Analyzing Metaphor in Literature: 
With Examples from William Wordsworth’s 
“I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”

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Abstract In this essay I present the outlines of a cognitively motivated, discourse-analytical approach to metaphor in poetry. I will begin by emphasizing that analysis has to be seen in the context of the more encompassing framework of research into the relation between language structure and process. I will then adopt one particular starting point in a three-dimensional approach to metaphor as expression, idea, and utterance, presenting the groundwork for a conceptual taxonomy of metaphor. In particular, distinctions will be introduced between simple and complex metaphor, restricted and extended metaphor, and explicit and implicit metaphor. All of these distinctions are independent of each other. They also require support from linguistic and communicative metaphor analysis. Finally, I will apply these principles to the first two lines of William Wordsworth’s “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” revealing how the linguistic, conceptual, and communicative structure of these lines interact to produce an intricate piece of poetry.

Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics

Since 1980, when George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s Metaphors We Live By was published, it has become a common assumption among many linguists, psychologists, and literary theorists that metaphor should be regarded as a conceptual and not as a linguistic phenomenon (see also Ungerer and Schmidt 1996; Gibbs 1994; Steen 1994). The distinction between linguistic and conceptual metaphor, now widely accepted, has given
rise to a wealth of studies of metaphor as thought. The claim that conceptual metaphor is ubiquitous in language and culture has led to the discovery of many cross-linguistic conventional conceptual metaphors involving non-literal mappings between distinct domains of knowledge that organize our knowledge about those domains in standard but metaphorical ways. The familiar examples include our views of abstract concepts such as LIFE or LOVE as JOURNEYS. That is why metaphors have become things we live by rather than the linguistic oddities that they were long thought to be.

There are at least two immediate consequences for the linguistic study of metaphor. The first concerns the very aspect of linguistic oddity just mentioned, or the role of deviance. Since many of the metaphors studied by cognitive linguists over the past two decades are part of conventional conceptual metaphors, they also give rise to standard ways of talking about things by ordinary users. Their surface forms do not strike one as deviant but natural. As a result, literal meaning has now been defined as that kind of meaning which is a direct expression of experience, whereas non-literal meaning involves the kind of mapping from one conceptual domain to another that is characteristic of metaphor (Lakoff 1986).

A related distinction is the one between congruent and incongruent expressions (Halliday 1985), where congruent expressions suggest a direct matching between our words and ways in which we conceptualize the world, whereas incongruent expressions do not. For instance, “If I am reporting the success of a mountaineering expedition, instead of writing they arrived at the summit on the fifth day I may choose an expression such as the fifth day saw them at the summit. Here the time ‘the fifth day’ has been dressed up to look as if it was a participant, an onlooker ‘seeing’ the climbers when they arrived” (Halliday 1985: 322).

But what is important is that non-literal or incongruent meaning does not have to be deviant in the sense that it is semantically unacceptable. Non-literal meaning does not necessarily entail deviance, but may equally represent the norm, for metaphor may be the only conventional means available to the language user to communicate about a particular domain of experience. As a result, it has become possible to write learners’ dictionaries of lexicalized metaphorical mappings between conceptual domains in connection with large and common semantic fields such as heat (Deignan 1995).

The other consequence of the changed relation between linguistic and conceptual metaphor concerns the stylistic or rhetorical realization of conceptual metaphor as a specific figure of speech. Whether a conceptual metaphor is expressed as a metaphor, a simile, an analogy, an extended non-literal comparison, or even an allegory, these are surface variations
of the same underlying conceptual structure. In other words, conceptual metaphor may be related to a variety of rhetorical forms in language, the choice of which will have to be investigated in relation to possible alternatives in a particular context. For instance, Ravid Aisenman (1997) has suggested that metaphor and simile serve to express different types of metaphorical comparisons, while John Kennedy (1997), in work with Don Chiappe, has argued that felt differences in the strength of a claim advanced by metaphor and simile are to be related to their function in context.

The distinction between conceptual and linguistic metaphor is only one aspect of the larger story of developments in cognitive metaphor studies in relation to language and literature. A broader functional view of metaphorical language motivates investigation of the connection between language structure and language processing. Several traditions and disciplines have contributed to this view, including functional linguistics (Halliday 1985), relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986), cognitive linguistics (Ungerer and Schmidt 1996), discourse analysis (Van Dijk 1997), and psycholinguistics (Gibbs 1994). In my previous work I have attempted to sketch the outlines of such an encompassing approach to the function of metaphor in Understanding Metaphor in Literature (Steen 1994; Steen 1999a). I have continued to develop this framework, and will present and apply it in the present contribution.

In light of the psycholinguistic literature on reading processes, I have proposed that the relation between the metaphorical words on the page and their resulting interpretation by the reader must be mediated by three different kinds of mental representations that have to be constructed during reading. I have termed these the linguistic, conceptual, and communicative representations of metaphor, and have derived three corresponding functions of metaphor as part of discourse that must be accounted for by cognitive linguists. The linguistic discourse function of metaphor is to express meanings; the conceptual discourse function is to embody ideas; the communicative discourse function of metaphor is to convey a message. These distinctions highlight different aspects of metaphor that require independent description and which, in combination, should account for diverging metaphor effects on discourse behavior. For instance, they allow us to produce independent descriptions of verbal and conceptual structure, which affect metaphor complexity and hence comprehension.

