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# **СВІТОГЛЯД – ФІЛОСОФІЯ – РЕЛІГІЯ**

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# РОЗДІЛ 3

## КУЛЬТУРОЛОГІЯ

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*Iryna BOKUN*

### CAN CULTURAL MODELS FOR ABSTRACT CONCEPTS BE LITERAL?

*The article describes the relationship between cognitive metaphors and cultural models. It proves that cultural models for abstract concepts cannot be literal. The author also argues that in real discourse target domains can select metaphors that are not a part of the conventional application of the source to the target. The selection of metaphors is limited because they come from a source that is already constitutive of the target.*

**Keywords:** *cultural model, conceptual metaphor, target domain, source domain, concept.*

**Problem statement.** Cognitive linguists have suggested that conceptual metaphors can produce cultural models, that is, a metaphor-based understanding of a domain of experience [7, p. 194]. The example that was given to illustrate this was the TIME IS A MOVING ENTITY metaphor [1]. Indeed, could we understand time without metaphor?

More generally, we should ask what the relationship between metaphors and cultural models is. More specifically, the issue in our context here is whether cultural models for abstract concepts can be literal at all.

**Previous research.** Cognitive linguists argue that our concepts for physical objects such as chairs, balls, water, rocks, forks, dogs, and so on, do not require metaphorical understanding (at least in our everyday conceptual system and for ordinary purposes). In fact, some scholars (especially some cognitive anthropologists) claim that literal cultural models do exist for abstract concepts; that is, they suggest that we can have a primary literal understanding of them [13]. Others, however, claim that cultural models for abstract concepts are inherently metaphorical; that is, they are constituted by metaphor [3; 4; 6; 8; 9].

**The aim of this article** is to prove that cultural models for abstract concepts cannot be literal. I will also argue that in real discourse target domains can indeed select metaphors that are not a part of the conventional application of the source to the target.

**Main body.** Naomi Quinn [13, p. 20] suggests that, contrary to the claim made by George Lakoff and Zoltan Kövecses [9, p.145], metaphors simply reflect cultural models. In contrast, Lakoff and Kövecses claim that metaphors largely constitute the cultural model.

Quinn bases her argument on her analysis of American marriage [12; 13]. On Quinn's view, the American conception of "marriage" can be characterized by a set of expectations: marriage is expected to be shared, mutually beneficial, and lasting [13, p. 67]. In this view, marriage takes over several properties of love, which then come to define it (i.e., marriage). But the question then becomes: Where does the abstract concept of "love" come from? Does it emerge literally or metaphorically? Quinn's answer is straightforward. It emerges literally from certain basic experiences, and then these experiences will structure marriage. The particular basic experiences that Quinn suggests the American conception of "love and marriage" derives from involve early infantile experiences between baby and the first caretaker.

As can be seen, for Quinn, no metaphor is needed for abstract concepts to emerge. The expectational structure of marriage derives from the motivational structure of love, which in turn derives from the basic infantile experience between baby and first caretaker.

If we characterize the essence of marriage, as Quinn does, as a set of expectations that can be viewed as being literal, Quinn's major claim stands: The core of the concept of "marriage" is literal, hence metaphors do not play a constitutive role in its understanding. More generally, abstract concepts such as "marriage" can exist without metaphors that constitute them. This analysis would support the Grounded Literal Emergence view [6, p. 145].

However, I believe that this analysis is incomplete and problematic. The problem is that we cannot take the expectational structure of marriage to be literal. Notice that Quinn's claim is that it is the motivational structure of love (i.e., that we want to be with the person we love, we want mutual need fulfillment, and we want love to be lasting) that provides the expectational structure of marriage. What Quinn does not say is how the concept of "love" itself is structured over and above its motivational structure. We should, therefore, first ask what love is before we discuss its expectational structure. And, ultimately, the question we have to face is whether the structure of the concept of "love" itself is derivable from the basic infantile experiences that Quinn mentions. Can the concept of "love" emerge literally from these basic experiences? My answer is that the basic infantile experiences play an important role in the emergence of the concept but are not sufficient for its detailed characterization. The insufficiency comes from the fact that the infantile experiences lack the detailed content and

structure that characterize the concept of “love” in adults. In other words, the metaphorical source domain has structure and content that is additional to that found in the basic experience.

It can be argued that, first and foremost, marriage is some kind of abstract union between two people. To illustrate this, we can refer to definitions of marriage in some American dictionaries [2; 10; 11]: As these dictionary definitions show, a major component of the concept of “marriage” is the (legal, social, emotional, etc.) union of two people. This seems to be a large part of the notion that is independent of and prior to the expectational structure associated with marriage. In other words, the prototypical, or stereotypical, idea of marriage must include the notion that it is an abstract union of various kinds between two people.

