

Chapter 1 : Aspects of Cognitive Poetics - Cogprints

Cognitive poetics is a school of literary criticism that applies the principles of cognitive science, particularly cognitive psychology, to the interpretation of literary texts. It has ties to reader-response criticism, and is also closely related to stylistics, whose application to literary study has been most popular in continental Europe.

After a short introductory section, it will present some aspects of Cognitive Poetics, focussed on a few brief case studies. A review of the twentieth-century critical scene may reveal that there are, on the one hand, impressionist critics who indulge in the effects of literary texts, but have difficulties in relating them to their structures. On the other hand, there are analytic and structuralist critics who excel in the description of the structure of literary texts, but it is not always clear what the human significance is of these texts, or how their perceived effects can be accounted for. Cognitive Poetics, as I conceive of it, offers cognitive theories that systematically account for the relationship between the structure of literary texts and their perceived effects. By the same token, it discriminates which reported effects may legitimately be related to the structures in question, and which may not. By appealing to cognitive theories, the critic ensures that the relating of perceived qualities to literary structures is not arbitrary. Thought processes are relatively convergent streams of information that display specific directions, and whose elements are well-defined, compact, tightly organised. Emotional processes are relatively divergent streams of information consisting of similar components, but are more diffused in all respects, are less tightly organised. So, rather than specific directions, they display general tendencies. When you say "My sister is sad", and "The music is sad", you use the word "sad" in two different senses. In the first sentence you refer to some mental process of a person. In the second sentence you do not refer to a mental process of the sound sequence, nor to a mental process it arouses in you. One may be perfectly consistent when saying: You refer to a perceptual quality generated by the interaction of the particular melodic line, rhythm, harmony and timbre of the music. In other words, you report that you have detected some structural resemblance between the sound patterns and emotions. When you say "This poem is sad", you use the adjective in the second sense. In this sense "sad" becomes the aesthetic quality of the music or the poem. Words designate "compact" concepts; even such words as "emotion" or "sadness" are tags used to identify the mental processes, do not convey the stream of information and its diffuse structure. Notwithstanding, some poetry at least is said to display diffuse emotions, vague moods, or varieties of mystic experiences. Furthermore, language is a predominantly sequential activity, of a conspicuously logical character, typically associated with the left cerebral hemisphere; whereas diffuse emotional processes are typically associated with the right cerebral hemisphere Ornstein, Thus, while we can name emotions, language does not appear to be well suited to convey their unique diffuse character. Accordingly, emotional poetry, or mystic poetry ought to be a contradiction in terms. We know that this is not the case. But this presentation of the problem emphasises that we have all too easily accepted what ought not to be taken for granted. The major part of this paper will discuss some ways poetry has found to escape, in the linguistic medium, from the tyranny of clear-cut conceptual categories. The case studies to be presented will illustrate how emotional qualities can be conveyed by poetry; and, as a more extreme instance, how "altered states of consciousness" are displayed by strings of words. One of the key-words in this respect is "precategoryal information"; or, perhaps, "verbal imitation of precategoryal information". Two additional key-words will be "thing-free" and "gestalt-free". Psychologists distinguish "rapid" and "delayed categorisation". Persons who are intolerant of uncertainty or ambiguity may seek rapid categorisation and miss some of the most crucial aesthetic qualities in poetry, including emotional as well as grotesque qualities. The last section of this paper will be devoted to the cognitive foundations of poetic rhythm, and its empirical study. During the past sixty years or so, the word cognition has changed its meaning. Originally, it distinguished the rational from the emotional and impulsive aspect of mental life. Now it is used to refer to all information-processing activities of the brain, ranging from the analysis of immediate stimuli to the organisation of subjective experience. In contemporary terminology, cognition includes such processes and phenomena as perception, memory, attention, problem-solving, language, thinking, and imagery. In the phrase Cognitive Poetics, the term is used

