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	<p>RESEARCH ARTICLE </p>
	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Conceptual Metaphor in Literary Discourse: A Cognitive-Analytical Framework for Meaning Construction and Cross-Domain Mapping</h2>
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<p><b>Keywords</b></p>	<p>Conceptual metaphor; Cognitive linguistics; Literary discourse; Meaning construction; Cross-domain mapping; Cognitive poetics</p>
<p><b>Abstract</b></p>	
<p>This study provides a comprehensive and theoretically grounded analysis of metaphor within literary discourse through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT). Moving beyond the traditional rhetorical understanding of metaphor as a stylistic ornament, the research conceptualizes metaphor as a fundamental cognitive mechanism that structures human thought, perception, and meaning-making processes. Drawing on the foundational works of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, the study explores how metaphor operates as a cross-domain mapping between source and target domains, shaping both everyday cognition and literary expression. The research adopts a qualitative, interpretive analytical design to examine the metaphorical structures embedded in two distinct literary texts—one prose narrative and one poetic work—thereby enabling a comparative exploration of metaphor across genres. Through systematic conceptual mapping, the study identifies underlying cognitive schemas that govern metaphorical constructions and demonstrates how these schemas contribute to the production of meaning, ideological positioning, and symbolic representation within literary discourse. The findings reveal that metaphor is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a cognitive framework that organizes experience and mediates the relationship between language, culture, and reality. Furthermore, the study highlights the limitations of classical rhetorical approaches—particularly within Arabic literary traditions—in fully accounting for the cognitive dimensions of metaphor. By integrating insights from cognitive linguistics and literary analysis, this research contributes to the ongoing theoretical expansion of metaphor studies and offers a novel interpretive model applicable to diverse textual contexts. The study advances the field by proposing a structured analytical framework for identifying and interpreting conceptual metaphors in literary texts, thereby bridging the gap between theoretical abstraction and applied literary analysis. It also underscores the relevance of conceptual metaphor theory in re-evaluating literary meaning production in contemporary interdisciplinary scholarship.</p>	
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## Introduction

The conceptualization of metaphor has undergone a profound transformation with the emergence of cognitive sciences, marking a decisive shift from its traditional rhetorical interpretation toward a cognitively grounded paradigm. In contemporary linguistic and philosophical thought, metaphor is no longer perceived as a mere ornamental feature of language or a stylistic device confined to poetic expression. Rather, it is recognized as a fundamental mental mechanism intrinsically linked to human cognition and deeply embedded in the processes of perception, conceptualization, and meaning construction.

Within this modern framework, metaphor precedes language; it operates at the conceptual level as a primary structuring principle through which individuals interpret abstract phenomena and construct experiential reality. Consequently, metaphor plays a central role in generating meaning, shaping thought patterns, and enabling the production of diverse and context-dependent significations. This reconceptualization challenges long-standing assumptions rooted in classical rhetoric, where metaphor was traditionally reduced to a linguistic substitution based on similarity and primarily associated with aesthetic embellishment.

The increasing attention devoted to metaphor by contemporary linguists and cognitive theorists reflects a broader epistemological shift in the study of meaning. Modern approaches emphasize the dynamic and systematic nature of metaphor as a tool for organizing knowledge and structuring everyday experience. In this context, metaphor is not limited to literary discourse but permeates all domains of human activity, including scientific reasoning, social interaction, and cultural representation.

Despite these developments, a critical gap persists within both classical and modern Arabic rhetorical and stylistic traditions, as well as within structuralist approaches, which have largely neglected the role of metaphor in everyday language use. Historically, these traditions have prioritized the creative and aesthetic dimensions of metaphor, focusing on the ingenuity of poets and the artistic value of figurative expression. Similarly, Western rhetorical traditions have often elevated metaphor to the status of the “queen of rhetorical figures,” thereby reinforcing its association with literary creativity rather than cognitive function.

However, such perspectives overlook the essential role of metaphor as a cognitive instrument that operates within the human mind, organizing perceptions of reality and forming the foundation of both ordinary and creative language use. From this standpoint, metaphor is not merely a reflection of thought but a mechanism through which thought itself is structured and articulated.

Against this theoretical background, the present study seeks to address the following research questions:

- (1) What constitutes the modern conceptualization of metaphor within cognitive linguistics?
- (2) What are the historical and theoretical foundations underpinning conceptual metaphor theory?
- (3) How does conceptual metaphor manifest itself within literary texts across different genres?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing re-evaluation of metaphor as a cognitive and cultural phenomenon, bridging the gap between traditional rhetorical analysis and contemporary cognitive approaches.

