the specific kind of relationship/lifestyle I'm communicating".
>
> (p.c., 2017)

Peterson then was quite specific in explaining the meaning of the most central and prominent metaphorical source domain of EATING in this poem: "I tend to think that eating is rather a form of 'trying to get' and one that's equal in relation to 'want' as taking, winning, creating, copulating, etc." Based on this response, I postulated the conceptual metaphors DESIRE IS HUNGER and WANTING IS EATING. The poet did not talk about any other metaphorical expressions or what has motivated him to write this narrative.

The responses of the readers were, overall, very similar to Peterson's reflections. As discussed in Chapter 6, the majority of the participants suggested that the poem talks about the careless lifestyles (e.g., overconsumption, waste of products) that people practice nowadays. Numerous participants explained how the poem depicts the relationship of a couple, and some readers suggested that the poem talks about the inner struggle of people. Overall, 60% of the participants' meaning interpretations were structured by comparisons between eating and consuming, which is reflective of the conceptual metaphor CONSUMING IS EATING. The second most frequently mentioned conceptual metaphor was EMOTIONS/FEELINGS ARE FOOD, followed by DESTROYING IS EATING, GREED IS HUNGER and HUMANITY/SOCIETY IS A BUILDING.

Table 16. Conceptual metaphors reflecting the analyst's, the poet's and the readers' responses to the poem "How we got here"

Analyst[59]	Poet	Readers
EMOTIONS/FEELINGS ARE FOOD[60]	EMOTIONS/FEELINGS ARE FOOD	EMOTIONS/FEELINGS ARE FOOD
DESIRE IS HUNGER	DESIRE IS HUNGER	CONSUMING IS EATING
GREED IS HUNGER	WANTING IS EATING	GREED IS HUNGER
RULES ARE FOOD		DESTROYING IS EATING
THE BODY IS A CONTAINER		HUMANITY/SOCIETY IS A BUILDING
ELIMINATION (OF SOMETHING) IS EATING SOMETHING		
THE FUTURE IS FOOD		
DESTROYING IS EATING		

If we now compare the readers' responses to the poet's responses and to the conceptual metaphors that were postulated applying CMT, we see much overlapping between the perspectives. For instance, the conceptual metaphor EMOTIONS/FEELINGS ARE FOOD structured numerous lines in the poems and was picked up by the readers as well as the poet. Also GREED IS HUNGER and DESTROYING IS EATING, which reflect the central themes of the poem, were very prominent amongst the readers' interpretations. These observations imply that the conceptual metaphors, which reflect the poem's central meaning, structure the majority of the readers' as well as the poet's responses to the poem. In other words, the responses primarily overlap in conceptual metaphors that work on the thematic and thematic-structural levels.[61]

Beside the similarities in the meaning interpretations, some of the responses to the poem varied. Consider how the poet as well as the readers recognized the metaphorical use of 'eating'. The interpretations of 'eating', though, varied. Peterson explained that, to him, 'eating' stands for getting, wanting, taking, winning, creating and copulating. These meaning interpretations are reflected in the conceptual metaphors

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59. The first column ("analyst") summarizes the conceptual metaphors that were postulated by me.

60. Conceptual metaphors colored in blue indicate overlappings in the different (analyst, reader, poet) interpretations.

61. As a reminder; in Chapter 5, I suggested that conceptual metaphors in poetry work on at least three different levels. On the immediate level, the conceptual metaphors reflect the meaning of local metaphorical expressions and/or the immediate imageries that the poem creates. On the thematic level, they reflect the poem's various themes and topics; and on the thematic-structural level, a conceptual metaphor may point to the most central theme of a poem which structures the entire narrative and may give rise to other conceptual metaphors.

DESIRE IS HUNGER and WANTING IS EATING. The majority of the participants, by contrast, understood eating as consuming or destroying, as depicted by the conceptual metaphors DESTROYING IS EATING and CONSUMING IS EATING. Both ways of interpreting the metaphorical use of 'eating' make sense, and one can find evidence in the poem in terms of which lines have possibly prompted these responses. The interesting aspect here is that paying attention to underlying conceptual metaphors points to the nuances in poetry interpretation (e.g., interpreting 'eating' as either 'wanting' or as 'destroying'). And these nuances are, as the analysis shows, reflected in the target domain of the underlying conceptual metaphors that work on the immediate level.[62]

7.2   Comparisons in "The Difficulty"

In the poem "The Difficulty", Rae Armantrout uses metaphors to bring the concept of cinema experiences into a relationship with real-world experiences. The most central conceptual metaphor that structures the entire poem is LIFE IS A MOVIE. It also shapes other conceptual metaphors that work on the thematic or immediate level, such as A FILM IS A PERSON, ENDINGS ARE ROLLING CREDITS and SUCCESS IN LIFE IS OVERCOMING OBSTACLES ALONG THE WAY. Furthermore, to depict the main theme of the poem, which are difficulties and how people deal with them, I postulated the conceptual metaphors RELEVANCE IS SIZE, DIFFICULTIES/DANGERS ARE OBJECTS and OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES/DANGERS IS REDUCING THEM IN SIZE.

As opposed to Peterson who explained what particular metaphors mean in the context of the poem, Armantrout, by reflecting upon her use of metaphors, talks about the meaning of the poem in a broader sense by suggesting, for instance, that the poem depicts the careless lifestyles of people. Below is the poet's response which was already quoted earlier in Chapter 5:

> I don't know if it matters, but I wrote "The Difficulty" after seeing the movie "Gravity." I guess you could say that the poem deals with the way we often seem to prefer vicarious experience and compressed time. Or we've gotten used to that. It's what films and games deliver. I see the "if" in "if the danger was survived/by simpler life forms.." as significant. That might refer to human arrogance. By bringing this in is I hope to broaden the scope of the poem and point to what's happening to the planet while humans have their (largely vicarious) adventures.
>
> (Armantrout 2017, p.c.)

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62. I am grateful to Herb Colston for pointing to a limitation of the current investigation, which is that the "reader's side" reflects multiple responses to the poems as I had many participants interpreting the poem; the "poet's side", though, is restricted to one response; namely the poet's. So if a poet wasn't particularly forthcoming, there could have been an underdepiction of the degree to which the two parties overlapped on conceptual metaphor activity.

Beside talking about the overall meaning of the poem, Armantrout also talks about one specific metaphor, namely film. By doing so, she highlights its ambiguous meaning. On the one hand, the poet explains that she has written the poem after seeing the movie 'Gravity', which suggests that the poem actually depicts her thoughts as inspired by the actual movie. On the other hand, Armantrout talks about the metaphorical meaning of 'film' by saying that films and games deliver "vicarious experience and compressed time". This implies that in the poem 'film' may stand for life in a more general sense, or for specific occurrences or experiences. This ambiguous meaning of 'film' reflects the LIFE IS A MOVIE/FILM conceptual metaphor and is most central to the poem. Thus, the conceptual metaphor works on the thematic-structural level. In addition, since the poets implies that "The Difficulty" depicts how people deal with various life experiences and situations – in particular difficult ones – they are confronted with, I postulated the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY and its entailment SUCCESS IN LIFE IS OVERCOMING OBSTACLES ALONG THE WAY.

Let us now turn to the readers' meaning interpretations of the poem. As discussed in the previous chapter, the majority of the participants interpreted the poem "The Difficulty" as depicting similarities between life and movies. As a further topic, many participants suggested that the poem depicts various struggles that people face in their lives. Furthermore, the poem was often interpreted as talking about relationships or connections, in a more general sense, that that are important to people. The five conceptual metaphor that the participants most often referred to in their interpretation of the poem were LIFE IS A MOVIE and its entailment PEOPLE ARE MOVIE CHARACTERS, LIFE IS A JOURNEY and its entailment HARDSHIPS ARE OBSTACLES, and ENDINGS ARE ROLLING CREDITS.

