Jana Kuzmíková

Metaphor in theory and research

Theories of metaphor. Conceptual and novel metaphor. Similarity space of metaphor. Cognitive analysis of metaphor. Emotions in metaphorical processes. Metaphor in empirical research.

The aim of the study is to describe the metaphor in literature as a blend, mixture, and a new mental space created on the basis of the domains of a source and a target. Creating such blends in the individual reader’s mind has a significant effect on the construction of textual meanings and overall reception of the literary text. In the introduction, I mention several significant metaphor theories from classical, rhetoric substitution theory to current interdisciplinary cognitive modeling of metaphoric processes. Theoretical models (especially by Fauconnier and Gentner – Smith) can be fittingly illustrated on the basis of modernist texts by the Slovak writers Ivan Horváth and František Švantner. Illustrative examples and also data from my research propose a hypothesis about creative interlinkings among the metaphorical processes, the reader’s personality, and the reception of a text. From the point of view of cognitive psychology, in similarity space (of a metaphor) relational similarity and object-attribute similarity create a continuum, not a categorical dichotomy. In other words, the analysis of formal structure between a metaphorical source and a target is not enough to understand metaphorical processes. My research indicates that *the domains* of a source and target and their mutual relations are decisive there, thanks to their suitability to situational updates, occasional insights and possible functioning in specific discourses (individual, cultural, historical, social, political, moral, etc.).