As Quinn suggests, the concept of “marriage” is structured by the mapping of the American cultural conception of “love”. However, she only finds this in the expectational structure of marriage. But now we can see additional structure in marriage that derives from love. This is the notion of unity that involves two people. It is largely the functional unity of two physical parts that serves as the source domain for the abstract target concept of “marriage”. But more generally, our understanding of nonphysicalsocial, legal, emotional, spiritual, psychological, etc. – unions derives from physical or biological unions. This is a perfectly regular way in which human beings conceptualize and, by conceptualizing, also build their nonphysical, abstract world.

In other words, we have the conceptual metaphor NONPHYSICAL (FUNCTIONAL) UNITY IS PHYSICAL (FUNCTIONAL) UNITY. This is the metaphor that underlies the conception of various social, legal, psychological, sexual, political, emotional, and other “unities” and explains the use of such expressions as “to join forces”, “the merging of bodies”, “a union of minds”, and so on. Obviously, the metaphor also applies to marriage as a nonphysical unity between two people. Some examples from the preceding dictionary definitions include “to join in marriage”, “a marriage union”, “the legal union of man and woman”; hence the metaphor MARRIAGE IS A PHYSICAL AND/OR BIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONAL UNITY OF TWO PARTS.

What is the relationship between the idea of MARRIAGE-AS-NONPHYSICAL-UNITY and the expectational structure of marriage that Quinn describes? I suggest that the conception of marriage as a unity between two people is the basis, or the foundation, of its expectational structure, namely, that marriage is expected to be shared, beneficial, and lasting. The reason that marriage is expected to be all these things is that it is conceptualized as a unity of a particular kind: the physical unity of two complementary parts, which yields the metaphor MARRIAGE IS THE PHYSICAL

AND/OR BIOLOGICAL UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS. The details of the unity metaphor for marriage can be given as a set of mappings: the two physical parts → the married people, the physical joining of the parts → the union of the two people in marriage, the physical/biological unity → the marriage union, the physical fit between the parts → the compatibility between the married people, the physical functions of the parts in the unity → the roles the married people play in the relationship, the complementariness of the functions of the parts → the complementariness of the roles of the married people, the whole physical object consisting of the parts → the marriage relationship, the function of the whole object → the role or purpose of the marriage relationship.

What we have here is a source domain in which there are two parts that fit each other and form a whole, where the particular functions of the parts complement one another and the parts make up a larger unity that has a function (or functions). This source schema of a physical unity has parts that are additional to the basic experience between baby and first caretaker. Unlike the infantile experience, here two originally separate parts are joined, or put together; unlike the infantile experience, there is a preexisting fit between the parts; unlike the infantile experience, the whole has a function that is larger than, or goes beyond, the functions of the individual parts. What corresponds to these in the target domain of MARRIAGE is that two separate people who are compatible join each other in marriage with some life goal(s) in mind. It is this structure that appears in the way many people (in America and possibly elsewhere) think about marriage. But this way of conceptualizing marriage is simply a special case of the larger process whereby nonphysical unities in general are constituted on the analogy of more physical ones. It is important to see that the physical unity metaphor characterizes not just “marriage” but many other abstract concepts where the issue of NONPHYSICAL UNION arises, that is, abstract concepts that have “union” as one of their dimensions, or aspects. This dimension of NONPHYSICAL UNION emerges from the content and structure of what was called the source domain of PHYSICAL UNITY (OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS). In this sense, abstract concepts that possess the dimension of NONPHYSICAL UNION can only be metaphorical. This is for the simple reason that this abstract dimension inevitably emerges from the physical source of PHYSICAL UNITY. The application of this simple, constitutive metaphor to marriage is both transparent and important. Its significance lies in the fact that in the concept of marriage NONPHYSICAL UNION is a core dimension.

In Quinn’s view, the basic experiences constitute cultural models (like those of abstract concepts in general and that of the concept of “marriage” in particular) and the cultural models select the fitting conceptual metaphors.

In my view, it is the basic experiences that select the fitting conceptual metaphors and the metaphors constitute the cultural models. As we saw earlier, there are differences between what the basic experiences and what the conceptual metaphors can yield relative to abstract concepts. Basic experiences in themselves could not account for the entire content and structure of the concepts of “love” and “marriage”. The more that is needed is provided by such constitutive metaphors as NONPHYSICAL UNION (IN LOVE AND MARRIAGE) IS PHYSICAL UNITY.