As a result, metaphors must be analyzed as expressions, by investigating their vocabulary and grammar; as ideas, by analyzing their propositional content and knowledge structure; and as messages, by examining their pragmatic structure and function in terms of co-text and context. The cor-
responding basic unit of analysis is metaphor as clause, as proposition, and as utterance, respectively. This does not mean that there are no metaphors at word or phrase level, nor that there are no metaphors that are either above or below the levels of the proposition or the utterance. What I am saying is that such metaphors will be preferably described with reference to the basic units of analysis in discourse: clause, proposition, and utterance. I will return to these proposals in more detail below, but first I will point out some more general implications of my approach.

One issue involves metaphor as a conceptual entity. Lakoff (1993: 207) has made a point of denying that metaphors are propositions: "Names of mappings commonly have a propositional form, for example, LOVE IS A JOURNEY. But the mappings themselves are not propositions. If mappings are confused with names for mappings, one might mistakenly think that, in this theory, metaphors are propositional. They are anything but that: metaphors are mappings, that is, sets of conceptual correspondences." However, a more encompassing cognitive view of the functions of metaphor in discourse shows that there is no conflict between regarding metaphor as a proposition and metaphor as a conceptual mapping. Propositions are minimal idea units consisting of small numbers of concepts functioning as predicate and arguments. They have demonstrated their use to psychologists investigating content processing in discourse. Propositions can be regarded as the bridge between language and thought in that they provide access to more complex knowledge representations involved in text interpretation, for instance in the form of conceptual networks (Perfetti and Britt 1995).

What I am suggesting is that this also holds for propositions that are metaphorical, which is a result of regarding metaphors as propositions at the conceptual level of analysis. Metaphorical propositions have not received attention in the psycholinguistic literature. But it is, in fact, possible to show that there is a continuum of analysis between metaphors as linguistic expressions, propositions, and mappings (Steen 1999b). Once propositions are derived from linguistic expressions by means of one of the commonly accepted methods of propositionalization in psychology, as demonstrated, for instance, in Bovair and Kieras 1983, they can be fed into a small number of rules for deriving non-literal comparison statements formulated by George Miller (1993). Applying these rules produces the skeleton of an analogical mapping that may then be fleshed out in the manner of Lakoff 1993 or, to name but one alternative, Gentner 1989. Lakoff's conceptual mappings cannot be constructed without going through a stage of propositional analysis that regards metaphors as propositions.

The fact that propositions account for distinct aspects of the reading
process of all kinds of expressions suggests that metaphors can be regarded as propositions just as much as sets of conceptual correspondences. This is important if we wish to be able to account for the conceptual discourse function of metaphor in the diverse stages of its analytical explication and possibly cognitive processing during reading or listening.

Although Lakoff and Johnson’s contrast of linguistic metaphor to conceptual metaphor has been fruitful, it has not been realized that it is also possible and productive to coin the phrase communicative metaphor in opposition to these two notions. Metaphor as a communicative phenomenon involves looking at metaphor as a specific kind of message, and it raises the question of the intention and uptake of metaphoricity. Some metaphors are meant to be recognized as such, while others are not, in that their metaphoricity is either irrelevant or not to be noticed, that is, concealed. Lynne Cameron (1999) has proposed a related distinction between what she calls “deliberate” and “emergent” metaphor. The latter term refers to metaphor that cannot be avoided when language users wish to communicate about a particular topic. Deliberate metaphor does not have to be novel or unconventional: many metaphors in teaching, political rhetoric, and on the sports pages, for instance, deliberately use metaphorical clichés to inform, persuade, or entertain the reader. Instead, the hallmark of deliberate metaphor is its explicit signaling of its metaphorical nature (cf. Goatly 1996). The encompassing cognitive approach to the function of metaphor in discourse hence also leads to a new and relatively neglected category of metaphoricity: communicative metaphor.

The cognitive turn in metaphor studies entails more than emphasis on the distinction between linguistic and conceptual metaphor. A more encompassing view of the cognitive function of metaphor in discourse is on the agenda. There is a difference between an approach based on the cognitive function of metaphor on the one hand and the investigation of its effect in actual processing on the other. Discourse analysts have emphasized that there is a tenuous relation between language structure and process, and that cognitive functions ascribed to language structures are to be seen as hypotheses that have to be tested against language behavior (see Van Dijk 1997). The attraction of the new program in metaphor research is that it contains many assumptions about functions regarding processing, but there is also a danger that they are becoming accepted as supposed effects without empirical support from processing research. All of the cognitively inspired descriptions of metaphor functions are empirical issues that only further research on cognitive effects will resolve.

This is particularly important for the status of conceptual metaphor in relation to the individual mind. I have criticized the assumption made by
Lakoff (1986) and others that there is a one-to-one relation between the
description of metaphor at the level of the ideal native speaker on the
one hand and its analysis at the level of the individual's ongoing process-
ing of language on the other (Steen 1994: 16). Individuals may differ as
to which conventional metaphors are represented in which ways as part
of their own mental lexicon and encyclopedia, which will affect their pos-
sibilities for retrieval of conceptual metaphors during on-line processing.
Similarly, I question the assertion by Lakoff and Mark Turner (1989) that
all conceptual metaphors representing the knowledge of a culture are
also represented as still-connected metaphorical mappings in the minds of
the individuals. In many cases, connections may have been severed and
what arc metaphorically used concepts from a cultural perspective may
be stored as polysemous items in the minds of individual language users.
What counts as a conceptual metaphor for the functional linguist inter-
ested in the semantics of a language may not count as one for the cognitive
psychologist.

