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**KESSLER, Stephan, 2013. *Theories of Metaphor Revised*. Berlin: Logos Verlag. 150 pp.**

*Inesa Šeškauskienė (Lietuva / Litwa)*

Those who are interested in metaphor but give preference to its Aristotelian treatment, and particularly those who have many doubts about conceptual metaphor theory, should read Stephan Kessler's book *Theories of Metaphor Revised*. The title indicates that the author intends to revise the theories of metaphor; however, the ideological frame of the book, encoded in its first and the last sentences, clearly points to a singular approach to metaphor, cf.: "This book deals with a theoretical problem called 'imagery in literature'" (p. 9); "[a]nd the metaphor remains classical" (p. 137).

In this review, let me first introduce the overall structure and the main ideas developed by the author in each section, and then proceed to some general comments. The book consists of five chapters. Chapter 1, *General Principles of Imagery in Language*, discusses—as its title suggests—general principles of the language of literature and its imagery; it also gives an outline of further chapters of the book. The author starts out by discussing rather general problems of language and thought, homonymy, polysemy, and the role of images in (mostly literary) texts. Though the title of the chapter promises to discuss imagery in language, the very first sentence narrows the focus to the "imagery of literature." This determines, in principle, that throughout the book the author will adhere to the "language of literature," or the classical approach to metaphor, according to which metaphor is an ornament confined to verbal expression and is clearly identifiable in literary, artistic

texts and closely linked with a visual image. A metaphor's major function is aesthetic. In fact, throughout the book the author does not move far from what he claims in Chapter 1 when, commenting on a number of linguists and philosophers—De Saussure in particular—he writes that "the main characteristic of natural languages constitutes the basis for our ability to 'play with words,' i.e., the basis for metaphor" (p. 21). I do not think there are many people who would disagree with such a claim, especially when we discuss fiction. Most examples offered by the author vividly illustrate his idea, and you can see from every page of the book that metaphor is something the author finds very important in a creative text and is very enthusiastic about. But who would disagree?

At the end of Chapter 1, the author gives an outline of the theories he intends to discuss further in the book: the substitution model, the model of non-literal or transferred meaning, the theory of interaction, and the model of Lakoff and Johnson (p. 26). As seen from this outline, the author does not intend to move beyond the theory that Lakoff and Johnson introduced in their 1980 book (Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003).

Chapter 2, entitled *Presuppositions of Metaphor*, starts off with the "ancient" model of substitution, in other linguistic works also referred to as similarity theory. Then the author proceeds to what he calls metaphor as a shortened simile, before finally discussing metaphor as an intercultural phenomenon which is paramount in translation. He argues with some cognitivists

and pragmatists; Levinson's and Searle's interpretations seem to be the main focus of his criticism. The several approaches introduced in the chapter are described as schools that have provided a basis to *conceptualism*, a term the author uses to refer to conceptual metaphor theory (CMT). The title of the chapter is therefore slightly misleading, as the author's focus is more on a criticism of CMT than any presuppositions of the nature of metaphor. Kessler offers a number of illuminating examples; many of them come from very different languages, first among which is German, but also including English, Russian, Polish, Latvian, and Lithuanian—all presumably known to the author.

In Chapter 3, *The Evidence of Classical Metaphor*, the author continues arguing for the classical approach. He is definitely right in pointing out the importance of visualization and contextualization—both of these processes are inextricable from perception and the ability to use (linguistic) metaphors. However, neither of them disproves the existence of conceptual metaphor. Adherents of CMT and later scholars working in a similar framework have expanded the understanding of context, introducing such notions as encyclopedic knowledge and cognitive models, reviving the well-known *gestalt*, etc. (cf., among others, Taylor 2003; Ungerer and Schmid 2006).

In Chapter 4, *How Metaphor Fades Away*, the author claims that metaphors are socially bounded (p. 73) and culturally and temporally restricted. He rightly points out that what might have been seen as metaphorical some ages ago, today seems much less so. Kessler introduces a distinction between several grades of conventionalization (p. 82): fresh, living, and solidified metaphors. This is aptly demonstrated through the

example of *the eye of a needle*. At some point in time, the phrase might have been perceived as metaphorical (in classical terms), as a nice linguistic device, but nowadays people use the expression in everyday language without seeing it as unusual, exceptional, or otherwise worth noticing. The process is referred to by the author as fading, and is seen for some reason as dangerous. However, the same problem is also approached in the framework of CMT and later schools of metaphor. These schools make a distinction between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphor (cf. Steen 2004), one which is similar to the distinction between fresh and solidified metaphors made by Kessler. Cognitivists have devoted considerable research to it. For example, Steen (2004) found that the deliberate, or fresh, metaphor is much more easily identified, particularly in literary texts.

Chapter 5, *All This Makes the New Way*, refers to a few theories discussed in Chapter 1, and proceeds to Lakoff and Johnson's understanding of metaphor. It should be noted that despite a rather specific interpretation and severe criticism, the interaction theory, including several stages of its development, is given a rather detailed account in this section. CMT, already criticized in previous chapters, is given even more criticism in this chapter. Without getting into an argument with the general approach of the author, it still seems important to note that the book has some completely ungrounded claims. For example, Kessler claims that “conceptualists ignore compound metaphors [i.e., metaphors in compound words—I.Š.] though they must have noticed that such metaphors *are* in English, too” (p. 117). But it is simply not the case that these metaphors have been ignored. Indeed, quite a few studies have been published on word composition from

the cognitive perspective. One of them is a fascinating collection of research articles on word formation (Onysko and Michel 2010). Some of them deal with compounds. For example, Réka Benczes focuses on creativity in the production of metaphorical and metonymical compounds (pp. 219–242), while Alexander Onysko discusses hybrid compounds in German (pp. 243–300). So Kessler seems to have missed some research directly related to his field of study.

The author's enthusiasm when dealing with "literary," or classical, metaphors is certainly very impressive, especially in the very last lines, where the author offers his own poem—a rather unexpected turn for a scholarly book. It is, however, remarkable that the author disregards all post-Lakoffian works on metaphor. On each point he has chosen to criticize, there is a vast amount of literature. If he had referred to it, he might have softened his attitude toward *concep-*

*tualism*, a term whose derivational pattern (*-ism*) is by default worth disapproval. A full appreciation of the book is also hampered by some pitfalls in language expression. Clearly, the text needs a good revision, preferably done by a native speaker editor.

Although the author seems to favor one theory, his work stands out as a contemporary (critical) revision of several approaches to metaphor, disclosed with the help of his illuminating verbal or non-verbal examples. Considering that the world of research offers many alternatives, I would tend to support Gibbs, who treats the existence of multiple theories as very natural, since "no single theory may be capable of explaining *all* aspects of the complex phenomena that are metaphorical language and thought" (Gibbs 2013: 32). The book by Stephan Kessler is yet another significant contribution to the multitude of publications in the field of metaphor.

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