in the latter sense. In the following characterisation of "poetics" Bierwisch has recourse to both poetic structure and perceived effects mentioned above: The actual objects of poetics are the particular regularities that occur in literary texts and that determine the specific effects of poetry; in the final analysis the human ability to produce poetic structures and understand their effect that is, something which one might call poetic competence Bierwisch, I shall illustrate this in a moment, with relation to a Hebrew and an English text. But first let us proceed by mentioning a few central assumptions of Cognitive Poetics. One major assumption of cognitive poetics is that poetry exploits, for aesthetic purposes, cognitive including linguistic processes that were initially evolved for non-aesthetic purposes, just as in evolving linguistic ability, old cognitive and physiological mechanisms were turned to new ends. The reading of poetry involves the modification or, sometimes, the deformation of cognitive processes, and their adaptation for purposes for which they were not originally "devised". In certain extreme but central cases, this modification may become "organised violence against cognitive processes", to paraphrase the famous slogan of Russian Formalism. Quite a few but by no means all central poetic effects are the result of some drastic interference with, or at least delay of, the regular course of cognitive processes, and the exploitation of its effects for aesthetic purposes. In this respect, one should point out that emotions are efficient orientation devices; and that much manneristic poetry is, precisely, poetry of disorientation. The cognitive correlates of poetic processes must be described, then, in three respects: Poetry and Emotional Qualities In the first section of this paper I claimed that language is a highly differentiated logical tool by its very nature, and that it requires special manipulations to convey or evoke with its help lowly-differentiated, diffuse emotional qualities. Cognitive Poetics investigates a variety of ways in which poets overcome this problem. One efficient means for this investigation is to apply to poetry knowledge gained by psychologists concerning the nature of emotions cf. When one attributes some emotional quality to a text, he reports that he has detected some significant structural resemblance between the text and emotions. Thus, a brief discussion of the structure of emotions in the present context is inevitable. Psychologists have discerned the following elements in emotions: Cognitive situation appraisal "cognitive", in the first sense ; 2. Deviation from normal energy level: Diffuse information in a highly activated state that is less differentiated than conceptual information; 4. To play chess, for instance, you must know the possible moves and strategies of the game; but you must also want to win. This wish to win must be active in the back of your mind, but may not usurp the place of your thoughts on the moves and strategies. How sad is the rustling of the reeds! We may make two preliminary observations about this stanza. First, it is only in the fourth line that it names an emotion "sad" ; in the first three lines it describes facts of the landscape that have no explicit emotional contents. In other words, the emotion appears to be there only by way of "telling", not "showing". Intuitively, however, this is not true, and we should attempt to account for this intuition in a systematic way. Second, the four descriptive sentences in the four lines relate to one another in two different ways: The latter relationship is reinforced by the rhyme pattern. The reader is inclined to extract from parallel entities their common ingredients. When the first three lines are read out to students, they abstract from these lines such abstractions as "going down", "decrease of activity". When asked whether this description has any emotional quality, they more often than not suggest the emotional quality "calm". We may recall that emotions are typically associated with some deviation from normal energy level, and that the lowering of energy is typically associated with sadness, depression, or calm. It is only the fourth line that supplies the "cognitive situation appraisal" that is, explicitly settles the uncertainty concerning the character of the situation in which the emotion arises: There is convincing experimental evidence that the superordinate categories of parallel entities is present, simultaneously though subliminally, in active memory. This can be demonstrated with the help of the Stroop test. The Stroop test has revealed an involuntary and subliminal cognitive mechanism of some interest for our present inquiry. In this test, colour names e. If the subject is required to read the word, he has little interference from the ink colour, but if he is required to name the ink colour, he has great difficulty because of interference from the colour name Posner, The findings of this experiment suggested a further study, concerning the automatic activation of superordinates. In this study, subjects were presented with lists of three words which they were to remember. The three words came from the same category e. The subjects were then shown one of the words in the list e. These visually presented words were written in coloured ink.

The subjects were asked to name the colour of the ink as rapidly as possible. Based on the Stroop effect, it was expected that if the word shown to the subject was in activated memory, the subjects would have greater trouble inhibiting a tendency to vocalise the word name. Such a tendency would slow their response to naming the ink colour. The experimental data showed that words from the list "maple", "oak", "elm" and the category name "tree" produced greater interference with colour naming than control words. This study suggests that the category name is activated when a list word is presented, without any requirement to do so Posner, One might perhaps cautiously suggest that the same principle may be extended to ad hoc categories too: Such an assumption, however, requires further experimental testing. The abstractions extracted from parallel entities have considerable adaptation value. As Posner suggested, such abstractions may contribute to a parsimonious hierarchical organisation of semantic memory. One might add that they also facilitate the preservation of such parallel entities in active memory. As suggested above, one major assumption of cognitive poetics is that poetry exploits, for aesthetic purposes, cognitive processes that were initially evolved for non-aesthetic purposes. In the present instance, the abstractions that typically serve to alleviate the load on active memory or contribute to the efficient organisation of semantic memory receive exceptionally strong emphasis and are perceived as aspects of the emotional quality pervading the landscape described. As aspects of the emotional quality pervading the landscape described, such abstractions conform with the description of emotions above: This is how this stanza evokes some diffuse emotion or vague mood. But these are attributed to the physical behaviour of animals and lifeless physical reality, not to human emotions. This, however, seems to bother very few if any poetry readers. They all seem to have acquired the basic convention of "literary competence", formulated by Jonathan Culler as the rule of significance: In gestaltistic terms, emotion becomes a "regional quality", that is, a perceived property of the whole, but not of its parts in this case, going down, sleeping, and ceasing from chatter are not emotions; but as parts of this landscape description, they become an emotional quality, calm or sadness. I have claimed, following Ornstein, that language is a predominantly sequential activity, of a conspicuously logical character, typically associated with the left cerebral hemisphere; whereas diffuse emotional processes are typically associated with the right cerebral hemisphere. I have also mentioned the problem generated by this state of affairs:

Cognitive poetics is a new way of thinking about literature, involving the application of cognitive linguistics and psychology to literary texts. This book is the first introductory text to this growing field.

