From the Perspective of Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory: The Multilevel Structure of Conceptual Metaphors in *Babylon Revisited*

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This study applies the Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory (ECMT) proposed by Zoltán Kövecses to the analysis of metaphorical expressions in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Babylon Revisited*. Utilizing the "Multilevel View of Conceptual Metaphor", the study categorizes the metaphors found in Fitzgerald's text into ontological and structural metaphors. The analysis reveals that Fitzgerald's metaphors systematically materialize abstract concepts at the domain and frame levels, facilitating a clearer understanding through familiar cross-domain mappings. At the mental space (MS) level, the narrative synthesizes these mappings with context-specific meanings and conceptual frameworks, resulting in richly detailed and contextually appropriate metaphorical expressions that enhance the thematic depth of the story. By applying ECMT to *Babylon Revisited*, this paper demonstrates the theory's utility in literary analysis, particularly in decoding the multilayered metaphorical language Fitzgerald employs to explore themes of redemption, loss, and societal change. The study not only advances our understanding of metaphor as a cognitive mechanism in literature, but also enriches the interpretation of Fitzgerald's narrative techniques and thematic explorations.

Keywords: Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory, "Multilevel View of Conceptual Metaphor", F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Babylon Revisited*

Introduction

In 1980, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson put forward the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in their joint work *Metaphors We Live By* to further explain the cognitive mode of metaphor. They postulated that metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon entrenched in human thinking and conceptual system, manifesting as cross-domain mappings. Specifically, individuals have the ability to draw upon familiar and comprehensible concepts from the source domain (often derived from human-nature interactions) to make sense of unfamiliar and complex ideas in the target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 68-76). This strategic approach enables individuals to grasp abstract or unconventional concepts more effectively.

In terms of the problem that CMT cannot explain the real-time meaning of metaphorical language in actual discourse, Zoltán Kövecses proposed the Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory (ECMT) and introduced the "Multilevel View of Conceptual Metaphor". Kövecses argued that traditional Conceptual Metaphor Theory views

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conceptual metaphors as static cross-domain mappings between source and target domains embedded in long-term memory (Kövecses, 2020, pp. 18-21). The examples of metaphors used in CMT lack components that capture the dynamic processes occurring during the actual use of metaphors. Thus, as a general theory of metaphor, CMT fails to account for the variability and diversity of metaphors.

The "Multilevel View of Conceptual Metaphor" posits that conceptual metaphors are not merely unidirectional cross-domain mappings from source to target domains, but complex combinations of a series of conceptual metaphors across different schematic levels (Kövecses, 2020, pp. 117-149). According to Kövecses, conceptual metaphors comprise a hierarchical structure of image schema (IS), domain, frame, and mental space (MS). IS, as the initial category of metaphor cognition, provides a cognitive foundation for abstract concepts, imbuing specific metaphorical levels with embodied cognition that facilitates comprehension. The domain level pertains to the source or target domains in conceptual metaphors, whereas the frame level describes more specific and conceptually richer information within these domains. The MS level, which contains the real-time meaning of metaphorical language in actual discourse contexts, represents the most concrete and richly detailed level, composed of one or several different frames, fulfilling pragmatic, emotional, rhetorical, and social functions.

Babylon Revisited, as a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald written in 1931, reflects the societal atmosphere and personal psychological changes following the 1929 stock market crash. The story centers on the protagonist, Charlie Wales, who returns to Paris seeking redemption and the custody of his daughter Honoria. Once, a prominent figure in the Parisian social scene, Charlie led a reckless life, but with the onset of the Great Depression, he lost his wealth and consequently his daughter. The narrative focuses on Charlie's efforts to rebuild his life and mend past relationships, exploring themes of repentance, redemption, and personal growth. Fitzgerald employs numerous shallow and deep, explicit and implicit metaphors and similes to elucidate Charlie's psychological transformation and his reflections on his past life, making this novel a viable choice for analyzing metaphors.

Research Design

Firstly, the author employed Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije University (MIPVU) to analyze *Babylon Revisited* (7,372 words). The analysis was divided into three steps: close reading of the text, identification of lexical units, and comparison of the basic meanings with contextual meanings (Steen et al., 2010, pp. 25-42). From this analysis, a total of 30 metaphorical expressions was identified, including 10 direct metaphors, 12 indirect metaphors, and eight metaphorical expressions. The author also searched for simile markers such as "like" and "as", identifying five instances of simile expressions and 25 instances of metaphorical expressions. Both metaphorical and simile expressions are considered manifestations of conceptual metaphors at the linguistic level (Lan, 2011, p. 40). Thus, they collectively constitute the analytical corpus of this study.