## Literature Review

The study of metaphor has undergone a significant epistemological transformation, evolving from a rhetorical and stylistic concern into a central topic within cognitive linguistics and interdisciplinary research. Traditionally, metaphor was conceptualized within classical rhetoric—most notably in Aristotelian theory—as a linguistic device involving the substitution or transfer of meaning based on similarity. This perspective, which dominated both Western and Arabic rhetorical traditions for centuries, framed metaphor primarily as an ornamental feature of poetic language.

However, the emergence of modern linguistic theories in the twentieth century, particularly the work of I. A. Richards (1936), marked a turning point in metaphor studies. Richards challenged the substitution model and introduced an interactionist perspective, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between the “tenor” and “vehicle” of metaphor. This approach was further developed by Max Black (1962), who proposed the interaction theory of metaphor, highlighting the cognitive interplay between conceptual domains. Despite its theoretical advancements, the interaction theory remained limited in its ability to fully explain the systematic and pervasive nature of metaphor in everyday cognition.

A major paradigm shift occurred with the publication of *Metaphors We Live By* by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), which established the foundations of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT). According to CMT, metaphor is not merely a linguistic expression but a fundamental cognitive mechanism through which individuals conceptualize abstract domains in terms of more concrete experiences. This theory posits that human thought is inherently metaphorical, structured by systematic mappings between source and target domains. Subsequent studies by Kövecses (2010), Gibbs

(2008), and Turner (1996) have further expanded the theoretical scope of CMT, demonstrating its applicability across disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, and literary studies.

Within literary analysis, the integration of cognitive linguistics has given rise to the field of cognitive poetics, which explores how cognitive processes shape literary interpretation and aesthetic experience. Scholars such as Stockwell (2002) and Semino (2008) have emphasized the role of conceptual metaphor in structuring narrative meaning, emotional engagement, and reader response. These approaches highlight the importance of metaphor as a tool for constructing symbolic worlds and mediating cultural knowledge within literary texts.

In contrast, contemporary Arabic scholarship on metaphor has largely remained anchored in classical rhetorical frameworks, focusing on semantic transfer and stylistic classification. While notable contributions have been made in re-evaluating rhetorical heritage, there remains a relative lack of engagement with cognitive approaches to metaphor. This gap underscores the need for integrative studies that bridge traditional rhetorical analysis with modern cognitive theories.

Therefore, the present study situates itself at the intersection of cognitive linguistics and literary analysis, aiming to extend the application of conceptual metaphor theory to literary texts within a comparative framework. By doing so, it addresses a critical gap in existing scholarship and contributes to the development of a more comprehensive understanding of metaphor as both a cognitive and cultural phenomenon.

### **Methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design grounded in cognitive linguistics and literary analysis. The primary objective is to investigate the cognitive structures underlying metaphorical expressions in literary texts and to examine how these structures contribute to meaning construction and conceptual representation.

#### **Research Design**

The research employs a theoretical-analytical approach based on conceptual metaphor theory (CMT). It integrates elements of cognitive semantics and textual analysis to identify and interpret metaphorical mappings within selected literary texts. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon rather than a purely stylistic device.

#### **Data Selection and Corpus**

The study is based on a purposive selection of two literary texts representing different genres:

1. A prose narrative text derived from Arabic literary heritage
2. A poetic text reflecting modern literary expression

These texts were selected according to the following criteria:

- Rich presence of metaphorical expressions
- Cultural and linguistic diversity
- Relevance to both classical and contemporary literary discourse
- Suitability for conceptual metaphor analysis

### **Analytical Framework**

The analysis is conducted using the conceptual metaphor framework proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which involves identifying systematic correspondences between source domains (concrete, experiential knowledge) and target domains (abstract concepts).

The analytical procedure follows four key steps:

1. Identification of Linguistic Metaphors  
Extracting metaphorical expressions from the texts through close reading.
2. Classification of Conceptual Domains  
Determining the source and target domains underlying each metaphorical expression.

3. **Mapping Process**  
Establishing structural correspondences between domains (cross-domain mapping), including attributes, functions, and relationships.
4. **Interpretation and Contextualization**  
Analyzing how these mappings contribute to meaning construction, symbolic representation, and ideological implications within the text.

#### Validity and Reliability

To ensure analytical rigor, the study employs conceptual consistency and theoretical triangulation, drawing on multiple sources within cognitive linguistics and literary theory. The interpretive process is guided by established frameworks in cognitive metaphor research to minimize subjectivity and enhance replicability.