Table 17. Conceptual metaphors reflecting the analyst's, the poet's and the readers' responses to the poem "The Difficulty"

Analyst	Poet	Readers
LIFE IS A MOVIE/FILM	LIFE IS A MOVIE/FILM	LIFE IS A MOVIE
LIFE IS A JOURNEY	LIFE IS A JOURNEY	LIFE IS A JOURNEY
A FILM IS A PERSON		PEOPLE ARE MOVIE CHARACTERS
SUCCESS IN LIFE IS OVERCOMING OBSTACLES ALONG THE WAY		HARDSHIPS ARE OBSTACLES
ENDINGS ARE ROLLING CREDITS		ENDINGS ARE ROLLING CREDITS
RELEVANCE IS SIZE		
DIFFICULTIES/DANGERS ARE OBJECTS		
OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES/DANGERS IS REDUCING THEM IN SIZE		

Comparing the three perspectives, we see that – similar to the interpretations of "How we got here" – the responses primarily overlapped in the readers' and poet's interpretation of the main theme of the poem. In this case, the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A MOVIE, which works on the thematic-structural level, was picked up by Armantrout as well as by the majority of the readers.

The most obvious difference, if we look at the table above, is reflected in the number of conceptual metaphors that were postulated for the three perspectives. Consider how the poem itself is full of metaphors that can be analyzed through the application of CMT. Most of these conceptual metaphors, though, are not part of the poet's interpretation. The reason for that is that Armantrout only talked about the overall meaning of the poem but did not explain what individual metaphors meant to her. Many of the readers, by contrast, talked about the themes and topics that the poem depicts as well as interpreted individual lines from the poem. For instance, three participants cited the lines *when the credits roll / and we don't know / when to stand* and explained what it meant to them (e.g., "the rolling credits suggest that death is approaching" (P6)). This way, a number of context-specific conceptual metaphors, such as ENDINGS ARE ROLLING CREDITS or HARDSHIPS ARE OBSTACLES could be postulated for the readers' interpretations.

7.3   Comparisons in "The Copper Husk Allegory"

The metaphors in Beck's poem "The Copper Husk Allegory" establish connections between abstract concepts like death, fear, isolation, loss and loneliness, sensuality and intimacy and concrete descriptions of the environment in which the narrative takes place, like the 'muffling sky', the 'still farmhouse', the 'voiceless hill' or the 'wind that rushes in through the open kitchen door'. The most central conceptual metaphor that structured the first two stanzas of the poem was DEATH IS WINTER. Further conceptual metaphors were postulated to reflect the meaning of individual metaphorical expressions and imageries, such as THE SKY IS A PERSON, A HILL IS A PERSON and DEATH IS SLEEP.

When I asked Frank Beck to talk about the overall meaning of the poem, he said that "in 'The Copper Husk Allegory', [he] wanted to express [his] sense of the way in which conventional American life represses sensuality and intimacy" (2017). These two metaphorical themes are to a certain degree[63] reflected in the description of the winter scene in the first stanza, which goes:

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63. As explained earlier, only the first two stanzas of "The Copper Husk Allegory", which match in length with the other poems, were used in the present project. Thus, some of themes and topics that Beck points to in his interpretation are more obvious if the poem as a whole is considered.

The sky is muffling
The fields with flakes
The farmhouse is still
Against a voiceless hill
The wind rushes in
Through the open kitchen door,
and snow drifts over the chairs

Based on the poet's reflection, the conceptual metaphors SENSUALITY IS WINTER/ FALLING SNOW/DRIFTING WIND and INTIMACY IS WINTER/FALLING SNOW/DRIFTING WIND can be postulated. Furthermore, as explained in Chapter 5, I asked Beck to reflect upon the lines *The farmhouse is still / Against a voiceless hill*, as I was particularly interested in what the 'voiceless hill' meant to the poet. Beck responded that he was not aware of this metaphor when he wrote the poem which shows how metaphor may often emerge unconsciously (also see Chapter 4). Since the poet did not say that I had misinterpreted the metaphor, the A HILL IS A PERSON conceptual metaphor seems to be appropriate.

In the think-aloud protocols, none of the participants consciously recognized the personification of the hill. Instead, the majority of the participants talked more broadly about possible themes and topics that the poem depicts, such as death, loneliness, and the inability to deal with pain and failure. These metaphorical interpretations of the poem were primarily shaped by the conceptual metaphors DEATH IS WINTER/COLDNESS/FALLING SNOW/DARKNESS, ABANDONMENT IS WINTER, ISOLATION IS WINTER, DEATH IS SLEEP and NOT SEEING IS NOT KNOWING which were prompted by the author's description of the winter scene and the imagery of the farmers committing suicide, as implied in the second stanza of the poem (*one farmer is hanging in the loft/ his limp neck stiffens in the cold / one is sitting in the darkened barn/the motor's singing him to sleep*). These last two lines were also the ones that many of the participants quoted in their interpretation, suggesting, for instance that *hanging and stiffens in the cold* may refer to death (e.g., P10).

Table 18. Conceptual metaphors reflecting the analyst's, the poet's and the readers' responses to the poem "The Copper Husk Allegory"

Analyst	Poet	Readers
DEATH IS WINTER / DARKNESS / COLDNESS / SILENCE	DEATH IS WINTER	DEATH IS WINTER / DARKNESS / COLDNESS / SILENCE
A HILL IS A PERSON	INTIMACY IS WINTER/FALLING SNOW/DRIFTING WIND	ISOLATION IS WINTER
THE SKY IS A PERSON	A HILL IS A PERSON	DEPRESSION IS WINTER
DEATH IS SLEEP	SENSUALITY IS WINTER/FALLING SNOW/DRIFTING WIND	A LIFETIME IS A YEAR
		NOT SEEING IS NOT KNOWING

The comparison between the readers' and the poet's interpretation shows, once again, that the responses overlap to a great extent. In particular, the poet and the readers agreed that the most central topic was death, and that it was conceptualized by the metaphorical descriptions of the environment, such as darkness, coldness, or silence. These interpretations are displayed in the postulated conceptual metaphors, in which the target domain reflects the theme that both the poet and the readers have highlighted, and in the source domains which point to the various metaphorical words and images that have prompted the interpretation.

The poet's interpretation differs from the readers' in that Beck talked about two further themes that the poem depicts, namely sensuality and intimacy. None of the readers pointed explicitly to one of these topics in their meaning interpretations of the poem.[64] In this context, I need to point out again that Beck talked about the meaning of the entire poem while readers only read the first two stanzas, which is quite obviously the reason for why the interpretations differed. This variation is reflected in the target domain of the conceptual metaphors underlying the poet's and the readers' responses. The source domain, though, was the same (e.g., INTIMACY IS WINTER vs. ISOLATION IS WINTER). The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the poet and the majority of the readers pointed to the same source that prompts a metaphorical reading (e.g., winter, as seen in the source domain of the underlying conceptual metaphor). The understanding of what this metaphorical concept represents or defines, though, differed (e.g., winter standing for sensuality and intimacy vs. winter standing for death, isolation, depression).

If we once again consider the list of conceptual metaphors underlying the poet's response, we see that – as it was the case with Armantrout's response – it is rather short. The number and types of postulated conceptual metaphors allows, as I am suggesting, for some assumptions about the poets' ways of talking about their poems. Consider how both Beck and Armantrout seemed to have a very concrete idea of what their poem discusses. Rather than talking about possible meanings that the poem or individual metaphors may convey, the poets focused their responses on specific aspects. For this reason, only a small number of conceptual metaphors could be postulated. By contrast, Peterson, the author of the poem "How we got here" discussed in Section 7.1, talked about the central theme of the poem and explained the various possible meanings of the metaphorical source domain of EATING. For this reason, Peterson's response was reflective of conceptual metaphors that work both on the thematic-structural level as well as on the immediate level. Lim's response to her poem, which will be discussed in the following section, is even more detailed and thus reflective of a large number of underlying conceptual metaphors.