Secondly, the author classified these metaphors according to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson. The conceptual metaphors identified in *Babylon Revisited* mainly include ontological metaphors and structural metaphors. Structural metaphors include travel metaphors and war metaphors, while ontological metaphors involve themes, such as architecture, the body, interpersonal relationships, and nature.

Finally, based on Kövecses' "Multilevel View of Conceptual Metaphor", these metaphors were further refined and discussed according to the level of IS, domain, frame, and MS, examining the formation of these metaphors and the mechanisms of cross-domain mapping (Kövecses, 2020, pp. 66-80).

Corpus Analysis

According to Kövecses and his Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory (ECMT), the Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije University (MIPVU) can be categorized as an intuitive approach/lexical approach (Kövecses, 2020, p. 86). These methods are suitable within the multilevel structure of ECMT for focusing on metaphor identification at the domain and frame levels. Therefore, in practical analysis, the author first identify metaphors at the domain/frame levels using MIPVU, and then infer metaphors at the IS and MS levels (Lan & Bai, 2023, p. 50).

According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the author categorized the conceptual metaphors in *Babylon Revisited* into ontological and structural metaphors, both based on the image-schematic cognitive model that "complex abstract systems are complex physical objects". Ontological metaphors primarily address the question, "What are society/family/emotions/time/economy/consumption?" They concretize these relatively abstract, indirect, complex, and obscured concepts into some form of material or entity for interpretation and expression. Structural metaphors, on the other hand, answer questions, such as "What kind of society/life/emotions/family/consumption is a good/bad society/life/emotions/family/consumption?" They employ embodied experiences or cultural experiences to understand people's subjective feelings, judgments, appreciations, and responses to these abstract concepts.

Ontological Metaphors

Ontological metaphor is a significant concept within cognitive linguistics, which allows us to conceptualize abstract ideas as concrete entities, thereby facilitating easier understanding and discussion of these concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 25-30). The primary function of ontological metaphors is to physicalize abstract concepts, making them more tangible and manageable within our cognitive processes.

In *Babylon Revisited*, the role of ontological metaphors primarily manifests in enhancing thematic expression, deepening character development, and enriching plot progression. For example, "regret" and "redemption" are depicted as tangible and perceptible entities. Such metaphors enable readers to more vividly experience Charlie's emotional burden and his psychological transformations.

The principal ontological metaphors at the domain/frame levels in *Babylon Revisited* include: [society is a building], [family is a building], [emotional states are physical states], [family relationships are the body], [the passage of time is physical traces], [consumption is the devouring of a machine], [consumer is a machine], [economy is a machine]. These ontological metaphors project certain characteristics of the source domains (society/family/emotions/time/consumption/economy) onto the target domains (building/body/machine...), thus making it easier for readers to understand the novel's background settings, character relationships, plot developments, and the author's foreshadowing of relatively abstract and difficult-to-comprehend or observe concepts.

In *Babylon Revisited*, society, family, and emotions are often likened to buildings:

(1) "It was not an American bar anymore—it had gone back into France".

Level of IS:

Buildings are fixed physical objects.

Complex abstract systems are complex physical objects.

Level of domain:

Society is a building.

The fluidity of society is a function of building.

Level of frame:

The transformation of the bar constructs a break between the protagonist's past and present life.

The bar's transformation represents the fluidity of cultural attributes and the psychological transformation of the protagonist.

Level of MSs:

The Ritz bar symbolizes past glory and present silence.

The "re-Frenchification" of the building reflects the protagonist's reflection on his past wasteful life.

In Example (1), the image-schematic level of metaphor expresses that "Buildings are fixed physical objects" and "Complex abstract systems are complex physical objects", which at the domain level manifest as "Society is a building" and "The fluidity of society is a function of building". The text's description of "An American bar going back into France" depicts the bar's past glory and present silence, reflecting the past American bar as a representative of chaotic, luxurious, unordered, excessive living, and the current French bar as a representative of rationality and order. At the frame level, the change in the bar constructs a break between the protagonist's past and present life, and this change represents the fluidity of cultural attributes and the psychological transformation of the protagonist Charlie. Ultimately, at the MS level, the building's "re-Frenchification" forms a contrast between American society's past glory and present silence and Charlie's reflection on his past wasteful life, expressing these metaphorical representations.