#### Research Contribution

This methodological approach enables the study to move beyond descriptive analysis toward a systematic cognitive interpretation of literary metaphor, thereby contributing to both theoretical and applied dimensions of metaphor research.

### 1. The Concept of Conceptual Metaphor

The notion of conceptual metaphor gained theoretical clarity with the publication of *Metaphors We Live By* by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980, which established the foundations of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT). This paradigm represents a significant departure from earlier linguistic models by positing that metaphor is not a peripheral feature of language but a central organizing principle of human cognition.

Within the framework of cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor is understood as a systematic mapping between two distinct conceptual domains: a source domain, typically grounded in concrete and embodied experience, and a target domain, which is often abstract and less directly accessible. Through this mapping process, individuals are able to comprehend complex or abstract phenomena in terms of more familiar experiential structures.

As articulated by Zoltán Kövecses, conceptual metaphor can be defined as the process by which “one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another.” This formulation highlights the cognitive nature of metaphor as a mechanism of cross-domain projection, whereby knowledge from a source domain is systematically transferred to structure the target domain.

For instance, the widely studied conceptual metaphor “LOVE IS A JOURNEY” illustrates how relational experiences are conceptualized through the schema of movement along a path. In this mapping, elements such as travelers, destinations, obstacles, and trajectories correspond to aspects of romantic relationships, including partners, goals, challenges, and outcomes. Consequently, expressions such as “our relationship has reached a crossroads” or “we are going in different directions” are not merely linguistic embellishments but manifestations of an underlying conceptual structure.

Similarly, the conceptual metaphor “ARGUMENT IS WAR” demonstrates how abstract processes of reasoning and debate are structured through the experiential domain of conflict. Within this framework, participants in an argument are conceptualized as opponents; positions are defended or attacked; and outcomes are framed in terms of victory or defeat. Linguistic expressions such as “He attacked my argument,” “I defended my position,” or “She demolished his claims” reflect this deeply embedded cognitive mapping.

These examples illustrate that linguistic metaphors are surface realizations of more fundamental conceptual structures. In other words, metaphorical expressions in language are not arbitrary but systematically motivated by underlying cognitive processes that shape human understanding and interaction.

Thus, conceptual metaphor theory redefines metaphor as a pervasive and indispensable component of the human cognitive system, extending beyond literary discourse to encompass everyday communication, social practices, and cultural representations. By foregrounding the cognitive dimension of metaphor, this approach provides a powerful analytical framework for examining the relationship between language, thought, and reality.

### 2. The Historical Roots of Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The evolution of metaphor theory reflects a broader epistemological transformation in the study of language, cognition, and meaning. Western philosophical and rhetorical traditions have long engaged in the critical reassessment of metaphor, culminating in what is now recognized as the contemporary theory of metaphor—a paradigm shift that redefined the nature and function of figurative language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Gibbs, 2008; Kövecses, 2010).

The intellectual foundations of this transformation can be traced to the seminal work of I. A. Richards, particularly in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936), where he challenged the adequacy of the classical substitution theory of metaphor. Aristotle's traditional definition conceptualized metaphor as a process of substitution and transfer, whereby one linguistic expression replaces another based on similarity. However, this framework proved insufficient to account for the complexity of meaning construction, as it failed to address fundamental cognitive questions regarding how meaning emerges and how conceptual structures are formed (Richards, 1936; Black, 1962).

Richards' critique led to a reconceptualization of metaphor as a cognitive process, emphasizing the interaction between mental representations. This perspective was further developed by Max Black, whose interaction theory introduced the concepts of "focus" and "frame," highlighting the dynamic interplay between conceptual domains (Black, 1962). Despite its theoretical significance, the interaction theory lacked the systematic explanatory power required to account for the pervasive and structured nature of metaphor across language and cognition (Gibbs, 2011).

These limitations ultimately paved the way for the emergence of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), which provided a more comprehensive and empirically grounded framework. By situating metaphor within the domain of cognitive linguistics, CMT redefined metaphor as a fundamental mechanism of thought rather than a peripheral linguistic phenomenon (Lakoff, 1993; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).

### 3. Metaphor between the Classical Arabic and Contemporary Western Perspectives

The divergence between classical and modern theories of metaphor reflects deeper differences in epistemological orientation and methodological approaches. While metaphor has occupied a central position in Arabic rhetorical tradition, its conceptual development has remained largely confined to linguistic and stylistic dimensions, in contrast to the interdisciplinary expansion observed in Western scholarship (Al-Harassi, 2002; Al-Zanad, 2009).