Psychological studies of metaphor processing have distinguished among
several aspects. It has become accepted practice to refer to four categories
proposed by Raymond Gibbs (1994: 116-17): comprehension, recognition,
interpretation, and appreciation. But what I would like to emphasize is that
the reader's achieving metaphor comprehension requires at least a partial
representation of the linguistic, conceptual, and communicative structure
and function of metaphor. Further details of these aspects are developed
by the reader on the bases of recognition, interpretation, and appreciation.
The reader's individual representation of the cognitive structure and func-
tions of conceptual metaphor (and of linguistic and communicative meta-
phor alike) is the cognitive effect of metaphor. The relation between the
analyst's description of such structure and function on the one hand and
their effect on the reader's realization of them on the other is an important
target for research, for which we need more empirical studies.

Metaphor in Literature

Because of the complexity of the discourse materials and situation, it has
often been questioned whether empirical research of literature and literary
text processing is even possible. However, the results of the new empiri-
cal study of literature suggest that it is (e.g., Tbsch et al. 1991; Rusch 1995;
Kreuz and MacNealy 1996). My own work on understanding metaphor
in literature also falls within this province and was designed to show that
it is possible, necessary, and productive to conduct empirical research on
metaphor processing in relation to the discourse domain of literature.
Recalling the distinction among Gibbs's categories of comprehension, recognition, interpretation, and appreciation, I have independently concentrated on the latter three and provided further subcategories on the basis of what readers did when they thought out loud about metaphors in a literary text compared to a journalistic text. When it comes to the role of metaphors in literature, the more accessible stages are identification, interpretation, and appreciation, for literature requires more careful and considered processes of reading than other domains of discourse (e.g., Zwaan 1993). However, the process of comprehension, both within and outside literature, leading to "the click of comprehension," may also be studied empirically, as is shown by the publications reviewed by Gibbs (1994).

I have also shown some effects of different properties of metaphors on the reading process. For instance, for the literary text, I was able to demonstrate that relatively unclear metaphors received more attention from readers than relatively clear metaphors for five distinct operations of metaphor processing, including identification and appreciation (Steen 1994: 227). By comparison, differences in metaphor clarity did not affect metaphor processing in the journalistic text. Moreover, the effects of another metaphor property, emotive value, were intelligibly different from this pattern: more positively valued metaphors were accorded more attention than less positively valued ones in the literary text, while the converse was true for the journalistic text. Roughly comparable results were found in another study using an underlining task, in which subjects were requested to underline what they experienced as typically literary and journalistic passages. The originally literary and journalistic text were both offered in two guises, as literary and as journalistic. Metaphors did indeed turn out to be underlined as typically literary passages and not as typically journalistic, while their unclarity or positive value had a positive effect on that experience.

These results are interesting not only for the student of metaphor, but also for the student of literature. They can be explained by relating them to the typical expectations readers have about literature as opposed to other types of discourse, such as journalism. For literature, I have defined these expectations as converging on the notion of subjectivity, while intersubjectivity would be the overall norm for nonliterary communication, including journalism (Steen 1994: 33–35). Subjectivity can then be made more concrete by relating it to the three kinds of mental representations readers have to make for understanding a text: subjectivity plays a role in the conventional attention to linguistic and textual form that allows for varied interpretation; it also plays a role in the construction of fictional text worlds for the conceptual representation of the text, permitting readers to become more personal and idiosyncratic; and it plays a role in the toler-
ance for, and even promotion of, polyvalent communicative functions of literary texts. It is striking how these aspects account for most if not all of Sabine Gross's (1997) remarks about the specific character of literature as opposed to other domains of communication in her mostly justified critique of Turner's (1991) treatment of metaphor in literature. Her conclusion that literature may be too complex for a scientific treatment, however, does not follow, as is shown by my results and their explanation. (It should be noted that subjectivity as the reader's conventional norm for a particular domain of discourse does not entail that the analyst should give up the norm of intersubjectivity for the description and explanation of that domain of discourse; intersubjectively reliable analysis is a prerequisite to be able to point out where readers make subjective use of texts.)

To return to literature as a specific domain of discourse, then, a high degree of attention to unclear and/or positive metaphors in literature involves attention to linguistic form (identification), conceptual fiction (focus processing), and communicative function (context construction and appreciation). Apparently it is felt to be worth the reader's while to spend effort on working out these aspects of metaphor in literature, in contrast to similarly unclear metaphors in journalism, which are accorded less attention. Metaphor processing is not just influenced by assumed functions of metaphor in connection with some metaphor property. It is also affected by the discourse context in which the reader approaches the metaphor for processing.

**Metaphor in Discourse**

Metaphor properties can be assessed not only by means of work with informants, as I did for the purpose of inserting them into my think-aloud and underlining studies reported above; they can also be determined analytically. A cognitively inspired analysis of the structure and function of metaphorical language involves a large number of factors and variables. I have been working on the construction of a checklist for metaphor analysis in discourse that distinguishes between three groups of four factors each, every factor containing a number of distinct variables, totaling some eighty different aspects of metaphorical language (Steen 1999a). The three groups of factors correspond to the division between the conceptual, linguistic, and communicative aspects of metaphor analysis mentioned above. Conceptual factors include the analysis of the literal and the non-literal concepts of the metaphor analyzed as a proposition and the construction of a mapping structure; linguistic factors include focus vocabulary, focus grammar, and frame grammar; and communicative factors are pragmatic func-
tions (implicatures, speech acts, etc.), rhetorical form, rhetorical weight, and textual function of the metaphor.