In *Babylon Revisited*, another source domain concerning emotions and family relations is [the body]:

(2) His heart sat up rigidly in his body.

Level of IS:

The heart is a physical object.

Complex abstract systems are complex physical objects.

Level of domain:

Emotional states are physical states.

Level of frame:

The rigidity of the heart constructs an emotional framework for Charlie to counter external pressures.

The "rigidity" of the body becomes an external manifestation of emotional repression.

Level of MSs:

Charlie's internal conflicts and tensions are concretely represented by the rigidity of his heart.

The rigid state of Charlie symbolizes his efforts to control emotions.

In Example (2), at the IS level, the heart, portrayed as a physical object, demonstrates an abnormal state through "rigidity". This description conveys a state of alertness or stress through the action of the body organ ("sat up"). At the domain level, emotional states (tension, fear, or resolve) are expressed through physical states

(rigidity of the heart). This metaphor reveals the close connection between psychological states and physiological responses. At the frame level, the "rigidity" of the heart builds an emotional framework for Charlie's resistance and perseverance when facing pressures or challenges. This bodily reaction becomes an external manifestation of emotional repression or psychological tension. Ultimately, at the MS level, Charlie's internal conflicts and tensions are materialized through the abnormal reaction of the heart, symbolizing his efforts in managing emotions and dealing with internal conflicts.

Structural Metaphors

Structural metaphor involves understanding an abstract concept (the target domain) through its systematic correlation with another more concrete or familiar entity (the source domain). This type of metaphor organizes the target domain through the structure of the source domain, allowing complex or abstract concepts to be explained and manipulated through a familiar framework.

In *Babylon Revisited*, structural metaphors include travel metaphors and war metaphors, which involve abstract cross-domain mapping of source domains with similar structures into the target domains. Travel metaphors encompass not only the spatial movements of the protagonist Charlie wandering aimlessly or purposefully through the streets of Paris at night, but also include the temporal movement from a chaotic and disordered life towards a rational and orderly existence. War metaphors primarily relate to the custody disputes over Charlie's daughter Honoria and his emotional conflicts with his sister-in-law.

The primary domain/frame level structural metaphors in *Babylon Revisited* are: [memories are journeys], [identity transformation is international travel], [emotional conflicts are wars], [emotional defenses are war strategies], [emotional traumas are strikes in a war], [custody battles are tug-of-wars]. These structural metaphors project the structures of the source domains (memories/identity transformation/emotional defenses/emotional traumas/custody battles) onto the target domains (travel/war). Through these metaphors, Fitzgerald conveys complex themes, such as redemption, guilt, and the inevitability of one's experience, making them more comprehensible and emotionally impactful for the reader.

Babylon Revisited often likens memories and the protagonist's transformation of identity to journeys:

(3) He strolled toward Montmartre, up the Rue Pigalle into the Place Blanche.

(4) I'm in business in Prague, representing a couple of concerns there.

Level of IS:

Complex abstract systems are complex physical objects.

Level of domain:

Memories are strolls.

Inner reflections are physical travels.

Identity transformation is international travel.

Emotional transitions are geographical movements.

Level of frame:

Strolling is a dialogue with the past.

The streets of Montmartre are spaces and carriers of emotional reflection.

The journey from Prague to Paris reflects Charlie's attempts to balance his past and present.

Geographical displacement serves as a concrete manifestation of life goal adjustments.

Level of MSs:

Charlie's stroll in Montmartre evokes memories and reflections on his past lavish lifestyle.

Charlie's stroll in Montmartre represents his psychological acceptance of the past and the beginning of his emotional healing.

Charlie's international travel is a redefinition of his life directions and values.

The starting point of the journey in Paris symbolizes Charlie's emotional connections to his past.

The endpoint of the journey in Prague represents the rational reconstruction of Charlie's current life.