Cognitive poetics is a tool of literary criticism that applies some elements of cognitive psychology to understanding of literature, and particularly how readers engage with and understand a text. This is our capacity to recognise other entities as having beliefs, perspectives and world views of their own. Somewhere in our earliest childhood we begin to recognise that those around us might be thinking, feeling creatures like ourselves. But how do we know that they are people? And how can we figure out what their individual beliefs and perspectives are? Well, our only real example of what a person is at this point is ourselves. So we begin a process of what is known as mind-modelling. Starting with the assumption that the thing we are interacting with has a mind, we start trying to figure out how that minds works either by collecting external evidence of their beliefs theory-theory or by imagining ourselves as the other person simulation-theory , then comparing the hypothetical person against ourselves to check if they are enough like us to be people. During the process of identifying theorising or imagining simulating person-like qualities we move the subject up and down what cognitive linguistics describes as an empathy scale, ranging from pure abstraction, through plants, machines and animals up to specific people we know well. Ever wonder why the internet is filled with pages of wondering why cats behave so much like us? Well now you know. The first thing to recognise from this is that we have greater empathy with close friends than we do with our neighbour, and even more so than with somebody we have only heard about and never met. The second is that anything we try to model will exist somewhere on this scale, not just people but also, including the dog barking in the middle of the night or the computer that keeps eating your backup files, and many of these things will be more like people to you than actual human beings. This is not a moral question: Your pet cat is almost certainly more of a person to you than a stranger whose name you read in the paper. Cognitive poetics posits that the same is true of characters in literature. Presented with the right signals, we begin to mind-model fictional characters in exactly the same way that we model people in reality. Given enough time, and enough data that we recognise as being the sort of things that people do, then fictional characters can become as real, or even more real, than people we have actually met. An impersonified character in a text can make us laugh or cry, can make us miss them and make us grieve in a fashion that is psychologically as real as the loss of a friend. This, however, can be achieved in only a few sentences – it usually has to be – because as mind-modellers we are used to have to fill up the gaps with ourselves. The meaning in the stories we write steps beyond denotational meaning the dictionary meanings of the words as the reader brings their connotational knowledge – their culture, their experiences, their understanding of what it means to be a person based upon their previous experiences of those things that they have impersonified. This might seem like it makes the process of encouraging impersonification is impossible. After all, so much of what the reader experiences of the text is brought to the text by the reader. Does a smoker experience the text differently from a non-smoker? Will the reader be disappointed if you break that illusion, telling them that the hair was long and not short, that they were a man and not a woman? Just to make things even more difficult, our physical environment impacts how we respond to a text, and a text will change our experience of a physical environment; we read books differently if we are cold or hot, if we are comfortable or uncomfortable; Professor Stockwell even claims juries that sit on hard benches convict more often. Given all these determinative elements that are external to the text, how are we to write in such a way as to encourage someone to believe our characters are people? Direct descriptions of appearance and actions, or speech, or illustrating their thoughts can all work. We are able to pull significance from someone staring out of the window while doing the washing up in the same way in text as we do in real life. But we need to describe the characters doing things that will signify to the reader that they act and think like a real person. As a writer, that probably means going through the same process of mind-modelling with your characters as your reader will. Simulated mind-modelling involves imagining what you would do if you were that person, so you need to indulge in more than a little daydreaming for you characters; you need to think

about these characters enough that they become real people to you as well. Theory mind-modelling involves looking for signs that indicate personhood. Show your characters doing things that you remember other people doing when they felt the way your character feels. Do it well, and this can reach a stage where the character has what is known as portability – the reader becomes able to imagine them having a life of their own existing outside of the book. This ultimate lack of control over an impersonified character is actually a good thing; just like in real life, the reader fleshes your character out with their own personality, beginning with the key movements, actions, things they recognise as actions they might take themselves if they were in that situation. Successful characters must be loved and then set free, for the reader to make their own, for reader to love or hate for themselves. But the particular course I was studying was an example of the extraordinary quality of free, flexible resources available for writers. Professor Stockwell used an excellent series of videos and anecdotes to explore the idea of how we deal with transitions of time and identity. Future Learn offers free online courses from British Universities. Visit the website and you can browse the available courses; the top three today were a course on Kitchen Chemistry from the University of East Anglia, one on Innovation and Enterprise from Loughborough University and another on Community Journalism from Cardiff University.