The approach facilitates various possibilities for ordering our view of metaphor in discourse. Its overall purpose is not merely taxonomic, but descriptive and explanatory: metaphors in discourse may be described regarding all of these variables, and their properties and clusters of them may be used to explain their effects on reader behavior, including comprehension, recognition, interpretation, and appreciation. The most important type of analysis departs from an examination of the conceptual structure of metaphor. In this section I will show that from this starting point we can begin to distinguish between a number of types of metaphor in discourse, emphasizing that conceptual analysis alone does not suffice to bring to light their characteristics; the analysis of linguistic and communicative aspects is also required. In the space at my disposal, I can set forth only a rough sketch based on different metaphor structures. Moreover, I can only speculate about the function of the resulting metaphor properties, studies of actual effect being on the agenda for the future.

My illustrations will come from a well-known poem by William Wordsworth, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud.” I will select metaphors from the poem in order to exemplify some of the differences between classes of metaphor and wish to stress that I do not aim to do full justice to every metaphor and its function in the poem. Rather, my intention is to show how an encompassing analytical approach can produce an interesting taxonomy for metaphor that can be related to research into metaphor function and effect. Some results of the application of the complete approach and the crucial role of poetic context will then be briefly demonstrated in the last section of this essay, which is concerned with the first two lines of the poem. The full poem is reproduced below (from Bloom and Trilling 1973: 174):

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;

5 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
and twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line

10 Along the margin of the bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee;

15 A poet could not but be gay,
in such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie:

20 In vacant or in pensive mood.
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Metaphors as Ideas

As discussed above, metaphor has come to be defined as a mapping from concepts in one domain to concepts in another domain. If metaphor is defined as such, then it is seen as a non-literal idea. It may hence be fruitfully analyzed as a proposition, which consists of a predicate and one or more arguments that are related to and by the predicate. As pointed out above, this analysis may then evolve into more complex types of conceptual analysis of metaphors as non-literal comparisons and analogies, in which other concepts are made explicit in the mapping structure. However, for the first stage of the conceptual analysis of metaphors as ideas, I will limit myself to producing propositional representations of clauses and sentences.

In what follows, I assume a one-to-one relationship between content words and activated concepts: I am only accounting for the concepts activated by the words in the text. This starting point produces an interesting observation, namely that most metaphorical propositions consist of one literal referent on the one hand and one non-literal predicate related to that referent which is expressed by one main concept on the other. For example, line 13 of the third stanza of the poem contains the following metaphorical proposition:

13 (DANCING WAVES)

There is a literal referent, “waves,” which is an entity that is actually present in the text world, and it is connected to a non-literal predicate, “dance,” which indicates a property of the referent by predicating over it. The predicate is metaphorical, which is indicated by the underling. This representation captures the essence of the metaphor as a non-literal idea, that the waves danced.
The non-literal predicate need not always be the propositional predicate but may also be another argument that is linked to the literal referent by means of the propositional predicate. This is the case in the worn-out *as A is a B* formula; schematically, it would lead to the propositional structure (BE A B). It is hence preferable to speak of the literal and the non-literal part(s) of the metaphorical proposition, even though the semantic function of the non-literal part is predicative with respect to the literal referent.

Generally speaking, metaphors like "the waves danced" predominate. This common type is a case of simple, restricted, explicit metaphor. The metaphor is simple for the reason suggested above: it contains only one non-literally used concept functioning as the non-literal part of the metaphor; it is the single-word metaphor focus in the encompassing linguistic frame. The metaphor is also restricted because it is of limited extent: it is confined to the boundaries of the linguistic unit of the clause. It is explicit because it contains an explicit linguistic expression of the literal referent to which the non-literal part of the metaphor is applied. We can now take this metaphor as our basic model and produce variations on this theme to exemplify other types of metaphor.

The first variant involves the addition of other concepts to the non-literal part of the metaphor. This makes the metaphor complex instead of simple. For instance, "sprightly dance" in line 13, "jocund company" in line 16, and "inward eye" in line 21 are all non-literal parts of complex metaphors in that the main concept of the non-literal part, "dance," "company," and "eye," is modified by an additional concept ("sprightly," "jocund," and "inward"). The respective literal referents of these metaphors are not merely related to the one concept of DANCE, COMPANY, or EYE, but to a DANCE that is SPRIGHTLY, and so on. Such metaphors require more complex integrative structures at a propositional level than simple ones, which consist of a single metaphorical word functioning as the metaphor focus.

However, these are not pure examples of difference from the metaphor "the waves danced," for another variable has also been changed. In particular, the understood literal referents of the metaphors have not been expressed in so many words in the text. DANCE, COMPANY, and EYE are all applied to other concepts that play a role in the text world or situation model but that are not made visible in the text. For instance, DANCE is probably predicated over such a concept as MOVEMENT, and COMPANY is certainly applied to DAFFODILS. These examples are therefore complex but implicit, not complex and explicit.

An example of a complex explicit metaphor may be provided by producing a variant of my own devising of the original example, such as "The waves wildly danced." Here the non-literal part of the metaphor, "danced,"
is itself modified by the adverbial adjunct “wildly.” The propositional representation of the complete new metaphor would have to look like this:

P1  (DANCED WAVES)
P2  (MOD DANCED WILD)

The metaphor is complex and explicit in that a complex notion, “wild dancing,” is applied in a non-literal fashion to a literal referent that is expressed in so many words in the clause “waves.”