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64. Only when the participants talked about how reading the poem makes them feel, some suggested that the poem conveys a sense of peace and calmness, which relate to the topics sensuality and intimacy that Beck had pointed out.

7.4   Comparisons in "Night Vision"

Shirley Lim's poem "Night Vision" is retrospective of the speaker's youth, reminiscing of what she had and of what it has now decayed to. The metaphors in Lim's poem reflect how people imagine human mortality and the feelings that are associated with it (e.g., fear, isolation, loss). Similar to Beck's "The Copper Husk Allegory" and Peterson's "How we got here", the description of the environment in Lim's poem reflects the thoughts and feelings of the poem's narrator. At first, when the narrator thinks back to her childhood, the feelings towards the house seem to be warm and welcoming (e.g., 'I lie awake, in the deep enclosing heart of the household'). When the speaker has grown up, she sees that the house is neglected and no longer a happy place ('Dust falling in the dark, in the house').

To represent the idea of the poem depicting the passing of time and of aging, I postulated the conceptual metaphors A LIFETIME IS A DAY and DEATH IS NIGHT. These conceptual metaphors reflect the main theme of the poem and give rise to other conceptual and image metaphors that work on the immediate level, such as BEING CARED FOR IS BEING SHELTERED, A FACE IS A WHITE MOON, MEMORY ARE FLECKS IN THE EYE, A FACE IS A ROUND SPHERE and DEATH IS FALLING DUST.

The postulation of all of these conceptual metaphors was supported by Lim's reflection upon her use of metaphors in her poem. For instance, the poet explains how the passing of years stands for inescapable mortality, the crib for childhood, the deep enclosing heart of a household for a secure place within the domestic family, and the dust for death.[65] As opposed to many of the poets that I had talked to, Shirley Lim explains quite specifically what has inspired the creation of some of the metaphors and how they work in the narrative. The DEATH IS DUST conceptualization, for instance, was an allusion to Genesis 3:19. "The metaphors," as Lim explains, "move through a sequence of family and communal security and comfort to the isolation of the single individual alone in a house". Furthermore, Lim explains that

> on one level, the metaphors generate a universal story of human mortality, but the loss of the family and community to my mind is less "universal" and more a modern tragedy of the ways in which isolated loneliness has become the condition of life for many old folks, and is particularly the tragedy for immigrants who in leaving their original communities can expect growing old and dying alone. This poem expresses my fear for my future in the US.   (p.c. 2017)

Lim's way of reflecting upon her poem is, to my mind, particularly striking as the author showed how metaphors work on different levels. First, the metaphors helped Lim to talk about abstract concepts such as loneliness, loss, morality and so on. In addition, these metaphors shaped Lim's allegorical reading of her own poem. She

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65. Please see Chapter 5 (p. 103) for Lim's complete interpretation of her poem.

explained how the story of the narrator who is aging represents "a universal story of human mortality". At the same time, the metaphors helped Lim to depict her very personal story of being an immigrant and now being afraid of dying alone. By saying that, the poem points to the often ambiguous meanings of metaphors, and to the fact that poems may be interpreted differently by different people. All in all, based on Lim's reflections, I added the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS ABANDON-MENT/ISOLATION to the list of underlying conceptual metaphors.

As it was the case with all poems discussed previously, the readers' interpretations of "Night Vision" overlapped to a great extent with the poet's interpretation of her poem. Like Lim, the majority of the participants suggested that the poem is about life and death, which includes aging, going through different life stages and reflecting upon one's life. These interpretations are, on the one hand, shaped by the metaphorical understanding of light and darkness, in which light stands for beginnings and darkness for death. On the other hand, many participants considered the image of the "deep enclosing heart of the household" as being representative of beginnings, and the "dust falling in the dark, in the house" as endings. The five most common conceptual metaphors in the readers' interpretation of the poem are LIFE IS A CIRCLE, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, A LIFETIME IS A DAY, DEATH IS NIGHT and TIME IS MOTION.

Table 19. Conceptual metaphors reflecting the analyst's, the poet's and the readers' responses to the poem "Night Vision"

Analyst	Poet	Readers
AFFECTION IS CONTAINMENT	AFFECTION IS CONTAINMENT	LIFE IS A CIRCLE
DEATH IS FALLING DUST	DEATH IS FALLING DUST	LIFE IS A JOURNEY
AFFECTION IS A HEART	BEING CARED FOR IS BEING SHELTERED	A LIFETIME IS A DAY
BEING CARED FOR IS BEING SHELTERED	A FACE IS A WHITE MOON	DEATH IS NIGHT
A FACE IS A WHITE MOON	LIFETIME IS A DAY	TIME IS MOTION
LIFETIME IS A DAY	AFFECTION IS A HEART	
A FACE IS A ROUND SPHERE	MORTALITY IS PASSING YEARS	
DEATH IS NIGHT		
STATES ARE LOCATIONS		

The most striking finding that the comparison points to is, as implied earlier, is the huge overlapping between the poet's response and the metaphors that were postulated to reflect the poem's meaning. In this case, the systematic application of CMT to "Night Vision" could reveal quite precisely the many meanings that Lim

tried to convey in her poem. Furthermore, the number of postulated conceptual metaphors for the poet's interpretation is impressive. For none of the other poems used in the study, can so many conceptual metaphors could be postulated. This reflects Lim's readiness to talk in detail about her poem as well as he meanings of individual metaphors.

If we now compare the poet's interpretation to that of the readers', we see that the postulated conceptual metaphors often differ in type. Consider how the conceptual metaphors that reflect the readers' interpretations point to the most common themes that the poem depicts (e.g., life, death, mortality) and remain on the thematic-structural level. Lim's interpretation of her poem, by contrast, is reflective of the poem's central themes as well as of individual metaphorical expressions and images. Another interesting aspect about Lim's interpretation is her readiness to share very personal, idiosyncratic interpretations of her poem. For instance, Lim mentioned that the poem talks about the lives of immigrants and is reflecting her own fear for her future in the US. Additionally, she explained the meanings and sources of individual metaphors, such as the reference to the Bible in the lines *dust falling in the dark / in the house*. Such personal insights are usually inaccessible to the readers and also one reason for why the readers' interpretations varied in this regard to the poet's. In such cases, asking a poet to talk about the meaning of his or her poem can considerably broaden the understanding of a poem.

7.5   Comparisons in "Wind"

James Arthur's poem "Wind" invites readers to identify themselves with the wind; to imagine what it must be like to act like the wind or to see the world through its eyes. Through the use of metaphors, Arthur creates a sense of ambiguity. Readers will find themselves wondering whether Arthur is talking about the wind as a natural phenomenon or as a human being who, as the wind, can be gentle and caring as well as careless and wild.

To represent the very obvious personification of the wind in lines such as, *flipping an umbrella outside-in, borrowing an old woman's hat,* or *embracing you so lightly*, I postulated the conceptual metaphor WIND IS A PERSON. This conceptual metaphor was also the most prominent one and structured the entire narrative. Further conceptual metaphors were postulated to represent the meaning of metaphors on the immediate level, such as THE WIND IS AN IRRESPONSIBLE PERSON, THE WIND IS A PERSON RIDING ENTHUSIASTICALLY ON A HORSE and AFFECTION IS TOUCH.

What the individual metaphors mean to Arthur, he explains as follows:

In the specific case of "Wind," I wanted to allow joy, even giddiness, to enter the poem. I tried to play off the idea of the wind being mischievous and impulsive, but intangible too, so I used a number of trochaic words, feminine line endings, and enjambment (plus the lack of punctuation) to try to capture the persona of wind, as I imagine it: careless, graceful, fey.

And yet, for all the poem's playfulness, I think there's a dark element to "Wind" too, because the wind disavows all responsibility for its actions. It's saying, in effect, "I do what I feel like doing in the moment, and I can't help it! It's who I am!" I've always wrestled against this impulsiveness in myself – probably everyone does – and I tried to give voice to that part of myself, without making the poem so ethically troubled that all sense of fun would be lost.