*Cognitive**Poetics*

'A masterly presentation of the 'cognitive turn' in literary reading and analysis, providing a radical re-evaluation of literary activity. an invaluable.

Peter Stockwell *Cognitive Poetics and Literary Theory* Peter Stockwell Abstract Cognitive poetics, the application of cognitive science to illuminate the study of literary reading, is maturing as a discipline. This paper argues that cognitive poetics is best seen as the latest development in the progressive evolution of stylistics. The endpoint of the process represents the return of rhetoric to the centre of literary scholarship, where it offers an alternative to the purely historiographic paradigm. It is argued that stylistics and cognitive poetics have been successful in providing a descriptive account of how readers construct propositional content from literary reading, but they have only recently turned their attention to a correspondingly rigorous analysis of aesthetics and emotional involvement. The paper surveys recent trends in the field, and argues that the most effective advance in cognitive poetics requires a thorough stylistic grounding to accompany the conceptual theory: The question of whether cognitive poetics has the status of a critical theory or a method is considered. The paper concludes by arguing that cognitive poetics differs from other critical theoretical approaches partly deriving from its interdisciplinary, scientific and empirical base, and partly because of its relationship with those critical theories. Cognitive poetics is and should be a hermeneutic theory with an integral poetic dimension, in order to capture the interaction of meaningfulness and felt experience in literary reading. The re emergence of a cognitive poetics For over two thousand years, the study of literature has broadly fallen into either archaeology or rhetoric in the broadest terms. Though the rhetorical study of literature has dominated the vast majority of this period, the archaeological approach has been the dominant paradigm of the modern phase of literary scholarship over the last century or so. In this approach "the product of the modern and secular university" literary works are investigated as part of cultural history, in order to illuminate the historical moment of production or less commonly reception, or to shed light on historical mindsets, preoccupations, values and practices. Literary scholars engage in textual scholarship and authorial attribution, the editing of manuscripts and the discussion of documentary versions and editions; they also explore intertextual relationships between literary works and the biographies of writers, and even write biographies of literary figures themselves. In all this activity, the literary text itself and the sets of readings which it generates are placed in the service of the historicising enterprise. In this archaeological tradition, I also include those practices in literary study which are primarily concerned with matters of philosophy, theory or meta-linguistic speculation, on the basis that the literary text itself is often adduced only as a piece of data or symbolic artefact dug up for the purpose of advancing the theory in hand. By contrast, the rhetorical tradition focuses on the text as the primary source location for further exploration. The text itself receives most of the attention, and its internal patterning and performative effects are the main area of interest. This is not to say that the classical rhetorical approach neglected the social, cultural or historical environment. Early tripartite divisions of rhetoric by Aristotle see , among others, placed equal emphasis on the status and authority of the speaker ethos and his empathetic and emotional disposition pathos as on the rationality and logical organisation of the words and patterns themselves logos. Later post-Renaissance revisions in rhetoric continued to lay as much emphasis on the status and authority of the speaker and the disposition of the audience as on the tropes and organisation within the text itself. Over the past century or so, the rhetorical tradition has persisted in several different manifestations, mainly and most prominently in stylistics and poetics, deriving directly from elocutio. Though even the Russian Formalists were never as formalist as their detractors suggested, the focus on style and linguistic organisation in the first half of the twentieth century helped to place an emphasis on structural patterns divorced from much human interaction. The human production and reception which concerned earlier rhetorical studies were downgraded; at the same time, the emotional dimension fell out of favour too. As Bloomfieldian structural linguistics developed increasingly sophisticated analytical techniques, and Anglo-American literary criticism aimed only to look at the text itself, the descendants of the rhetorical