An interesting aspect of complex metaphor is that the additional concepts in the non-literal part of the proposition may belong to the literal frame of reference (“inward”) or to the non-literal frame of reference (“sprightly,” “jocund”). The former often serves to facilitate interpretation of the non-literal in terms of the literal text world, whereas the latter makes the non-literal image more specific. This is also demonstrated by our examples: the modification of “eye” by “inward” helps the reader to link the “eye” to the literal frame of reference of the poet’s “vacant and pensive mood,” whereas the additions of “sprightly” and “jocund” serve to give a particular twist to the more general images of “dance” and “company.” Elsewhere I have even found additional concepts that are ambivalent between the two frames of reference: they could be interpreted as belonging to the literal or the metaphorical domain. Such ambivalently complex metaphors might be typical of complex metaphor in literature (Steen 1997). A fourth possibility is the addition of a concept to the non-literal part of the metaphor that introduces a new kind of non-literal use in its own right, thereby producing a mixed metaphor, as in calling something “a key step.” There is an interesting example of this structure in lines 1 and 2 of the poem, which will be analyzed below.

We now turn to the second parameter of variation, the classification of “restricted” as opposed to “extended.” In extended metaphors, the main non-literal concept is not modified within the utterance, as is the case with complex metaphors, but outside the utterance. The non-literal part of the metaphor thus becomes a local subtopic for temporary further commenting. An example is found in lines 21 and 22:

They flash upon that inward eye;
Which is the bliss of solitude:

“That inward eye” is the complex non-literal part of an implicit metaphor which itself is not closed off at the end of line 21. The complex non-literal concept is resumed as given in the next line by means of the relative pronoun “which,” becoming a topical referent within another proposition:
Since eyes cannot be bliss, literally speaking, this is also a non-literal proposition. However, it is not a metaphor but a metonymy, as we are dealing with the eye as the cause or the site of bliss.

The distinction between complexity and extension is helpful in that metaphors may be either simple or complex in their host clause irrespective of whether they are continued or not in the subsequent clause as a temporary subtopic. In this case, lines 21–22 contain a complex as well as extended metaphor (which also happens to be implicit). In addition, the extension of the metaphor is itself not literal but nonliteral, which enhances the overall complexity of the lines.

We now turn to a brief discussion of implicit metaphors, non-literal propositions that are not fully expressed in the language of the text. In particular, their literal referents are left implicit in the linguistic frame of the metaphor. This is where the conceptual analysis of metaphor cannot do without a consideration of the linguistic analysis of metaphors in terms of focus and frame. For explicit metaphors, focus and frame are roughly equivalent to non-literal part and literal part of the proposition, as is the case with “the waves danced.” But for implicit metaphor, the focus of the non-literal proposition occurs in a frame that has nothing to do with the proposition, as the literal part of the metaphorical proposition is unexpressed.

The foregoing examples were “sprightly dance” in line 12, “jocund company” in line 16, and “inward eye” in line 21. Their propositional representation would look like this:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{L12: P} & \quad (\text{REF DANCE “MOVEMENT”}) \\
\text{L16: P} & \quad (\text{REF COMPANY “DAFFODILS”}) \\
\text{L21: P} & \quad (\text{REF EYE “MEMORY”})
\end{align*}
\]

Implicit metaphors of the nominal kind always contain the predicate “REF,” indicating that the non-literal parts refer to an entity in the text world that has to be inferred, which is why the entity, involving a constructed literal referent, is placed in quotation marks. As can be seen from the examples, some literal referents may be inferred by searching the context, as is the case with DAFFODILS, while others have to be derived from the context, as with MEMORY. The latter may hence be less easily recovered by the reader. This is a difficulty that in turn may be alleviated by the writer’s choosing relatively conventional, familiar connections between a non-literal concept and the literal concept that is to be inferred. I am currently investigating this hunch by means of corpus work and informant judgments.

The lack of an expression of the literal referent in the surface structure of the text explains the fact that some metaphors do not exhibit a seman-
tic tension between their metaphor focus and the linguistic frame in which they occur. My favorite example is the one of a police helicopter watching over a riot being referred to as a bird: “The bird of prey hung over the demonstrators.” The incongruity present in the non-literal mapping between the police helicopter and the bird of prey is hidden from the surface of the text and has to be made manifest by constructing the inferred proposition capturing the implicit metaphor:

P (REF BIRD-OF-PREY HELICOPTER)

But there is no incongruity or semantic tension between the metaphor focus “bird of prey” and the linguistic frame in which it is inserted: it is perfectly possible for birds of prey to hang over demonstrators. This is one possible variant of the relation between implicit metaphor and linguistic frame, which is also present in the poem, in lines 15–16:

A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company

If the lines are not interpreted in their pragmatic context in which “company” is seen to refer to the daffodils, they can be read as literal statements about poets and their company, which by default would be human.

The variant should be contrasted with another, in which there is tension between the metaphor focus of the implicit metaphor and the linguistic frame in which it is inserted. However, this tension would not involve the non-literal part and the literal referent of the implicit metaphor, as in the case of explicit metaphor. Instead, it is a tension that results from a clash between the non-literal part of the implicit metaphor and some other expression in the linguistic frame that happens to be incongruous with it. This is an additional tension that produces an opportunity for another round of metaphorical interpretation. This representation is not of the pragmatic kind, meant to establish such things as referential coherence, but semantic, produced by taking the surface of linguistic expressions at face value. There are two examples of this case in the poem, which I shall now analyze in some detail.