Perhaps the wind also offers a kind of consolation. I think that in the last lines, the wind is saying that it sees us, faults and all, and is always with us, loving us, tending to us, keeping us company, even if we are unaware of its presence.

(Arthur 2019, p.c.)[66]

As the response shows, Arthur talks in great detail about his use of metaphors in his poem. He starts by reflecting upon the overall meaning, pointing – maybe implicitly – to the personification of the wind (e.g., "trying to capture the persona of the wind"). Thus, the conceptual metaphor WIND IS A PERSON is also central to the poet's perspective. Based on Arthur's reflections and in addition to the previously defined conceptual metaphors, I postulated the conceptual metaphors THE WIND IS A MISCHIEVOUS PERSON and CONSOLATION IS TOUCH.

Across the participants' responses, the WIND IS A PERSON conceptual metaphor was the most prominent one. Similar to the poet, readers too presented various understandings of what the wind might represent. Conceptual metaphors such as THE WIND IS A CARELESS PERSON, THE WIND IS A PERSON WITH INNER STRUGGLES, THE WIND IS A GENTLE PERSON, THE WIND IS A COMPASSIONATE PERSON structured the participants responses. In relation to describing what the 'wind' represents, many of the participants suggested that the poem depicts topics such as such as superficiality (e.g., judging people on their outer appearance), tolerance, individuality and humanity.

Comparing the responses, we see once again that the conceptual metaphor WIND IS A PERSON, which structures the whole poem, is most central across the readers' and the author's responses. In none of the other five poems was there a metaphor as prominent as this one. Another interesting overlapping between the poet and the readers was their explanations of how they personally related to the poem. For instance, Arthur explained that the poem depicts the struggle against

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66. Also this response was discussed in the article "A cognitive linguistic approach to James Arthur's poem 'Wind'" (Rasse 2018).

Table 20. Conceptual metaphors reflecting the analyst's, the poet's and the readers' responses to the poem "Wind"

Analyst	Poet	Readers
THE WIND IS A PERSON	THE WIND IS A PERSON	THE WIND IS A PERSON
THE WIND IS AN IRRESPONSIBLE PERSON	THE WIND IS A MISCHIEVOUS PERSON	THE WIND IS A CARELESS PERSON
THE WIND IS A PERSON RIDING ENTHUSIASTICALLY ON A HORSE	CONSOLATION IS TOUCH	THE WIND IS A PERSON WITH INNER STRUGGLES
AFFECTION IS TOUCH		THE WIND IS A GENTLE PERSON
		THE WIND IS A COMPASSIONATE PERSON
		INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS

his impulsiveness of doing what he feels like doing at the moment; it might be wrong, but that is who he is. Many of the participants, too, said that they can easily relate to the poem as they – like the wind – do things that can be harmful and unintentionally messy, but in the end they also do things to help and care. Lastly, the responses overlapped in the ways the poet and the readers approached the poem, as both talked about the overall meaning of the poem as well as interpreting individual metaphorical expressions and imageries.

The only, but rather obvious, difference between the readers' and the poet's interpretations were their understandings of the metaphorical use of 'wind'. Similar to the interpretations of Peterson's poem "How we got here", in which participants offered various understanding of 'eating', readers of Arthur's poem presented various understandings of 'wind'. These differences are again reflected in the source domains of the postulated conceptual metaphors (e.g., THE WIND IS A MISCHIEVOUS PERSON compared to THE WIND IS A COMPASSIONATE PERSON).

7.6 Comparisons in "The Hearts"

The last poem to be discussed in detail is Robert Pinsky's "The Heart". As explained in Chapter 5, the poem can either be read as a metaphorized depiction of the physiological image of the heart. In this case, the use of metaphors allows the poet to establish connections between the circulatory system and the ocean, between blood and water, and concerning heart beats and waves. Or, one might consider a further dimension of the poem, which sees the heart as a symbol of love and which depicts topics such as affection, loss, grief, and persistence. Both interpretations are reflective of numerous conceptual metaphors.

First, as in Arthur's poem "Wind", Pinsky personifies the heart by calling it a *legendary muscle that wants and grieves.* Furthermore, Pinsky describes the heart as *an organ of attachment, the pump of thrills.* Based on these metaphorical descriptions of the heart, I postulated the conceptual metaphors THE HEART IS A PERSON and THE CENTER OF EMOTIONS IS THE HEART, AND THE HEART IS A MACHINE. The lines *and troubles, clinging in stubborn colonies / Like pulpy shore-life battened on a jetty* show how Pinsky maps the qualities of water onto the domain of blood, which is reflective of the conceptual metaphor TROUBLES ARE BLOOD CLOTS. Or, if we consider the connection between entities sticking to the ground and feelings that are persistent, the conceptual metaphor PERSISTENCE IS CLINGING ENTITIES can be postulated. For the final four lines (*slashed by the little deaths of sleep and pleasure / They swell in the nurturing spasms of the waves / Sucking to cling; and even in death itself – Baked, frozen – they shrink to grip the granite* harder) I postulated the conceptual metaphor, WATER IS BLOOD, NURTURANCE IS WATER, WAVES ARE RHYTHM, HARDSHIPS ARE SLASHINGS and DEATH IS BEING BAKED/FROZEN.

Turning to the author, we see that Pinsky's way of reflecting upon his use of metaphors is quite different from how, for instance, Lim or Beck talked about their use of metaphors. Pinsky did not say what the metaphors that he used in his poem "The Hearts" meant to him personally. Instead, the poet said that he finds it striking how much metaphoric power inheres in verbs and nouns:

> Wants, grieves, pumps, thrills, clings, battens, jetties, slashes, swells, nurtures, sucks, clings, shrinks, grips, rids . . . the energy of metaphor churns through syntax. There's maybe a lazy inclination to think of metaphors as "images." In a way yes, but in poetry that energy is not so much pictorial as kinetic.
>
> (Pinsky 2019, p.c.)

Pinsky is surely right in saying that metaphor not only creates static pictures in the readers' minds but is very closely related to bodily movement. What would have been interesting to learn, though, is what has inspired Pinsky to use these metaphors and how the poet possibly expects readers to interpret them. Due to this rather narrow response, I could not postulate conceptual metaphors that would reflect Pinsky's interpretation of his poem. When I asked the author explicitly about the possible metaphoric readings of his poem in a follow-up e-mail, he confirmed that both ways of interpreting the poem (the metaphorized scientific depiction of the heart vs. seeing the heart as a symbol of affection) are appropriate.

If we now turn to the readers' interpretations of the poem, we see that they are very rich and diverse; in particular, in the ways the metaphorical use of the 'heart' was interpreted. The majority of the participants recognized the personification of the heart and pointed out that the descriptions of how the heart thinks, feels, and acts in given situations reflects how people think, feel, and act in similar situations. Some further frequently mentioned metaphorical themes were emotions, life, and

relationships. Overall, the most common conceptual metaphors that shaped the readers' understanding of the poem were THE HEART IS A PERSON, THE HEART IS AN OBJECT, THE HEART IS THE OCEAN, EMOTIONAL CLOSENESS IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS and LIFE IS A JOURNEY.

If we now consider what the underlying conceptual metaphors tell us about the ways the poem was interpreted by the readers, we see, as in the responses to "Wind", that one target domain was particularly prominent, namely HEART. This suggests that the majority of the readers recognized the metaphorical use of 'heart' in the poem. The ways they interpreted it, though, differed. For instance, one participant claimed that the poem "is comparing ship life to the characteristics of the heart (e.g., that life is driven by desire, grief, thrill, stubbornness)" (P4), which supports the reading of the poem as a scientific-metaphorical description of the heart as an organ. Yet, there were also interpretations that showed that the poem could also be read as depicting various emotions associated with love and loss that people experience in their lives, as reflected in the following response: "The meaning seems to be that we cling to life and all it the suffering and pain and pleasure it brings because that is what being alive means" (P19). If we now consider the conceptual metaphors underlying these responses, we see that they vary primarily in the source domains (e.g., THE HEART IS SHIP LIFE, P4, and HEART IS A LIVING ORGANISM THAT ENABLES BONDING, P19).