tradition focused on textual analysis. The recent and most persistent manifestation of the rhetorical enterprise is represented by the field of stylistics. British stylisticians were particularly prominent in these early years Leech ; Widdowson ; Leech and Short , though it is an irony of the field that stylistics has been hugely influential in English-language teaching locations around the world and has been until recently relatively marginalised in university literature departments in the UK itself. This is largely because stylisticians allied themselves with educationalists and applied linguists while their literary colleagues were increasingly becoming interested in literary theory in its own right. The practical aspect of stylistic practice has meant that it has been well-funded as part of English-language teaching, and has also meant that stylisticians have tended to avoid major theoretical statements of their methodological practices. This particular aversion to theory might also be seen as being rather British. Stylistics has developed over the last forty years as techniques in applied linguistics have developed, and the general trend has been away from formalism towards a more contextualised stylistics see Verdonk ; Verdonk and Weber ; Bex, Burke and Stockwell I am arguing that, in this process, stylistics has been reconnecting more fully with the older and longstanding rhetorical tradition. For example, advances in pragmatics in the s and text linguistics in the s were adopted in stylistics to enable researchers to investigate extended prose fiction and even drama more readily. Further progress in discourse analysis and sociolinguistics filtered into stylistics similarly. Most recently, the refinement of techniques in computational and corpus linguistics has enabled stylistics to engage in empirical research that was previously impractical. And the development of cognitive poetics has brought a psychological and sociocultural dimension to stylistics. This last development, I argue, completes the evolution of stylistics into a fully-fledged form of rhetoric once again. It can certainly be seen as a restoration of a rich version of rhetoric, though of course there are important innovations which make it more than simply a recycling of old ideas or a conservative project. Indeed, one of the main contributions of cognitive linguistics has been in demonstrating the provisionality and conceptual dependency of the human system of categorisation itself. Tsur was interested in drawing on neuroscience and the emerging cognitive science in order to develop a theory of poetic reading. The field expanded in the late s, driven by interest from literary scholars particularly stylisticians in conceptual metaphor, figure and ground, and schema- and world-theories. These offered several useful insights into matters of central literary-critical importance. Conceptual metaphor theory suggested new ways of examining creative language in poetry and ways of understanding extended metaphors and thematics in longer prose fiction. The work on figure and ground had obvious applications for understanding literary foregrounding, significance, deviance and value. Schema theory and various theories of world-building offered ways in which fictional worlds and performed poetic personas could be better understood. Schema theory, possible worlds theory and text world theory all suggested various ways to explain the fact that interpretative communities could share roughly consensual readings at the same time as individual readers could hold varying interpretations. For all these aspects of the enterprise, see Stockwell a. Cognitive poetics draws on cognitive science, particularly cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology, though some work in neuroscience and medical work on perception and sensation has also featured. Correspondingly, the approach rests on the same three key principles from cognitive science: The consequences of these three principles for cognitive poetics as a literary theory will be discussed later in this paper. Some of the early work in cognitive poetics has attracted the attention of literary scholars in offering a means of moving on from a critical practice that had, for many, become overly theorised and removed both from the literary work and the sorts of readings engaged in outside the academy. Just as stylistics brings literary-critical tools which have, to a certain extent, been developed and validated outside the discipline in linguistics, so cognitive poetics brought insights which were independently originated. The source interdisciplinarity of cognitive poetics means that it is fundamentally a form of comparative study. In short, we do not require a special theory of literature, just a theory of language. See Gavins and Steen , pp. From its fairly recent origins, cognitive poetics is becoming more widely influential, and the range of its different aspects is increasing correspondingly. The main introduction to the field Stockwell a set out the micrological dimensions of cognitive poetics first, including figure and ground, prototypes, deixis and cognitive grammar, followed by the macrological dimensions of schema poetics, possible worlds, mental spaces, conceptual metaphor and parable, text world theory and models of global

