The Narrative Lyric: Conceptual Integration, Embodied Cognition, Styles and Diachrony in the Poetics of Emotion

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How does verbal figuration reflect both emotional styles and universal procedures of meaning construction? The poetics of emotion strongly rely on the realization of abstract, widely shared conceptual models into more specific instantiations. At all levels of abstraction, these models are rooted on principles of human cognition, but they also vary, perhaps at all levels too, under the influence of individual, cultural, and social conditions. These emotion discourses, or *emotives*, to use Reddy's (2001) term, need to be situated both in a historical and a cognitive perspective (Reddy 2009).

So far, in the studies of the language of emotions there has been a tendency to privilege universality over the diversity of emotional styles, often also as to incur in Anglocentrism (Wierzbicka 1999, 2009a-b). In more general emotion theory, the invaluable insights offered by neurobiology (Damasio 1994, 1999, 2003) should not obscure the social nature of emotions, pointed out as early as Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. The Communicative Theory of Emotions (Oatley & Johnson-Laird 1987, 1996) bridges the gap by paying great attention to expression and conceptualization in historical terms (Johnson-Laird & Oatley 2000, 2008; Oatley 2004: 70). However, even emotions postulated as basic by Oatley & Johnson-Laird, Damasio, or Ekman, seem to be configured by means of vast arrays of cultural meanings (Gross 2006).

The numerous relevant studies in cognitive linguistics (e.g. Kövecses 1986, 2000, Lakoff 1987: 380-415) mainly use conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1993) and idealized cognitive models (Lakoff 1987) to account for conventional expressions of emotions in everyday language. This approach has identified many useful inference patterns, but presents three main shortcomings: it has not much new to say about the particularities of individual texts, let alone contextualized poetic expressions (Tsur 2000; however, see Lakoff & Turner 1989); it lacks the necessary historical perspective (Geeraerts & Grondelaerts 1995, Geeraerts & Gevaert 2008); its binary conceptual mappings are insufficient to model the complexity of emergent meanings (Fauconnier & Turner 2008).

The dynamics of meaning construction are extremely relevant to any enterprise in the social sciences (Turner 2001). I propose that Conceptual Blending Theory (Fauconnier & Turner 2002), with its networks of mental spaces (Fauconnier 1994, 1997), is a better model for the way we recruit cultural frames (Fillmore 1982), vital relations (such as cause-effect), and basic cognitive operations (pattern completion, running mental

simulations, etc.) to construct the complex meanings behind the imagery of emotions. Emotions result from blending biological responses with cultural narratives subject to change.

Thus I use Blending Theory to model recurrent conceptual patterns in the poetics of emotion. These patterns recruit *image schemata* (Johnson 1987, Talmy 1988), that is, condensed redescriptions of perceptual experience (Oakley 2008), to construct imaginary narratives (Turner 1996) that blend everyday spatial interaction with emotional meaning. These generic integration networks (Fauconnier 2009; Pagán Cánovas 2004, 2007, 2008) recur throughout many different literatures and periods, and can manifest even in the most succinct lyric expressions. For example, an erotic emission coming from the beloved or from a superior force (as in the arrows of love) has been repeatedly used to conceptualize love causation in literature, everyday language, or rituals, from Antiquity to the twentieth century (Pagán Cánovas 2009).

Crucially, the way these abstract templates are instantiated varies significantly within individuals, communities and contexts, and these variations can be precious marks of emotional style (Pagán Cánovas, forthcoming a). These conceptual blends of emotional and spatial meanings also have a history, which sometimes can be traced back to the conceptual materials and cultural settings from which they arised (Pagán Cánovas, forthcoming b). They also make history, since they constitute the background against which different styles of emotional meaning are constantly redefined.

Poetic imagery is a precious material for the study of emotional styles. It conveys both cognitive procedures and cultural background, exposes the norm by innovating from it (Fauconnier 1997: 125, Brandt & Brandt 2005), and anticipates change. This paper presents some examples of generic networks integrating skeletal spatial stories and emotion situations in nineteenth and twentieth century Western poetic traditions (English, Spanish, Greek, etc.). In order to observe their evolution, they are considered in diachronic and social perspective, and contrasted with everyday language, art, or other cultural manifestations.

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