Table 21. Conceptual metaphors reflecting the analyst's and the readers' responses to the poem "The Hearts"

Analyst	Readers
THE HEART IS A PERSON	THE HEART IS A PERSON
THE CENTER OF EMOTION IS THE HEART	THE HEART IS AN OBJECT
THE HEART IS A MACHINE	THE HEART IS THE OCEAN
TROUBLES ARE BLOOD CLOTS	EMOTIONAL CLOSENESS IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS
PERSISTENCE IS CLINGING ENTITIES	LIFE IS A JOURNEY
RHYTHM IS WAVES	
NURTURANCE IS WATER	
WATER IS BLOOD	
HARDSHIPS ARE SLASHINGS	
DEATH IS BEING BAKED/FROZEN	

The comparisons between the readers' responses and the conceptual metaphors that were postulated to reflect the meaning of the poem shows one interesting aspect; namely, that the poem itself was full of creative, context-specific conceptual metaphors (e.g., TROUBLES ARE BLOOD CLOTS, WATER IS BLOOD, DEATH IS BEING BAKED). Hardly any of the readers, though, referred to these conceptualizations in

their interpretations. Instead, the participants mainly talked about general themes and topics that the poem depicts, which is also reflected in the postulation of rather common conceptual metaphors (e.g., EMOTIONAL CLOSENESS IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS, LIFE IS A JOURNEY).

7.7   Summary of main findings

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the similarities and differences in the readers' and poets' interpretations of the six poems. As the results have shown, much overlappings can be found. Yet, there are also instances in which the poets' and readers' responses differ. My contention is that a systematic, close analysis of the conceptual metaphors underlying the poets' and readers' responses can point quite precisely to "where" these responses vary. This, in turn, allows for more astute assumptions about the similarities and differences in poetry interpretations across different readers (including the poets).

The list below summarizes where and how, based on the collected data, the poets' and readers' interpretations mainly overlapped or varied, how these similarities and differences are reflected in the underlying conceptual metaphors, and what these patterns tell us about the ways poetry is approached. In addition, it links the discussion of where the responses overlapped or varied to the previously defined levels on which conceptual metaphors in poetry work:

I.   Responses usually overlap when poets and readers talk about the general/central meaning of the poem. These overlappings are reflected in the conceptual metaphors that depict the main theme of the poem and appear in both the poet's and the readers' interpretations. For instance, in Arthur's poem "Wind", the conceptual metaphor WIND IS A PERSON was central to the narrative and shaped both the poet's reflection and the readers' interpretations of the poem. Based on this finding, one might suggest that responses primarily overlap in references to conceptual metaphors that work on the thematic-structural level.

II.   When poets and readers talk about additional themes or topics that the poem depicts, and are thus reflective of conceptual metaphors that work on the thematic level, their responses overlap/vary to different degrees, which I summarize as follows:

i.   Poets and readers talk about the same theme or topic. In this case, the underlying conceptual metaphors are identical.

ii.   Poets and readers talk about completely different themes and topics. In this case, the conceptual metaphors underlying the responses vary in their source and target domains.

   iii. Poets and readers pick up the same metaphorical theme/topic (e.g., LIFE). The ways they see that LIFE is conceptualized in the poem, though, varies. For instance, Shirley Lim considered life to be linear (e.g., "The metaphors move through a sequence of family and communal security and comfort to the isolation of the single individual alone in a house 'to see/ Dust falling in the dark,' i.e. facing death") whereas many of the readers thought that life is depicted as a circle (e.g., "The poem depicts life as a circle; where you begin is where you end" (P31). In such interpretations, the underlying conceptual metaphors match in the target domain but vary in the source domain.

   iv. Poets and readers recognize a metaphorical concept/idea in the poem (e.g., the notion of 'eating everything' in Peterson's poem). The ways they interpret the concept, though, varies (e.g., understanding 'eating everything' as 'winning' as compared to 'destroying'). In this case, the responses overlap in the source domain but differ in the target domain.

III. The same scenario as in II.) can also be found in the readers' and poets' interpretations of individual metaphorical expressions or imageries. In such cases, the conceptual metaphors underlying the interpretations work on the immediate level and may

   i. be identical, which means that both perspectives offer the same interpretation of a metaphor.

   ii. vary, which means that the poet and the readers do not talk about the same metaphor.

   iii. overlap in the target domain, which means that different words or imageries make the poet and the readers think of the same topic. For instance, Lim considers the image of the 'flecks in the eye' to represent memory. Many of the readers, by contrast, pointed out that the image of the narrator lying awake at night makes them interpret the poem as being about memory and past experiences.

   iv. overlap in the source domain, which means that the poet and the readers consider the same expression to be metaphorical (e.g., 'the deep enclosing heart of the household' in Lim's poem); the interpretation of it, though, varies (e.g., seeing this metaphorical image as depicting the baby's crib (Lim) as compared to a mother's womb (P3)).

IV. In regards to (II) and (III), I should point out that the most common reason for why the poets' and the readers' responses vary is when one of the two parties includes information that is inaccessible to the other. For instance, readers or poets may present idiosyncratic interpretations, as in response to "The Hearts" to which one participant wrote that the poem makes him/her reflect on his/her grandpa's immense love for his/her grandmother when she passed away (P31). Or a poet has a very specific idea of what the poem represents (e.g., Lim

saying that the poem "Night Vision" depicts her fear of her future in the US). In such cases, the conceptual metaphors underlying the responses might give some clues on the meanings or experiences that a poem depicts that – during a more "superficial" reading – would possibly remain unnoticed.

All in all, what we see from this overview is that there is no simple 'yes' or 'no' answer to the question on whether there is much overlapping between a poet's interpretation of his or her poem and the readers' responses to it. Instead, as I hope to have shown in my analyses, the interpretations of and comparison between the readers' and poets' perspectives may overlap or differ on various – but interconnected – levels or dimensions. These include, but are not limited to, the ways a poem as a whole is interpreted, the strategies readers or poets use to talk about specific themes or topics a poem depicts, the ways individual metaphors are interpreted, the ways a poem is approached, and much more.

This chapter proposed that a systematic application of CMT to the poets' and readers' responses may help researchers get to, and interpret, these various dimensions of poetry interpretation. For instance, as the previous pages have shown, a conceptual metaphor that is very central to a reader's or poet's response will reflect the main theme of the poem. The target domains of underlying conceptual metaphors reveal what concepts in the poem were considered to be metaphorical, and the related source domains give information on what (e.g., a word, an utterance, an image, an experience, etc.) has prompted the reader/poet to arrive at that particular metaphorical understanding of the poem. Additionally, poets' and readers' interpretations may vary in their willingness or ability to talk about the meaning of the poem or of individual metaphors, which is reflected in the types and numbers of conceptual metaphors being postulated. If researchers take these different aspects into account, the conclusions they draw from comparisons between various interpretations will be more nuanced and accurate.

7.8   What a systematic application of CMT to readers' and poets' responses, and a comparison between these, tells us about poetry interpretation

To conclude this chapter, I would like to suggest that thinking about the differences and similarities across the poets' and readers' interpretations and the underlying conceptual metaphors brings us back to the discussion of why poetry is so powerful. Consider how the similarities between the poets' and the readers' interpretations show how poets get their messages across, and that readers understand poetry. Otherwise, the responses would not overlap to such a great extent. At the same time, responses of poets and readers may differ, which suggests that poetry leaves enough

room for idiosyncratic interpretations. And isn't it exactly this interplay between closeness and distance, familiarity and strangeness, enticement and aloofness which makes poetry so enjoyable?