comprehension. These aspects provide a means of exploring literary critical issues such as deviance, defamiliarisation, literariness, creativity, genre, intertextuality, mind-style, parody, periodisation, canonisation, point of view, characterisation, narrative, perspective, voice, fictionality, allegory, symbol, tone, archetypes, theme, plot and so on. All of these innovations and extensions serve to enrich the toolkit for literary linguists. However, at a major conference involving stylisticians and literary theorists at the University of Helsinki in published as Veivo, Petterson and Polvinen , it was generally observed that most of these early advances in the field were concerned mainly with meaningfulness. That is, they were primarily concerned with the propositional effects of literature on readers, rather than treating aesthetics, emotional motivations and effects, ethics and cultural value. The conference was an important corrective for cognitive poetics, and its effects are being felt in current developments in the discipline. Current developments in cognitive poetics Stylistics in general over its half-century history has proven itself pretty adept at accounting for literary meanings. However, it is surprising, given the focus of stylistics on literary texture, that the discipline is not nearly so advanced in accounting for aesthetic effects. As mentioned above, early cognitive poetics persisted in this emphasis, such that the focus of work in the field has until recently been on explaining meaning and interpretation, accounting for what readers know at different points in a narrative, how we keep track of shifts in perspective, how we re-interpret back through texts when it becomes apparent that we have either misread something or been deliberately sent down a false interpretive track in order to generate a shock or a defamiliarising surprise. However, cognitive poetic innovations within stylistics finally offer the potential for engaging with several aspects of literary reading that are wholly or partly non-propositional in nature. A list of these areas, with a brief discussion, follows. Possible worlds semantics in the mid-twentieth century aimed at an account of truth and falsity judgements for propositional utterances. The application of possible worlds theory in the 4 literary domain was especially fruitful in relation to discussions of the ontological status of fictional worlds and the characters that inhabited them, and the evaluation of the significance for our actual world when possible fictions were compared with reality see Allen ; Ryan ; Semino However, analysis tended to restrict itself to these questions, and favourite genres for investigation remained those where ontology was a major thematic concern: The experience of literary reading, however, clearly features a sense of a richly textured world, invoked by the text which in itself underdetermines the complexity of the sort of mental representation which readers are easily observed building. This is an extension of early cognitive linguistic work on conceptual metaphor which was criticised for being too reductive and propositionally restrictive. Other metaphors which flow from this or might be connected with it include the sense that being at home is safe and healthy, being physically well is perceived as wholeness, centredness, stasis or balance. Extensions of the metaphor might include the xenophobic view that home is safe and foreign parts are unhealthy, or even that foreigners are a threat, and bring problems of unemployment and crime which are figured as diseases of society. Here, society is figured as a body that is ill, and illness structured by the original conceptual metaphor again is understood as brokenness and displacement or removal. However, it seems to be the case, even in fairly plain metaphors like this and even more so with creative, novel, poetic metaphors , that the source notion of ILLNESS is also altered by the encounter with the metaphor. Being ill is also figured in terms of displacement, as well as the other way round. This became most apparent when expressive literary examples were explored. This can be illustrated by exploring my example of a conceptual metaphor from a real literary work. A polio spider abseils the drop from the sink to the bath. Larium country â€” this far south to broaden the mind. Look, learn, rise to the day, throw back the blind: In a puff of chalk a yellow-fever moth collides and detonates against the window frame. Malaria witters and whines in the radio waves. A warm diphtherial breeze unsettles the pool. As with most real instances of figurative language in context, several related metaphoric mappings are threaded together involving, in this case, intersections with engines and bombs. In a blending account, all of these would form part of the emergent logic of the blended space. Furthermore, in my experience of discussing the poem, most people who have read or heard this passage find that it persists in the memory and is invoked whenever foreign travel or illness is mentioned. In other words, the blend persists and becomes assimilated into personal experience. The literary encounter alters perception somewhat permanently and has a resonance beyond a simple bald explanatory denotation. An even more detailed and rich account of

this can be provided by text world theory Werth ; Gavins , which takes the potential offered by a world-frame approach and embeds it into a discourse-based theory. Text world theory asserts that the decision as to what readerly information is drawn down as being relevant is a matter of text-drivenness; it neatly squares the circle between the underdetermination of the linguistic surface and the richness of the readerly experience by setting out the principles by which a world is enriched and experienced emotionally in the process of reading. For example, British readers are likely to build a strong counterpart relationship between themselves and the poetic persona which the poem encourages with its imperative second person voice , and thus identify and empathise with the paranoia presented here. My point here is that such world-based models go beyond a simple propositional account and start to draw in considerations of felt experience, empathy, identification, atmosphere and impact. These are all dimensions that are a crucial part of the literary reading experience, but they have not really been systematically addressed until recent and forthcoming cognitive poetic work. Traditional stylistics, being a text-based discipline, has focused almost exclusively on poetry and prose rather than drama. Where theatre, television and cinema were explored, the object of analysis has been the playtext rather than the performance. There are, of course, very obvious reasons for this, in terms of the relative stability and accessibility of the playtext for analysis, and the practice has been reasonably justified on the basis that the playtext is a form of idealisation of the dramatic event which is analogous to the idealisation of the reader in much literary criticism see Short ; Culpeper, Short and Verdonk With developments in discourse and conversation analysis, and ethnomethodological techniques in sociolinguistics in the early s, stylisticians turned their hands to the analysis of drama, with “ it must be said “ patchy success. Part of the problem with models drawn from pragmatics is the role played in such theories by intentionality and co-operativeness, which is rendered much more complex when the interlocutors are actors pretending to utter speech acts, pretending to interrupt each other, pretending to exploit the power effects of politeness strategies, and pretending to gather knowledge and develop as characters in front of the eyes of an audience which does not share their ontological status. Occasionally, the treatment of the playtext as a sociolinguistic transcript led to some nonsensical conclusions and theoretical naiveties see Herman

Chapter 4 : Cognitive Poetics and Future Learn - About Writing

The chapters in Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction and Cognitive Poetics in Practice on literature as parable bring together all the concepts from previous chapters to describe how meaning is made of whole texts.