Classical Arabic scholars, including Al-Jurjani and Al-Sakkaki, conceptualized metaphor primarily in terms of *isti'āra* (borrowing), emphasizing semantic transfer based on similarity between lexical items. Within this framework, metaphor was understood as a linguistic operation involving the substitution of one expression for another, grounded in shared semantic properties (Al-Bahi, 2000).

Although these approaches contributed significantly to the development of rhetorical theory, they largely overlooked the cognitive dimensions of metaphor. In contrast, contemporary Western approaches—particularly those grounded in cognitive linguistics—conceptualize metaphor as a cross-domain mapping within the human conceptual system, shaping not only language but also perception, reasoning, and cultural practices (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2015; Semino, 2008).

From this perspective, metaphor is understood as a generative mechanism that produces meaning rather than merely reflecting it. It functions as a cognitive tool that structures human experience, mediates interaction with the environment, and facilitates the construction of abstract knowledge (Gibbs, 2008; Turner, 1996).

Despite the extensive development of conceptual metaphor theory in Western scholarship, its integration into contemporary Arabic studies remains limited. This gap highlights the need for interdisciplinary research that bridges traditional rhetorical frameworks with modern cognitive approaches, thereby enriching both domains of inquiry (Barcelona, 2000; Evans & Green, 2006).

## 4. Conceptual Metaphor in Literary Texts

### 4.1 Conceptual Metaphor in "The Israelite's Trap and the Bird"

Conceptual metaphor is not confined to theoretical abstraction but is vividly realized in literary discourse, where it functions as a powerful mechanism for meaning construction and symbolic representation (Stockwell, 2002; Semino, 2008). A compelling example can be found in the narrative "The Israelite's Trap and the Bird," which illustrates how metaphor operates through systematic conceptual mapping.

In this text, the deceptive figure of the ascetic serves as a source domain that structures the conceptualization of the trap as a target domain. Through this mapping, the narrative constructs a complex metaphorical framework in which religious imagery is reinterpreted as a mechanism of entrapment.

The effectiveness of this metaphor lies in its ability to project attributes, functions, and relational structures from one domain onto another, thereby generating a coherent and meaningful conceptual system (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010).

**Table 1.** Cross-Domain Mapping of Conceptual Metaphor: “The Ascetic as a Trap”

Source Domain (Ascetic Devotee)	Features / Functions	Target Domain (Trap Mechanism)
Ascetic	Human, pious, devout	Trap (constructed hunting device)
Bent back	Physical curvature	Curved metal wire
Prayer posture	Repetitive bodily act	Mechanical tension structure
Bones	Thin, protruding	Fine metallic wires
Fasting	Weakness / thinness	Subtle, hidden mechanism
Clothing (wool)	Covering / concealment	Camouflage layer
Asceticism	Detachment from world	Concealment function
Staff	Support / tool	Structural component (clasp)
Offering (charity)	Giving to the needy	Bait (lure mechanism)
Food	Nourishment	Grain (entrapment element)
Poor person (human)	Target of charity	Bird (target of capture)
Taking the offering	Acceptance	Triggering the trap
Ascetic	Moral disguise	Trap (deceptive structure)

**Interpretive Synthesis**

This mapping demonstrates that the conceptual metaphor underlying the text can be formalized as:

“THE ASCETIC IS A TRAP”

Such a metaphor exemplifies how cognitive structures operate in literary discourse by enabling the projection of moral, religious, and social meanings onto physical mechanisms. The narrative thus transforms a simple hunting scenario into a complex symbolic representation of deception, illusion, and manipulation (Turner, 1996; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).

More broadly, this example confirms that conceptual metaphor functions as a cognitive-semantic interface, mediating between linguistic expression and experiential knowledge. It also illustrates the capacity of literary texts to encode sophisticated conceptual mappings that reflect deeper cultural and ideological structures (Gibbs, 2008; Charteris-Black, 2004).

**Conceptual Mapping and Schematic Representation**

Building upon the analytical structure presented in Table 1, it is possible to construct a systematic schematic representation of the conceptual mapping network underlying the metaphor “THE ASCETIC IS A TRAP.” This representation illustrates the core principle of conceptual metaphor theory—namely, the projection of structured knowledge from a concrete source domain onto an abstract or functionally distinct target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010; Gibbs, 2008).