Think back to the Introduction of the monograph in which I recounted how the poet James Arthur explained how people often say that they admire poetry but are reluctant to read it as they find it difficult to understand. The American poet Matthew Zapruder shares this view. In an interview for the *New York Times*, Zapruder says, "Like classical music, poetry has an unfortunate reputation for requiring special training and education to appreciate, which takes readers away from its true strangeness, and makes most of us feel as if we haven't studied enough to read it" (2017: n.p.). In response to such presuppositions about poetry, both Arthur and Zapruder remind us that poetry is such an incarnate part of our lives. We all use and rely on poetry in various situations and contexts, such as when we teach children to read or count, or when we compose a song or prepare a speech for a special event like a wedding. And there, we take poetry for granted.

The difference of poetry compared to other media in which poetic elements are used, as Zapruder suggests, is probably the ways people approach it. Consider how in the classroom poems are often taught as if they were riddles. We often ask ourselves what a poem is trying to convey, what the theme or message of this poem is, or what words like "purple" or "flower" or "grass" *really* mean. From the perspective of most poets, though, a poem does not have one single true, pre-described meaning. Instead, poets invite readers to find out for themselves what a poem means to them, what emotions and feelings it evokes and which experiences it conveys.

In addition, people usually have certain expectations from reading poetry which, too, shape the ways they approach and interpret a poetic narrative. Consider how, in Chapter 2, I discussed how the metaphor identification procedure MIP could be applied to poetry and which limitations it has. As an example, I presented Maya Angelou's poem "Caged Bird". Below is the second stanza of the poem.

> But a bird that stalks
> down his narrow cage
> can seldom see through
> his bars of rage
> his wings are clipped and
> his feet are tied
> so he opens his throat to sing

Imagine you would read these lines in a nature magazine. How would you interpret them? Most likely, you will think that the author, quite poetically, is writing about a bird in a cage, how it suffers as it is locked up. By doing so, the author might be criticizing cage system housing. And now consider you would read these lines in a poetry journal. Would your interpretation change? My assumption is that most

readers will recognize that, in the poem, the 'bird' is not just a bird in its literal sense but stands for people who suffer from being oppressed. This way, the poem will be interpreted as depicting topics such as freedom and slavery, hope and fear because readers *expect* that the poem has a deeper meaning than what it presents on its surface form. Matthew Zapruder explains this function of language in poetry as follows:

> In a poem, language remains itself yet is also made to feel different, even sacred, like a spell. How this happens is the mystery of each poem, and maybe its deepest meaning. Coming upon a word, having it rise up out of the preconscious, intuitive dream-state and into the poem, either to begin or somewhere along the way or even, blissfully, at the end, is the special reward of being a poet, and a reader of poetry. By being placed into the machine of a poem, language can become alive again. It is both what it is and what it means, but also something that is greater than the ordinary   (Zapruder 2017: n.p.)

It seems as if this "greater than the ordinary" is exactly what many poets hope to convey in their poems, and what readers expect from poetry. To find support for this claim and to offer yet another comparison between the poets' and readers' perspectives, I have outlined poets' and readers' responses to the questions "What do poets hope to achieve in writing poem?" and to "What do readers expect from poetry?". The responses were taken from the American question-and-answer website *Quara*,[67] as well as from other online discussions that I have come across on *Twitter* and *Researchgate*, and on websites that collect quotations from famous poets.

Let me start with the poets' responses:[68]

– "There are three things, after all, that a poem must reach: the eye, the ear, and what we may call the heart or the mind. It is most important of all to reach the heart of the reader." (Frost)
– "Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar." (Shelley)
– "Poetry is the journal of a sea animal living on land, wanting to fly in the air. Poetry is a search for syllables to shoot at the barriers of the unknown and the unknowable. Poetry is a phantom script telling how rainbows are made and why they go away." (Sandburg)
– "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events

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67. The readers' responses can be accessed through this link: https://www.quora.com/What-do-readers-expect-from-poetry

68. The poets' responses can be accessed through this link: https://www.quora.com/What-do-poets-want-to-express-after-all

which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked." (Eliot)
–   "Poetry is what in a poem makes you laugh, cry, prickle, be silent, makes your toe nails twinkle, makes you want to do this or that or nothing, makes you know that you are alone in the unknown world, that your bliss and suffering is forever shared and forever all your own." (Dylan)
–   "The genesis of a poem for me is usually a cluster of words. The only good metaphor I can think of is a scientific one: dipping a thread into a supersaturated solution to induce crystal formation. I don't think I solve problems in my poetry; I think I uncover the problems." (Atwood)
–   "The idea is to put in words a fleeting image. I can feel something and don't know what to call it. If I say I feel 'fear', I am limiting the expression to one dimension. I feel fear but maybe other things at the same time for example 'hopeful'. With this feeling I might also have visions of something with which I can compare my feelings. The total effect of all these experiences on me is a jumble of images and words. I have to put them on paper to realize the full depth of what I feel at the moment." (Bhattacharyya)
–   "A great poet is a great soul who consolidates so many things in a poem: a thought, a music, a language, a feeling, an information, a wisdom and that too in a small piece of work." (Bhatt)

Knowing what many poets hope to achieve by writing poetry, let us consider some examples of what people expect from reading poetry:

–   "To be challenged in terms of form and/or content." (Fiona D.)
–   "A moving of my heart, a surprise-insight, a space of introspection, an ending that shifts me in the inside." (Elaine L.)
–   "I'm looking for insight, something that connects me to either an emotion or an observation about humanity." (Christina H.)
–   "I expect to slow down and be taken into the minutia of human existence. That maybe sounds a bit silly, but what I mean is that I see poetry as small noticing that a poet is able to magnify in a meaningful way, that is often surprising and moving." (Jessica v.G.)
–   "When I read a poem, I want to feel something. Anything. I want the poem to affect me emotionally. Pat me on the head or punch me in the gut." (Mason D.)
–   "Heart to heart communication, I would say. As a reader, you like the poem when you can 'feel' it, rather than spending too many hours on it to extract a meaning out of it." (Swati)

–   "What I want most from poetry is Wordsworth's visionary gleam. It is often just a few magical words that somehow encapsulate thoughts and feelings I never even realized I had until I read those lines. My head is full of them even as I type. I can't imagine what life would be like if my head was not stuffed full of poetry." (Mickie S.)

–   "I have two expectations that pop to mind quickly, one cynical and the other kind of innocent. The cynical one is that I expect to not like most poetry that I read. Probably more than 2/3s of the poetry I've read I find unmoving, haughty, too-high-on-the-optimal-innovation scale, too presumptuous, frankly, too long, or somehow wanting in another way. But of the minority of poetry that I like, I expect it first and foremost to move me in some both intellectual and emotional way. I expect it to take my breath away, pull a tear, or give me that huge warm tingly feeling of a juicy sexy metaphor or just-the-right-phrasing, cascading through your body […]. Involved in this latter expectation is a form of mind-melding (a la Spock) that I expect of good poetry. To illustrate, imagine a group of people in some situation and some subtle little bit of intrigue happens that most of the group don't notice […]. I expect this kind of mindfulness to exist between myself and the poet (and between them and a generic "me", knowing of course that the writer would not likely know that I personally am one of their readers). It is like I am saying, 'I see what you are doing here and it is good', and the writer knows that savvy readers share that mind space" (Herbert C.).