Samuel Richardson and the Project of Poetic Justice 3. Altruistic Punishers in B-Hall 3. The Trials of Clarissa 4. Poetic Justice at the Limits Chapter 5: Ann Radcliffe and the Abdication of the Superpunisher 5. The Unities Chapter 6: The Best Possible Storyworld: Where the Bodies Are 8. The Female Quixote and the Probability of Romance The Querelle de Miss Groves The Predictable Novel Love, Duty and the End of Curiosity Conclusion: She is a specialist in cognitive approaches to literature and narratology. She has published on comics and graphic novels Contemporary Comics Storytelling, , embodied and probabilistic cognitive approaches to literary narrative, as well as on the eighteenth-century novel. A Prehistory of Cognitive Poetics Neoclassicism and the Novel Cognition and Poetics Reviews and Awards "The book radiates from a vigorous hypothesis, that of a kinship between eighteenth-century neoclassical poetics and present-day cognitive poetics. Karin Kukkonen, whose solid background in contemporary literary theory and textual criticism is indisputable, substantiates her persuasive argument with a wealth of case studies from eighteenth-century English and French novels. The bringing together of neoclassical poetics, the emergent novel and modern cognitive poetics proves to be a winning strategy for extending our knowledge of eighteenth century literature and culture. A state-of-the-art study which recalibrates both the history of the novel and the understanding of poetics as a cognitive discipline. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty. It argues that European neoclassicist literary theory was an early incarnation of present-day cognitive poetics, that the rules governing a given literary genre during a definite historical period, in this case seventeenth and eighteenth-century neoclassicist poetics of drama, were equally applied to other genres, and that, consequently, the eighteenth-century English literary wave called " -Thomas Pavel, Modern Philology A Prehistory of Cognitive Poetics Neoclassicism and the Novel.

Chapter 5 : Cognitive Poetics in Practice by Gerard J. Steen

Cognitive Poetics, as I conceive of it, offers cognitive theories that systematically account for the relationship between the structure of literary texts and their perceived effects. By the same token, it discriminates which reported effects may legitimately be related to the structures in question, and which may not.

This chapter, like the previous chapter on parable, is more complex than the beginning chapters because these methods and approaches incorporate the foundational concepts previously introduced to expand the range and depth of the cognitive poetic analysis. For example, text world theory is similar to possible worlds theory described in the chapter on Discourse worlds and mental spaces, but text world theory is more thoroughly rooted in the cognitive approach and is generally applicable to longer texts. Possible worlds and mental spaces offer a way of explaining the process a reader uses to interpret literature. Cognitive poetic analysis using possible worlds theory is limited to generalized statements about texts that describe setting and analyze characters. Mental space theory can extend possible worlds theory by describing the cognitive means by which readers track these possible worlds. But possible worlds theory is a philosophical conceptualization that models knowledge as a formal logical set rather than using a cognitive model of information. In text world theory, a text world is constructed as a consequence of reader? In other words, text worlds are what readers build in their minds using the material of the text. Text world theory offers a finer, more detailed text analysis, as well as a fundamentally cognitive explanation for how reading is a process of world building. It is broader in scope than possible worlds theory in that the top level of the text world theory is the discourse world, a language event that includes all the immediate situation in which the text is read. The discourse world, as modeled in text world theory, includes two or more participants. Participants bring all their memories, intentions, knowledge, and motivations to the language event. The next level down is the text world, which can be divided into two types of components: Below the text world are levels of sub-worlds that can extend indefinitely. Changes in focalizing, location, time, etc. Although the top level discourse world potentially includes every aspect of the reader? The concept of Common Ground directly links aspects of the discourse world to the text world. Agreement is implicit between discourse participants on elements included in the Common Ground. Disagreement at this level would cause a breakdown in communication leading to misunderstanding, absurdity, or incoherence. These elements and propositions are directly linked to the words and phrases in the text. WBEs provide detail of location, time, objects, and characters. FAPs introduce motivation, action, and argument to the text world. The same cognitive mechanisms used to organize the information in the actual world, such as prototypes, scripts, schemas and cognitive metaphors, are used to organize WBEs and FAPs that build the text world. To accommodate the richness and subtlety that can be expressed in literature, the text world includes sub-worlds with the same basic structure as the text world. Flashbacks, points-of-view, hypotheticals are all sub-worlds. Joanna Gavins writes in *Cognitive Poetics in Practice* that a typical cognitive poetical analysis using the methodology of text world theory begins at the level of the discourse world where participants are engaged in a language event. She continues from the discourse world to the construction of the text world or mental representation by the participants. Gavins applies the methodology to an analysis of Donald Barthelme? She concludes by suggesting that although some readers may be put off by the complexity generated by an uncooperative author, for many readers the complexity is what attracts them to the text. A similar conclusion about the aesthetic pleasure of complexity was arrived at by the author of a paper I read several years ago which also used text world theory. *Movie Scripts* proposes at least three types of text structure: Her claim is that the Textual World?? What she identifies as the superstructure correlates with sub-worlds within the text world, or rather with how sub-worlds are structured in the text. She makes the interesting observations that what is generally remembered by readers is textual world structure and not the superstructure but that a disjunction between textual world structure and superstructure is aesthetically appealing. Peter Stockwell provides three short examples of cognitive poetic analysis using text world theory. *Campbell*, a pulp SF novel. What he finds is that for *Birdsong*, the FAPs in the text world are mostly relational and descriptive, with action driven FAPs occurring in sub-worlds. While

