

On the novelty of novel metaphors and metonymies

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The topic of novel (and creative) metaphors like:

- (1) *This world is like a nail, and **life is a bottle of acetone**. Many people come, draw their paintings, their art, leave their marks, but life, it wipes them off clean every time, so that new people can come and draw at the nail, which acts as a blank canvass to this world. Life isn't a very complicated or complex thing, but utterly simple. It's we who make it complicated.*

seems to be a well-established and a recurrent one in cognitive linguistics. Speaking about the scale of conventionality, Kövecses (2005, 2010 and 2015) says that on the end of this scale diametrically opposite to the conventional ones we find highly unconventional and novel metaphors. He also observes that conventionality and novelty alike can be observed at the level of both conceptual and linguistic metaphors. A novel linguistic metaphor can thus be a realization of a conventional conceptual metaphor (Kövecses 2010: 35).

Discussions of novel or creative metonymies, on the other hand, do not abound in the literature, but a number of recent publications (e.g. Slabakova, Cabrelli Amaro & Kang 2013a & b, 2016; Van Herwegen, Dimitrou & Rundblad 2013; Littlemore 2015; Falkum Lossius, Recasens & Clark 2017) take up this issue. The phenomenon in question, just like many other aspects of metonymy, like its definition, typology, etc. is surrounded by lots of uncertainties and mystery. In this presentation I examine various dimensions along which the novelty of metonymy may manifest itself and argue that, unlike novel or creative metaphors, novel metonymy is actually somewhat of a unicorn of cognitive linguistics. Examples brought up in the literature as cases of novel metonymies, such as:

- (2) *And I said: "Well gosh, can't we—can't we find some women that are also qualified?" And—and so we—we took a concerted effort to go out and find women who had backgrounds that could be qualified to become members of our Cabinet. I went to a number of women's groups and said: "Can you help us find folks," and they brought us **whole binders full of women**. (Mitt Romney, 2012)*
- (3) ***The apron** burned the dinner.*

turn out on closer inspection to be at best just novel instances of established and well-known, i.e. conventional types of conceptual metonymy.

I also demonstrate why novel metonymies are hardly possible on theoretical grounds. Specifically, I claim that there are and there can hardly be any novel conceptual metonymies, at least at the type level, while studying individual examples, i.e. linguistic metonymies, is a fairly trivial task, to say the least. However, I show in the final part of my presentation that metonymy may be involved in the creation of novelty, but it is the creation of novel linguistic metaphors, specifically those realized as the XYZ construction, such as:

- (4) *Three years ago **Renzi was the Diego Maradona of Italian politics**, the source said, but now he's more like Antonio Cassano, a tantrum-prone Italian soccer star whose volcanic temper caused problems on the field.*
"Like Maradona, he was a little hard to handle, but it was OK because the team won," the source said. "But now he's more like Cassano, whose volatile personality offset his talent and hurt his team."
- (5) *But then you have to take him seriously because he had just been voted international wine maker of the year. He is **the Diego Maradona of grape, the Usain Bolt of viticulture**, the ... well you get the picture.*

Keywords: (novel) metonymy, (novel) metaphor, regular metonymy, typology of metonymy, XYZ construction.

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