In Example (3), the IS level metaphorically expresses complex abstract systems as complex physical objects by conceptualizing emotional exploration as an act of strolling, transforming complex psychological activities into a form of physical movement. This pattern of behavior reflects a process of deep thought through slow-paced movement. At the domain level, strolling through Montmartre symbolizes Charlie's reexamination of his past life, where each step represents a review and consideration of his history. The streets and scenes become concrete expressions of his psychological state, and environmental changes reflect fluctuations in his inner emotions. At the frame level, Charlie constructs a dialogue with his past through strolling, offering an opportunity for self-communication and understanding. The streets of Montmartre become a space and carrier for his emotional reflection, materializing his abstract psychological processes into specific locations. Thus, ultimately at the MS level, Charlie's stroll in Montmartre triggers memories and reflections on his past lavish life, providing a catalyst for a mental journey.

In Example (4), the IS level metaphorically expresses complex abstract systems as complex physical objects by embodying Charlie's transformation of identity as international travel, and through his business activities in different countries, it displays the transition of his personal role and responsibilities. At the domain level, Prague symbolizes Charlie's new identity, while Paris represents the repair of his past chaotic life, with the movement from one location to another metaphorically representing the psychological transition from the past to the future. Therefore, the metaphor of international travel expresses Charlie's integration of the future and past, embodying the development of his emotional and professional life and their interaction. At the frame level, the journey from Paris to Prague reflects Charlie's efforts to balance his past and present, materializing the adjustment of his personal life and professional responsibilities. Geographic displacement becomes a concrete manifestation of life goal adjustments, exploring the transition of Charlie's personal identity through his representative roles in different cultural and economic settings. Ultimately, at the MS level, international travel symbolizes Charlie's redefinition of life directions and values, with the temporal displacement reflecting a deepening of self-awareness and the setting of future goals.

In *Babylon Revisited*, emotional conflicts, lavish lifestyles, emotional traumas, and custody disputes are metaphorically represented as war and various aspects of war:

(5) "He knew that now he would have to take a beating. It would last an hour or two hours, and it would be difficult".

Level of IS:

Complex abstract systems are complex physical objects.

Strikes are physical violence.

Level of domain:

Interpersonal conflicts are wars.

Psychological stress is a strike in war.

Level of frame:

Negotiations for custody are battles filled with strategy and endurance.

Charlie's patience and self-control are "weapons" in the battle.

Level of MSs:

The strike Charlie receives symbolizes the pain he feels in emotional conflicts.

Charlie realizes that enduring the confrontation in emotional conflicts is necessary to achieve victory in the battle

In Example (5), the IS level metaphorically expresses "complex abstract systems are complex physical objects" by conceptualizing emotional conflicts as physical strikes, making the abstract psychological states more tangible and comprehensible, indicating that emotional conflicts are a "beating" Charlie must endure, which materializes his psychological pain as physical violence. At the domain level, Charlie's discussions for achieving a goal (possibly custody of his daughter or other significant matters) are conceptualized as a battle, highlighting the intensity and adversarial nature of the custody conflict. Moreover, the psychological trauma experienced in this conflict is viewed as damage sustained in battle, emphasizing Charlie's psychological burdens and challenges. At the frame level, Charlie's negotiations for his daughter's custody are battles filled with strategy and endurance, not only challenging him physically, but also testing his psychological resilience. Therefore, Charlie's patience, persistence, and strategic thinking are his weapons to overcome difficulties and win the "custody battle". Ultimately, at the MS level, the strike Charlie receives becomes the pain he feels in emotional conflicts, not just physical pain but also symbolic of the distress and pressure he experiences in emotional conflicts. Thus, Charlie realizes that enduring the confrontation in emotional conflicts is necessary to achieve victory in the battle, reflecting his firm pursuit of custody and the personal sacrifices it entails.

Conclusion

This paper applies the Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory (ECMT) proposed by Kövecses to analyze the metaphorical expressions in F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story *Babylon Revisited*, categorizing the underlying conceptual metaphors into ontological metaphors and structural metaphors, both based on the IS cognitive model that "Complex abstract systems are complex physical objects". Ontological metaphors primarily address the question of "What are society/family/emotions...?", materializing these relatively abstract, indirect, intangible, and hidden concepts into some forms of direct and concrete material or entity. Structural metaphors, on the other hand, answer questions like "What kind of society/life/emotions/family… is a good/bad society/life/emotions/family…?" Subsequently, the domain and frame levels initially materialize these abstract metaphorical expressions into cross-domain mappings that we can recognize, and ultimately at the MS level, combine various contextual meanings and conceptual systems to generate the most concrete, contextually appropriate metaphorical expressions for the narrative.

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