Within this framework, the mapping process can be formalized as follows:

Source Domain → Target Domain

- Bent back → Curved metal wire
- Protruding bones → Thin metallic wires
- Wool garment → Concealment (camouflage)
- Staff → Mechanical clasp / structural support
- Offering (charity) → Bait (lure mechanism)

- Poor person (human) → Target animal (bird)
- Ascetic → Trap

This network of correspondences demonstrates that metaphor is not a random or purely stylistic phenomenon but a systematic cognitive operation governed by structured mappings between domains (Lakoff, 1993; Turner, 1996). The metaphor organizes disparate elements into a coherent conceptual system, enabling the reader to interpret the narrative beyond its literal surface.

Importantly, this mapping reveals a deeper ideological and semiotic dimension: the ascetic figure—traditionally associated with morality, piety, and spiritual integrity—is recontextualized as an instrument of deception and entrapment. This inversion generates a powerful critique of appearances, exposing the tension between external representation and underlying reality (Charteris-Black, 2004; Semino, 2008).

Thus, the conceptual metaphor may be formally expressed as:

Conceptual Metaphor: “THE TRAP IS AN ASCETIC”

This formulation underscores the bidirectional interpretive potential of metaphor, where meaning emerges through the dynamic interaction between domains rather than through simple substitution (Black, 1962; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).

**Conceptual Metaphor in Poetic Discourse: “The Last Words of Spartacus”**

The operation of conceptual metaphor extends beyond narrative prose into poetic discourse, where it often assumes a more complex and symbolically dense form. A notable example can be found in *The Last Words of Spartacus* by the Egyptian poet Amal Dunqul, whose work exemplifies the use of extended metaphor as a central organizing principle of poetic meaning.

In this poem, the speaking voice adopts the persona of Spartacus, the historical figure associated with resistance against oppression and the struggle for freedom. Through this identification, the poem constructs a powerful symbolic framework in which individual experience is mapped onto collective political and existential realities (Turner, 1996; Stockwell, 2002).

The opening lines—depicting Spartacus suspended on the gallows—establish a dramatic tension between physical defeat and moral defiance. The statement that he “never bowed” in life, except in death, functions as a metaphorical assertion of resistance, transforming bodily posture into a symbol of ideological stance. This reflects a broader conceptual pattern in which physical orientation is mapped onto moral and political values, a phenomenon widely documented in cognitive linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Gibbs, 2008).

As the poem progresses, the speaker addresses his fellow rebels, urging them to raise their heads and reject submission. However, this call to resistance is ultimately undermined by a tone of disillusionment, as the poem concludes with a pessimistic reflection on the cyclical nature of oppression: “behind every Caesar who dies: a new Caesar.” This shift introduces a complex interplay between hope and resignation, reinforcing the tragic dimension of the metaphor.

Conceptual Metaphor: “THE MILITANT IS SPARTACUS”

At the conceptual level, the poem is structured by the metaphor:

In this mapping, Spartacus serves as the source domain, while the modern militant or freedom fighter constitutes the target domain. Through this projection, the historical narrative of rebellion is reinterpreted as a universal model of resistance, enabling the poem to transcend its immediate context and acquire broader symbolic significance (Kövecses, 2015; Semino, 2008).

**Table 2. Cross-Domain Mapping of Conceptual Metaphor: “The Militant as Spartacus”**

Source Domain (Spartacus)	Features / Functions	Target Domain (Militant / Freedom Fighter)
Spartacus	Historical rebel	Contemporary militant
Rejection of slavery	Resistance to domination	Rejection of submission
Rebellion against Caesar	Political defiance	Opposition to unjust authority
Struggle for freedom	Liberation movement	Fight for social and political freedom
Leadership	Mobilizing others	Inspiring collective resistance

Execution	Punishment by authority	Suppression by oppressive systems
Symbolic legacy	Enduring historical icon	Continued ideological influence

**Interpretive Analysis**

This mapping illustrates how poetic metaphor functions as a cognitive and cultural bridge, linking historical memory with contemporary political experience. By projecting the figure of Spartacus onto the modern militant, the poem constructs a universal archetype of resistance that transcends temporal and spatial boundaries (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002; Gibbs, 2011).

Moreover, the metaphor operates at multiple levels simultaneously:

- Cognitive level: structuring understanding through domain mapping
- Cultural level: invoking shared historical narratives
- Ideological level: articulating resistance and critique

Such multilayered functionality highlights the capacity of conceptual metaphor to serve as a central mechanism of meaning production in literary discourse (Charteris-Black, 2004; Semino, 2008).