What is the basic idea unit capturing the nature of the metaphorical use of “crowd” and “host” in lines 3 and 4? They activate the concepts crowd and host, which do not themselves have literal referents in the situation model of the reader: there are no crowds and hosts in the scene developed so far. Rather, crowd and host are to be related to another concept, number, which is not explicitly expressed in the text until line 11, “Ten thousand saw I at a glance.” In the first stanza, however, the reader has to make an inference regarding the literal concept to which crowd and
host are applied. The propositional representation of these two non-literal ideas, then, looks like this: (REF CROWD "NUMBER") and (REF HOST "NUMBER"). These implicit metaphors are contextual: they can be interpreted by resorting to the default variable of any interpretation of concrete objects, namely that they can be quantified.

However, the most important issue for our present purposes is the possibility for additional metaphorical tension between the non-literal part of the foregoing implicit metaphors and another, literal, part of the linguistic frame in which they occur. Both of the linguistic expressions “a crowd of daffodils” and “a host of daffodils” allow for a metaphorical interpretation, that the daffodils are a crowd and a host. Thus “crowd” and “host” fulfil a dual function: they are the non-literal parts of two implicit metaphors that involve an unexpressed literal referent that is understood to be present in the situation model, but they are also interpretable as part of additional metaphors in which another literal referent from the situation model, DAFFODILS, is personified. This state of affairs is automatically reflected in the propositional analysis; to take the first example, the analysis would first show the proposition containing the implicit metaphor and then go on to explicate the role of the non-literal part of that implicit metaphor in the surface structure of the text, producing the semantic metaphor:

P1  (REF CROWD "NUMBER")
P2  (MOD CROWD DAFFODILS)

Also observe that if the analysis selects another convention, in which alternative expressions such as “crowd” are replaced by their intended referents as recorded in the derived proposition for the implicit metaphor, then the second, semantic, metaphor disappears:

P1  (REF CROWD "NUMBER")
P2  (MOD NUMBER DAFFODILS)

There is much more to be said about metaphor from a conceptual point of view. For instance, our “the waves danced” metaphor is also to be classified as a full metaphor because the non-literal idea is expressed as the linguistic equivalent of a proposition, that is, a full clause, as opposed to its possible reduction to a phrase or a word. A reduced metaphor would be the “golden daffodils” metaphor in line 4, which would be represented as (MOD DAFFODILS GOLDEN). I have called this factor the form of the non-literal proposition.

Another conceptual property of metaphors is their level of expression in the list of propositions representing the sentence. They can function at a high level, in that they are the top-level proposition of a sentence, which
means that they would form the main clause; an example would be our "the waves danced" metaphor again. But they may also function as immediate constituents of the main clause, or as part of immediate constituents, in which case I have called them midlevel or low-level metaphors. For instance, the propositions containing our implicit "crowd" and "host" examples above function as parts of the immediate constituent "a crowd, a host of golden daffodils," and are hence low-level metaphors. However, the ensuing semantic metaphors discussed afterward, pertaining to the propositionalization of the phrase "a crowd, a host of golden daffodils" itself, are midlevel. Such properties may have an effect on the prominence of metaphor to the reader and on the processing strategies consequently activated for its interpretation: high-level propositions are generally accorded more attention and remembered better than lower-level ones, and it would be odd for metaphors to receive a different treatment.

It is also possible to discern relations between conceptual metaphor aspects and other linguistic and communicative aspects. For instance, the absence of an overt clash between literal part and non-literal part may make a metaphor look less deliberate than would the presence of such a clash. Extended metaphor wears its metaphoricity prominently on its sleeve, whereas for restricted metaphor this need not be the case. And reduced metaphors do not exhibit a prototypical topic-comment structure, turning the metaphorical idea into a matter of presupposition rather than independent utterance. There are hence many more relations to be explored on the basis of the distinction between the discourse factors mentioned above. To give an impression of how such relations work in practice, we will now turn to a more integral analysis of the first two lines of the poem.

Metaphor in the First Stanza of "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

The first two lines of the poem are a good illustration of the peculiar character of metaphor in poetry. The first aspect on which I wish to concentrate is the syntactic ambiguity of line 1, which has an effect on the propositional content of the metaphor: "I wandered lonely as a cloud." The prepositional phrase "as a cloud" can be interpreted in two ways, for the question is to which expression it should be related. One possibility is to take it as an immediate constituent of the main clause functioning as an adverbial adjunct of manner. It then also implies a comparison, as is often the case with manner adjuncts. It should hence be concluded that it applies to the wandering lonely by the poet: it suggests that this is done in the manner of a cloud. However, the prepositional phrase may also function as a post-modifier of the head of an adjective phrase, "lonely." In this case the poet
wanders while being lonely as a cloud and "as a cloud" changes into an adverbial adjunct of degree, which also implies comparison. No clear choice is possible: line 1 is simply ambiguous between the two interpretations. It fully exploits the alternative possibilities of combinations of word forms. It is well known that this aspect of language is exploited in poetry.