The readers' and poets' responses capture so beautifully the many aspects that make poetry so powerful and enjoyable for both writers and readers. At the same time, they point – even if indirectly – to the important role metaphor plays in poetry. Without metaphors, neither poets nor readers would be able to experience what they hope to experience in writing or reading a poem. As I hope to have shown in various discussions along the monograph, metaphors help poets to describe, and readers to see or feel something "beyond the ordinary". They make language become alive; they move us places, give rise to thoughts, feelings and experiences that we possibly would not encounter in such form in everyday-life situations, and they connect us with fellow beings. Metaphor, I would say, is the engine of poetry. And one way of understanding its functions is being attentive to conceptual metaphors that structure a poem and the poet's and readers' responses to this poem.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion and future outlook

Metaphors are a way of leaping the gap between one mind and another by illustrating an idea with what we have in common as human beings. They form deep connections. They make abstract ideas concrete. They speak to us, subconscious to subconscious.
Maggie Butt (2019, p.c.)

Metaphor plays a crucial role in human life. It shapes the ways we think, act, and communicate – both in verbal and non-verbal, in poetic and non-poetic contexts. The production and processing of metaphorical language happens, for the most part, automatically and unconsciously. This may pose various challenges for metaphor researchers.

Cognitive linguists are, to a great extent, dependent on the language that people use when they create and interpret metaphors when they study metaphorical thought and language. Consequently, they can usually only make assumptions about online processes that operate during the immediate metaphor production or comprehension. In addition, metaphor scholars have in the past often been criticized for relying on their intuition when deciding whether a word was used metaphorically in the given context or not. Sometimes they also face difficulties when determining how representative the analyses of isolated examples are of real discourse.

Despite these shortcomings, cognitive-linguistic approaches to metaphor have greatly shaped our understanding of what metaphors are and how they work. They revealed, for instance, that metaphoric thought plays a role in the historical evolution of what words and expressions mean (cf., Sweetser 1990; Kay et al. 2015). Additionally, cognitive linguists offered evidence on the ubiquity of metaphor in both language and thought through systematic analyses of linguistic expressions (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Deignan 2017; Katz 2017; Onysko 2017; just to name a few). The growing body of experimental research, in particular, and the application of different methods, such as asking people to describe their thoughts after speaking metaphorically, looking at the way people form mental images for verbal metaphors, or analyzing how people reason about abstract topics such as love or loss, have given scientific proof that people think via conceptual metaphors when they engage with metaphors.

The present project used a combination of different qualitative methods (questionnaires, online interviews, written think-aloud protocols) to explore how poets

create and readers interpret metaphors in poetry. One of the main goals of this book was to "reunite" conceptual metaphor theory with poetry studies. Since Lakoff and Johnson's hallmark publication *Metaphors We Live By* in 1980 there were, to my knowledge, only two bigger book projects, namely Lakoff and Turner's *More than Cool Reason* (1989) and Gibbs' *The Poetics of Mind* (1994) which systematically applied conceptual metaphor theory to poetry to explore the role of conceptual metaphors in people's understandings of poetic narratives. Recent handbooks and edited volumes[69] have drawn heavily on conceptual metaphor theory when studying metaphorical thought, language, and communication in various facets of our lives. Yet, relatively little attention has been given to metaphors in poetry.[70] The present project aimed to fill this gap by studying poems – as well as poets' and readers' responses to poetry – for underlying conceptual metaphors and by investigating what conceptual metaphors may tell us about the meanings of a poem, about the ways poets reflect upon their use of metaphors in their works, and about the ways readers respond to poetic narratives.

The book was divided into eight chapters. After a general introduction to the project was given in the first chapter, Chapter 2 discussed various theoretical and empirical investigations into the study of metaphors in various discourses. It explained what conceptual metaphors "are made of" and how they work, introduced the metaphor identification procedure MIP, and presented how conceptual metaphors shape the ways people think, act and communicate. In the last part, the chapter focused on metaphors in poetry and presented studies that have drawn on insights of CMT to explore how readers interpret poetic metaphors. The chapter closed with a discussion of the challenges involved in poetic metaphor studies.

In Chapter 3, the advantages of qualitative methods for the study of metaphors in poetry were discussed. After that, the corpus and the three empirical studies were explained in detail. The combination of different study designs had a number of advantages. First, the analysis of poetic metaphor was not limited to my close readings of the poems and my subjective understanding of the metaphors, but also took the perspectives of the poets and other readers into account. Secondly, the investigation enabled me to explore the production and processing of poetic metaphors on both a

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69. E.g., *Researching and Applying Metaphor in the Real World* (Graham et.al. 2010); *The Routledge Handbook of Metaphor and Language* (Semino & Demjen 2017), *Metaphor, Nation and Discourse* (Šarić & Stanojević 2019); *Metaphor in Language and Culture across World Englishes* (Callies & Degani 2021).

70. Some works that included discussions on metaphor in poetry and have partly drawn on conceptual metaphor theory are *The Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (Gibbs 2008), *Gehirn und Gedicht* (Schrott & Jacobs 2011); *The Poem as Icon (Freeman 2020), Poetry in the Mind* (Gavins 2020).

micro and a macro level: The interviews with the poets focused on the interpretation of individual metaphors whereas the questionnaires and written think-aloud protocols took into account the broader contexts as well as factors that, beside conceptual metaphor, influenced the poets' and readers' engagements with metaphors.

Chapter 4, then, focused on the poets' perspectives on metaphors by analyzing the results of the questionnaire that had been sent out to 54 English-speaking poets. The aim was to present the poets' very personal perspectives on why and how they use metaphorical language, what inspires them to write poetry, what they hope to achieve by the implementation of metaphors, whether they think that the creation of metaphor is a conscious, or rather intuitive process, and if they think that they can foresee, or even control, how readers interpret the meanings of their metaphors. The findings of this study were discussed for current cognitive- and psycholinguistic theories on metaphor. For instance, the ways some of the poets commented on the extent to which metaphors draw on bodily experiences resonates strongly with work on embodied metaphor. In addition, many of the views that are expressed by the poets brought into question the straightforward domain mappings that are often referred to in metaphor theory. A further interesting finding was that many of the poets cited the subconscious as one of the main sources of the metaphors. Even though many of these metaphors might be described as 'deliberate' under one view, the data has clearly shown that the poets were not always aware of exactly how or why they produced their metaphors. Last but not least, many of the poets described how they are happy to let their metaphors loose in the wild and therefore understood in different ways by different readers. This idea supports the assumption that metaphors usually do not have single, pre-described meanings.

In a follow-up interview study, the six poets whose works were used in the present project were asked to reflect upon the meanings of specific metaphors in their works. The poets' responses served as a basis for my postulation of conceptual metaphors underlying the meanings of the six poems in Chapter 5. The intention of this investigation was to broaden the understandings of the poems by presenting different dimensions of (metaphorical) meanings, feelings and experiences that the poems convey. In this context, I suggested that metaphors in poetry work on at least three different, though often closely connected, levels. On the micro, or "immediate level", the conceptual metaphors reflect the meaning of local metaphorical expressions and/or the immediate imageries that the poem creates. On the meso, or "thematic level", conceptual metaphors reflect the poem's theme(s). And if the entire poem is structured by one particular conceptual metaphor which also gives rise to other conceptual metaphors in this poem, the conceptual metaphor works on a macro, or "thematic-structural level". In sum, I suggested that studying poetry for underlying conceptual metaphors and investigating on which level(s) they work may give a more accurate and multi-faceted picture on the role of metaphors in

poetry in contrast to what previous studies have done. Researchers are encouraged to pay attention to details by, for instance, asking themselves what individual words and phrases mean, what themes and topics the poem conveys, and whether there is a central theme that structures the entire poem. Additionally, their findings are based on systematic analyses of metaphors that work in and across various dimensions of the poem.