At the same time, the poem introduces a critical tension by juxtaposing the heroic ideal of resistance with the inevitability of systemic reproduction (“a new Caesar”). This ambivalence reflects what cognitive theorists describe as the dynamic and context-dependent nature of metaphor, where meaning is continuously negotiated rather than fixed (Evans & Green, 2006; Kövecses, 2015).

**Findings**

The analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that conceptual metaphor operates as a systematic cognitive mechanism that structures both linguistic expression and literary meaning. The examination of the selected prose and poetic texts reveals that metaphor is not a superficial stylistic device but a deeply embedded conceptual framework that organizes perception, interpretation, and symbolic representation.

The findings indicate that metaphorical meaning is generated through structured cross-domain mappings, whereby elements from a concrete source domain are projected onto an abstract target domain. In the narrative example, the metaphor “THE ASCETIC IS A TRAP” illustrates how moral and religious imagery can be reconfigured to represent deception and manipulation, thereby revealing the ideological potential of metaphor in shaping narrative meaning. Similarly, in the poetic analysis, the metaphor “THE MILITANT IS SPARTACUS” demonstrates how historical figures are cognitively reinterpreted as symbolic archetypes of resistance, enabling the construction of collective identity and political meaning.

Furthermore, the study highlights that conceptual metaphors function at multiple levels simultaneously—cognitive, cultural, and ideological. They not only facilitate the understanding of abstract concepts but also encode value systems, social norms, and cultural narratives. This multidimensional functionality confirms that metaphor is central to the process of meaning-making in both everyday language and literary discourse (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010; Gibbs, 2008).

Another significant finding concerns the limitations of traditional rhetorical approaches, particularly within classical Arabic scholarship, which have predominantly treated metaphor as a linguistic phenomenon based on similarity and substitution. The present analysis demonstrates that such approaches fail to account for the cognitive and conceptual dimensions of metaphor, thereby underscoring the necessity of integrating cognitive linguistic frameworks into literary studies.

Overall, the findings provide strong empirical and theoretical support for the claim that conceptual metaphor theory offers a robust and comprehensive model for analyzing the relationship between language, thought, and culture.

**Conclusion**

This study has sought to re-examine the nature and function of metaphor through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory, demonstrating its central role in human cognition and its pervasive influence across linguistic and literary domains. By moving beyond traditional rhetorical frameworks, the research establishes metaphor as a fundamental cognitive mechanism that underlies not only language but also perception, reasoning, and cultural representation.

The results confirm that metaphor is deeply rooted in human experience and constitutes an essential component of the conceptual system through which individuals interpret reality. In its modern understanding, metaphor is no longer confined to literary creativity or aesthetic expression; rather, it functions as a universal cognitive tool that shapes both ordinary communication and complex symbolic discourse.

Moreover, the study underscores the transformative impact of conceptual metaphor theory on contemporary linguistic and literary scholarship. By redefining metaphor as a process of cross-domain mapping, this theoretical framework provides new insights into how meaning is constructed, negotiated, and communicated within diverse contexts. It also highlights the interconnectedness of language, cognition, and culture, revealing metaphor as a key interface through which these domains interact.

Importantly, the research contributes to bridging the gap between classical rhetorical traditions and modern cognitive approaches, offering an integrative perspective that enhances the analytical potential of metaphor studies. At the same time, it opens new avenues for future research, particularly in the application of conceptual metaphor theory to underexplored literary traditions and cross-cultural contexts.

In conclusion, conceptual metaphor theory not only transforms our understanding of metaphor itself but also fundamentally reshapes our perception of the relationship between human beings, language, and the world. As such, it represents a pivotal paradigm in contemporary scholarship, with far-reaching implications for the study of meaning, cognition, and culture.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted in accordance with internationally recognized standards of research integrity and publication ethics. The research does not involve human participants, animal subjects, or sensitive personal data; therefore, formal ethical approval was not required. The study adheres to the ethical principles outlined by the Committee on Publication Ethics and complies with best practices in academic research, including transparency, accuracy, and academic honesty.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted independently, and no financial, institutional, or personal relationships have influenced the results or interpretation of the findings.

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The author solely contributed to all aspects of the research, including conceptualization, methodology design, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and manuscript preparation.

### **Data Availability Statement**

No datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study. All materials used in this research are derived from publicly available literary texts and established theoretical frameworks.

### **Informed Consent Statement**

Not applicable. This study does not involve human participants.

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