This metaphorically structured understanding of marriage forms a definition of marriage and provides its expectational structure. The definition could be given as follows: “Marriage is a union of two people who are compatible with each other. The two people perform different but complementary roles in the relationship. Their union serves a purpose (or purposes) in life”. This is, of course, a generic-level definition, which can be filled out with specific details in individual cases.

The expectational structure of marriage arises from the definition in the following way:

- Because a part by itself is not functional, people want to share their lives with others in marriage.
- Because only one or some parts fit another part, people want compatible partners in marriage.
- Because (to get a functioning whole) a part must perform its designated function, people want to fulfill their designated roles in a marriage relationship.
- Because wholes have a designated function to perform, marriage relationships must be lasting.

As can be seen, this is similar to Quinn’s expectational structure, although there are also some differences. One difference is that in my characterization compatibility is a mapping in the unity metaphor, while in hers it is a consequence that follows from the expectational structure. Another difference is more substantial. It is that I have given the expectational structure of marriage as a consequence of a certain metaphorical understanding of marriage, one that is based on the metaphor nonphysical unity is physical unity. It is in this sense that we can claim that the concept of “marriage” is metaphorically constituted.

**In sum**, what Quinn calls the expectational structure of marriage results from a certain metaphorical understanding of marriage. Thus, marriage is not a literally conceived abstract concept, although the metaphor that yields the expectational structure is based on certain bodily experiences.

**Conclusions.** A part of our conceptual system consists of abstract concepts that are metaphorically defined. The definition of abstract concepts by means of metaphor takes place automatically and unconsciously.

This is the case when emotions are viewed as forceful entities inside us, when we think of abstract complex systems as growing (= developing), when we define our goals as “goals” (to be reached), and, indeed, when we believe that marriage is some kind of a union. We take these metaphorical “definitions” as givens that are literal. But they are not. There are many concepts like these that are defined or constituted by conceptual metaphors. And they are so constituted unconsciously and without any cognitive effort. Probably it makes sense to believe that this kind of definition of abstract concepts takes place at what Kövecses calls the supra-individual level of conceptualization [5, p. 197]. It is the supra-individual level in the sense that it consists of a static and highly conventionalized system of mappings between physical source and abstract target domains. Because of the automatic and unconscious nature of the mappings, we tend to think of these abstract concepts as literal and believe, as Quinn does, that the literal models of the concepts “select” the appropriate metaphors.

However, having said this, I can suggest that Quinn makes a partially valid point. When we actually use these metaphorically constituted concepts in real discourse, it is often the case that we choose metaphorical expressions that are not constitutive of our understanding of the target concept in question in discourse but that are based on an already-existing metaphorical understanding of a model of a target domain. In other words, we may agree that the way discourse understanding and production works often creates situations in which metaphorical expressions arise from a prior understanding of the target as a (metaphorically constituted but literally taken) cultural model. The further research can focus on some other conceptual metaphors with a rich set of linguistic expressions and their cultural models.

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#### Анотація

#### **Бокун Ірина. Чи можуть культурні моделі абстрактних концептів бути буквальними?**

*Стаття описує взаємовідносини між когнітивними метафорами та культурними моделями. В ній доводиться, що культурні моделі абстрактних концептів не можуть бути буквальними. Автор також доводить, що в реальному дискурсі цільові домени можуть відбирати метафори, які не є частиною конвенціонального застосування джерела до цілі. Відбір метафор є лімітованим, тому що метафори виходять з джерела, яке вже є складовою цілі.*

**Ключові слова:** культурна модель, концептуальна метафора, цільовий домен, вихідний домен, концепт.

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**Алла ЗЯКУН, Юлія ЗЯКУН**

### **“УКРАЇНСЬКЕ ОБЛИЧЧЯ” СУЧАСНИХ МІГРАЦІЙНИХ ПРОЦЕСІВ: ПРАВОВИЙ І СТАТИСТИЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ**

*У статті розглянуто статистичні показники трудової міграції українського населення за останній рік. Виокремлено популярні серед українців сучасні центри тяжіння робочої сили та проаналізовано правове регулювання міграційних процесів в Україні.*

**Ключові слова:** трудова міграція, міграційний процес, міграція.

**Постановка проблеми.** З часу, як Україна здобула незалежність, у країні значно активізувалися міграційні процеси. Проявляються вони в основному у формі міжнародного руху робочої сили. За останні 20 років