Chapter 6, then, discussed the results of the written think-aloud protocol study to explore the readers' responses to the six poems. In their interpretations of the poems, participants were asked to talk about the meanings of the poems, about how reading the poems makes them feel, and about what they think the authors' intentions were in writing the poems. The responses were analyzed for underlying conceptual metaphors. The main finding of this investigation is that conceptual metaphors play a crucial role in people's responses to poetry. Different to previous investigations, particular attention was given to the various nuances in poetry interpretation. For instance, a close analysis of the readers' meaning interpretations has shown that readers' use of conceptual metaphors may vary in terms of their explicitness. While some responses show very clear references to underlying conceptual metaphors, other are implicit or incomplete. A further interesting observation was the rather even use of literal and metaphorical responses to how reading the poem makes the participants feel. This might be rather unexpected as one might think that talking about one's emotions and feelings – being abstract concepts – require the use of metaphors. The results of this study, however, have shown that many people talk in literal terms about how reading a poem makes them feel since the actual expressions such as sad, happy, worried or unbothered are used in their literal emotionally evaluative senses.

The study also revealed that participants primarily used metaphorical language when they reflected upon the author's intention in writing the poem. The conceptual metaphors underlying these responses predominantly overlapped with the readers' meaning interpretations of the poems. In some cases, when the participants talked about the author's intention, they elaborated further on what they discussed in response to the meaning questions, which resulted in allegorical readings of the poem. The results, in general, have shown that readers' responses to the poems are often complex and dynamic. Participants usually do not interpret single metaphorical expressions and present possible source and target domains in their responses. Instead, it is often an interplay between various words and concepts, different images that the poet creates, the mood that a poem evokes, the experiences that it conveys, the memories that it triggers, and much more, which make a reader arrive at a very personal understanding of a poem.

Last but not least, the readers' and the poets' responses were compared to each other in Chapter 7. The aim was to reveal patterns in the ways the responses of the

poets and readers overlap or vary. The analysis, again, focused on the conceptual metaphors underlying the various responses to the selected poems. The results offered further support for the assumption that a systematic application of CMT to the poets' and readers' responses may help researchers get to, and interpret, various dimensions of poetry interpretation. For instance, a conceptual metaphor that is very central to a reader's or poet's response will reflect the main theme of the poem. The target domains of underlying conceptual metaphors revealed which concepts in the poem were considered to be metaphorical, and the related source domains gave information on what (e.g., a word, an utterance, an image, an experience) prompted the reader/poet to arrive at that particular metaphorical understanding of the poem. The chapter concluded with a discussion on what poets hope to achieve in writing a poem and on what readers expect from poetry. In general, the results have emphasized once more what a crucial role metaphor plays in the creation and interpretation of poetic narratives.

Overall, I hope that my project has broadened the knowledge of the meanings and functions of metaphors in poetry. As part of that, the study provided some insights into what metaphors mean to poets, and it highlighted how a systematic application of conceptual metaphor theory may help researchers not only to study poetry itself but also to investigate how poets reflect upon the meanings of specific metaphors in their works, and to analyze how readers interpret and respond to poetry. As regards future work in the study of metaphor in poetry, several things could be done. First, more attention could be given to different levels or dimensions on which poetic metaphors operate. For instance, Kövecses (2018) differentiated between the situational context, the discourse context, the conceptual-cognitive context, and the bodily context when he talked about factors that possibly influenced a poet's use of (conceptual) metaphors in his/her work.

Similar to Kövecses' assumptions, the present project, as explained before, suggested that conceptual metaphors may reflect the meanings and experiences that a poem conveys on at least three different levels (immediate-, thematic-, and the thematical-structure level). These categories reflected the metaphoricity that a poem conveys on the linguistic level, which means that the postulated conceptual metaphors were primarily based on my understanding of metaphorical words or concepts detected in the poem. In poetry, though, metaphoricity may also lie in rhyme and rhythm; in the ways individual words or the entire narrative sound when a poet or reader reads the poem out aloud; in pauses and lines breaks, or in a poem's visual appearance on the paper. Thus, it is very likely that conceptual metaphors work on levels other than the three discussed in this project. Future research shall shed light on this assumption.

As a second route of future investigations, researchers could explore whether the awareness of conceptual metaphors underlying poetic narratives may help instructors

to teach and students to understand poetry. For instance, Rasse and Gibbs (2021) have shown that literary texts elicit metaphorical thinking as a major part of readers' interpretive experiences. The authors suggested that the tacit knowledge of conceptual metaphors may help readers to understand metaphorical expressions as well as larger (metaphorical) themes that a novel exhibits. Additionally, the authors explained how metaphorical ideas, which have underlying conceptual metaphors, often give rise to rich metaphorical imagery that helps readers to understand the story characters' beliefs, their inner struggles, and their interpersonal interactions with others. Furthermore, Rasse and Gibbs (2021) emphasize that metaphorical thinking emerges not just locally whenever people encounter metaphorically used words and phrases, but unfolds in complex, interacting layers throughout the reading of the novel, which may result in allegorical reading of a fictional story. Future research could test whether something similar applies to poetry reading as well; whether, for instance, the tacit knowledge of conceptual metaphors underlying a poem may help students to understand the meaning as well as various elements of poetry, such as diction, imagery, figures of speech, symbolism or allegory. Furthermore, it would be important to create a method for how conceptual metaphor theory may be taught efficiently to students, so that they learn how to apply it to poetry or other works of fiction.

Thirdly, future work on metaphors in poetry could explore whether poets might find it helpful to draw on insights from conceptual metaphor theory when writing poetry. For instance, I had mentioned CMT to some of the poets who had participated in the interview and questionnaire studies. The majority said that they know about Lakoff and Johnson's work. Yet, none of the poets seemed to be consciously thinking about CMT when writing or teaching poetry. I had a longer conversation about this topic with the poet James Arthur, and he proposed that the most successful poems (e.g., Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (1923)) seem to be structured around very common conceptual metaphors (e.g., LIFE IS A JOURNEY). However, Arthur (p.c. 2020) suggested that the poet needs to implement such (conceptual) metaphors in a way that readers would not immediately think "Oh, that's a cliché". Instead, the conceptual metaphor should be used in a subtle and unconventional, creative manner; in a way that is different to how this particular metaphor has been used before. This way, readers, as Arthur assumed, would truly believe in what the poem is trying to communicate, given their tacit knowledge of the common underlying conceptual metaphor. At the same time, they would be surprised as the metaphor was used in an unconventional way. Future projects could test empirically whether this assumption is valid.

Lastly, and in a broader sense, the project's theoretical and methodological approaches – in particular its interdisciplinary nature and its focus on studying metaphors from different perspectives (e.g., analyst, producer, recipient) – could serve as a basis for studying metaphors in contexts other than poetry. We all know

that metaphors are present in different facets of life. We have also seen from many studies that conceptual metaphor plays a crucial role in how we think, act and communicate as well as in how we produce and process metaphors. However, relatively little attention has been given to genre-/context-/situation-specific meanings and functions of metaphors, and to the roles conceptual metaphors play in these given situations. For instance, what does a metaphor mean to a designer compared to a musician? Is the function of metaphors in politics similar to the function of metaphors in poetics? Does it make a difference if metaphors are aimed at a huge audience (e.g., in speeches, concerts, advertisements) compared to metaphors being used in intimate conversations (e.g., between patient and doctor, a loving couple)? Explorations into this direction would, on the one hand, point to universal aspects of metaphor creation and interpretation. On the other hand, they would allow for more nuanced views on the very specific, maybe special roles metaphors sometimes play in particular situations in our lives.

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Poetry pushes metaphor to the limit. Consider how many different, dynamic, and interconnected dimensions (e.g., text, rhyme, rhythm, sound, and many more) a poem has, and how they all play a role in the ways (metaphorical) meaning is constructed. There is probably no other genre that relies so much on the creator's ability to get his or her message across while, at the same time, leaving enough room for the interpreters to find out for themselves what a poem means to them, what emotions and feelings it evokes, and which experiences it conveys. This book uses interviews, questionnaires and think-aloud protocols to investigate the meanings and functions of metaphors from a poet's perspective and to explore how readers interpret and engage with this poetry. Besides the theoretical contribution to the field of metaphor studies, this monograph presents numerous practical implications for a systematic exploration of metaphors in contemporary poetry and beyond.

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