As a result, the question arises whether "as a cloud" introduces an implicit comparison between two ways of doing something, i.e., wandering (adjunct of manner), or two ways of being, i.e., lonely (adjunct of degree). This means that the propositional representation of line 1 has to display two alternatives:

**Propositional Representation 1:**
"as a cloud" as an adjunct of manner

L1: P1  (WANDER 1)
P2  (MOD P1 LONELY)
P3  (MANNER P1 CLOUD)

**Propositional Representation 2:**
"as a cloud" as an Adjunct of Degree

L1: P1  (WANDER 1)
P2  (MOD P1 LONELY)
P3  (DEGREE LONELY CLOUD)

It should also be noted that both interpretations and representations are based on the supposition that there is a hidden comparison, which may be revealed by making explicit an understood subordinate clause fleshing out the terms of the comparison.

Understood comparison clause for manner interpretation:
I wandered lonely as a cloud wandered lonely

Understood comparison clause for degree interpretation:
I wandered while I was lonely as a cloud is lonely

This kind of reconstruction also reveals the non-literal, metaphorical nature of the implied comparisons: for the manner interpretation, there is an incongruity between clouds and their wandering lonely, and for the degree interpretation, there is an incongruity between clouds and their being lonely. Both wandering lonely and being lonely involve human subjects, which clouds are not. To describe what the cloud is actually doing or being, we need to look for cloud-related equivalents of WANDERING LONELY and BEING LONELY. Only then is it possible to make fully explicit the understood non-literal comparison statements.

We are hence moving away from propositional analysis of the kind practiced in discourse analysis to the more specific kind of conceptual analy-
sis proposed for metaphor by Miller (1993). He has demonstrated how underlying metaphorical comparisons can be reconstructed in the form of analogies for the purpose of further interpretation. I will show informally what the result of that exercise would be for our two interpretations. The first interpretation of line 1, as involving an adjunct of manner, would lead to the following comparison statement: “There is a similarity between the wandering of the I and some action of a cloud.” The second interpretation of line 1, as involving an adjunct of degree, would lead to the following comparison statement: “There is a similarity between the being lonely of the I and some property of a cloud.” What this approach shows is which conceptual element is missing from the “general concept—resemblance, comparison, analogy—that we are trying to appreciate and make explicit” (Miller 1993: 384–85). As Miller (384) observes, “A variety of words may be appropriate, or there may be none at all. The claim is not that the author had particular words in mind.” The syntactic ambiguity can hence be shown to result in the activation of different target concepts and slightly different constructions of the overall mapping.

Another fundamental issue that may be briefly addressed by inspecting line 1 is the role of rhetorical form. The two metaphorical propositions that may be derived from the language of the poem have been realized in the form of a simile. I do not believe that the choice for simile has to do with issues of strength or kind of mapping here (cf. Aisenman 1997: Kennedy 1997). Rather, the implicit comparison marker “as” in combination with the active verb “wander” or the adjective “lonely” suggests the construction of an understood comparison clause. We have seen that this is important for the reconstruction of the non-liter al propositions.

However, something should be added to this observation from the side of communicative metaphor analysis. For the use of simile also means that the fact of non-literal comparison is signaled explicitly. In other words, the metaphor turns into deliberate metaphor because of its rhetorical form. This may have an effect on its recognition and the effort readers put into its interpretation and appreciation.

So far, I have discussed the metaphor in the context of the first line of the poem, as if it stood on its own. This is a legitimate procedure if one wishes to account for the relation between metaphor and its position in the text; in this case, we are dealing more specifically with one aspect of the poem’s poetics, the presumable effect of the unit of the line upon interpretation. It should be noted that this aspect interacts with the grammatical analysis of the metaphor frame, for the construction of line 1 creates the impression that we have to do with a complete and clause-final metaphor focus, which is presented as the grammatical focus or N-Rheme of the metaphor.
frame (Fries 1994). This temporarily lends a particular prominence to the expression “a cloud.”

However, we also have to move on to consider how the text is developed in the next line, which turns out to continue the image of the cloud begun in line 1: “That floats on high o’er vales and hills.” Line 2 functions as a relative clause giving further information about “a cloud” in line 1 and produces either complex metaphor or extended metaphor (see above). Grammatically speaking, it is a restrictive relative clause and functions as a postmodifier. The metaphor would hence be a complex metaphor that is restricted to the confines of one clause: there is additional information apart from the metaphor focus “a cloud,” but it is placed within the bounds of the immediate constituent of the head word itself and does not transgress the limits of the clause in which the cloud functions as a clause element. The extra information is needed to complete our image of the non-literal referent cloud, for it is a cloud of a particular kind, one “that floats on high o’er vales and hills.”

This may also be reformulated from another angle. In ordinary discourse, line 2 would not qualify as a discourse unit (Mann and Thompson 1988), for it cannot stand on its own as a (semi-)independent clause. Therefore the metaphor in line 1 should not be regarded as the basis of an extension in line 2. Extended metaphor only arises when metaphors are continued in ensuing (semi-)independent clauses or sentences. As this is not the case, the additional information belongs to the head word, making the metaphor not extended but complex. To reiterate, the notion of metaphor complexity refers to the presence of modifying expressions that relate additional concepts to the metaphor focus within the scope of its immediate constituent.

However, this is not ordinary discourse but poetry. There is a decided effect of the interaction between versification and grammar here: when line 1 is broken off it produces momentary semantic closure with the potential assignment of grammatical focus function to “a cloud.” This possibility leads to a relatively greater semantic independence of the relative clause in line 2 than similar cases in ordinary discourse would. In other words, even though line 2 has the logical function of restricting the scope of the kinds of clouds referred to, the verse structure also allows us to see it as a “more” extension of the general concept cloud introduced in line 1. Its function could be to develop a more specific image of such clouds by describing what they typically do.

These considerations arise because of the precise and theoretically motivated distinction between restricted and extended metaphor, and simple and complex metaphor, and their application in the context of an inde-
dependent analysis of the grammar and the textual position of the metaphor. They may make the decision about the restricted or extended, and complex or simple, nature of the metaphor more problematic than it would be in non-poetic discourse. But this is no major difficulty, for it prompts us to say that the metaphor is ambivalent in this regard, an observation that might otherwise have escaped our attention. To be more accurate, the metaphor is ambivalent between being complex and restricted or simple and extended.

The distinction between restricted and extended metaphor is interesting because it has a bearing on the coherence of the text. An extended metaphor momentarily creates a new topic domain in the text, directing the reader's attention away from the previously active topic and forcing the reader to concentrate more on the source domain involved in the extended metaphor. Restricted metaphors preserve the predominance of the literal referent of the metaphor as the current topic of the text, but extended metaphors are a threat to that kind of structural clarity. The more extended they are, in terms of additional clauses and even sentences, the more important they become as the local semantic baseline for the interpretive activities of the reader. Moreover, the sheer quantity of the number of non-literally used words acts as a signal of the metaphorical nature of message, turning the metaphor into a deliberate one.

As a result, the complex or extended nature of the metaphor in lines 1 and 2 may also alert the reader to a special role of the domain of clouds, hills, and vales for the poem. In fact, the possibility for independent topicality of the cloud in line 2 affords it such presence in the poem that it may lead to a form of de-metaphorization that is close to the phenomenon of metaphor realization (Hrushovski 1984), which involves the conflation of the literal and non-literal frames of reference in the text world. The second line creates the possibility of our imagining the poet as actually seeing a real cloud in the sky as he walks across the vales and hills.

The distinction between complex and simple metaphor may also be invoked when examining another aspect of line 2, the presence of mixed metaphor. For if "a cloud that floats on high o'er vales and hills" is a non-literal expression with regard to "I wandered lonely," one part of that non-literal expression, "floats," is used nonliterally when it is compared with its linguistic frame, "[a cloud] Xs on high o'er vales and hills." Thus we have metaphor inside metaphor, or mixed metaphor: the reader's attention has to perform a balancing act not only between the wandering of the I and the movement of the cloud, but also between the cloud itself and what it does, floating. At the end of line 2, all of this has to be integrated into a coherent representation. Let us take a closer look at this phenomenon.
"Floating" is the non-literal part of a restricted and simple metaphor: it is not extended beyond the current clause and does not govern any further propositional information that is related to the focus as a semantic head. Its propositional representation looks like this:

\[ P (\text{float cloud}) \]

This representation must be opposed to the complex and/or extended metaphor in which it is located, involving the cloud itself. The hierarchical relation between the two metaphors creates a difference in their relative importance. It might hence be assumed that the "floating" metaphor deserves less attention than the "cloud" metaphor when it comes to assigning poetic significance to them.

However, the very fact that "floating" gives rise to a mixed metaphor is also important and counteracts the above tendency of diminishing its value. It may be surmised that poets are aware of mixed metaphors and do not use them without purpose: as soon as we realize the mixed metaphoricity of line 2, we seek to account for it. The point is that, however one does that, it involves removing oneself another step from the main topic of line 1, the wandering of the I. Not only has the attention shifted from the I to the role of the clouds, vales, and hills, perhaps producing an effect that is comparable to realization; but subsequently another shift takes place from the clouds, hills, and vales themselves to the domain of liquids, prototypically water, and objects floating in them. To analyze this in conceptual terms, if extended metaphor replaces a literal frame of reference by a non-literal one, mixed metaphor replaces a local non-literal frame of reference by another local non-literal frame of reference.

Both of these movements away from the "I" at the beginning of line 1 are significant. They are predicted to enhance the recognition of the metaphor as such, turning the second metaphor into deliberate metaphor as well. The poem hence can be argued to make a startling start, becoming twice removed from the literal domain of reference after the first three words, and making no secret of this operation.

**Conclusion**

We have looked at several aspects of the metaphors in lines 1 and 2 from the perspective of their multidimensional function in discourse. The conceptual starting point of the approach was taken for granted in the exposition, which began with the ambiguity of the grammar in line 1, an aspect of the grammatical analysis of the linguistic frame of the metaphor. Moreover, the grammatical analysis of the metaphor focus was shown to be
affected by its position at the end of the poetic line, which is a feature of
the communicative factor of textual analysis. As a result of this interaction
between grammatical focus position and textual position, the conceptual
structure of the metaphor was seen to be ambiguous between complexity
and extendedness.

In both cases, I may posit a relation between the conceptual metaphor
and its communicative deliberateness, in that the number of non-literally
used concepts can act as a signal to the reader for the metaphor's deliber-
ate character. This deliberate character is increased by the fact that line 2
exhibits mixed metaphor, which adds to the rhetorical weight of the first
and second metaphor. Moreover, the similetic shape of the metaphor in
line 1 can be regarded as another aspect of its deliberateness, involving the
factor of rhetorical form.

The factors from the checklist I referred to on page 9 that have not
been dealt with in my discussion are the linguistic one of vocabulary and
the communicative one of pragmatic function. Moreover, textual function
could also be elaborated further by investigating the position of lines 1
and 2 as a whole with respect to the rest of the poem. Space does not per-
mit me to probe into these aspects any further. I hope the present analysis
will suffice for demonstrating the use of a systematic and multidimensional
analytical approach to metaphor in discourse.

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