the contrast between the styles of two novels is a useful exercise for elucidating the technique of text world theory, similar conclusions could be drawn from a variety of analytical techniques. Stockwell ends the chapter with a cognitive analysis of a poem by John Keats that does provide some unique insights specifically based on the sub-worlds of the poem. First, Stockwell comments on the fact that *When I have Fears* is written in such a way as to have a clear discourse world and clear sub-worlds, but no actual text world. He proposes borrowing a technique from deictic shift theory so that movement between sub-worlds can be described as world-switches along a nested hierarchy. So then, the phrases: *Then on the shore?* Furthermore, the final line: *Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.*? The two different readings lead to unique interpretations of the poem, one stoical and the other despairing.

Chapter 6 : Project MUSE - Cognitive Poetics in Practice (review)

Cognitive poetics is a developing epistemological movement in literary and media studies that takes stock of this theoretical shift, and exploits the new intellectual resources that this paradigm affords to study, understand, and explain literary texts as well as other forms of esthetic productions.

Four equestrians galloped up the drive and after them came two open carriages. Fluttering veils and waving plumes filled the vehicles. Two of the cavaliers were young, dashing looking gentleman. The third was Mr. Rochester on his black horse Mesera. Pilot bounding before him? From this description I form a perception, which not only includes the image of guests arriving at the mansion but also the perspective that frames the scene: Jane Eyre watching from a high window. Many details are quickly disregarded, such as the specific number of riders and carriages, even before the description concludes. Rather than a specific number of guests, my perception is of more than one, several, or a crowd of guests. Other facts linger, such as Miss Ingram? I share the main character? But within a few more pages some of these details also fade. Of the facts picked out from the text and not deleted I begin to form generalizations about Mr. Also, because the whole scene is framed in Jane Eyre? These generalizations combine with my sociocultural knowledge and beliefs of 19th century England as well as my opinions on class and gender as I build a macrostructure, which is my reading of Jane Eyre. Application of these five macrorules is not linear or unidirectional. Even citation, direct recall of specific text, can vary between readers. The facts I pick out and notice will differ from the facts another reader or I myself upon re-reading may pick out from the same textbase. This nonlinear, multidirectional relationship between the facts microstructure and meaning macrostructure of the text is what literature as parable describes. In *Cognitive Poetics in Practice*, Michael Burke applies aspects of blending theory to explain how multiple input spaces macrorules blend to create new spaces that do not have a direct relation to the original input spaces. These blended spaces are also input spaces: Three phases of blending composition, completion, and elaboration can extend the blending for as long as a reader is interested. A parable, religious or otherwise, works on the reader to alter ways of perceiving and thinking about the world. Michael Burke uses the example of a biblical parable from Mathew 20 that tells of workers in a vineyard who are rewarded evenly regardless of how much work they performed. A narrative does not have to be explicitly didactic to be read as a parable, though. The assumption made in treating literature as a parable is that a change occurs in the reader as a consequence of reading. The allure of this assumption is strong because it fits well with my own experience as a reader and supports my motivation as a writer. But having recently read *Empathy and the Novel* by Suzanne Keen, I have a healthy doubt of extrapolating this assumption too far. Keen highlights the lack of strong evidence to support most extravagant claims about the salutary effects of reading. However, the claim Stockwell and Burke make about reading does not extrapolate but interpolates deeper into the dynamic process of reading. Parable is a cognitive process that constructs meaning in the real-world, not only literary texts. Parabolic projection is a cognitive blend with input spaces that are mapped onto generic spaces. Parabolic reading is how human beings experience and make meaning of the world using various conceptual tools. Burke makes a case study of Shakespeare? He identifies a main conceptual metaphor: Continuing to re-read the sonnet, Burke identifies two more conceptual metaphors: The field of meaning is constrained to the text but is not limited by it. The only limit to meaning is the amount of attention the reader is able and willing to give. Burke is self-conscious of how meaning is made and remade while engaging with the text. At times he seems to be engaged in free-association, but he returns to the text after each new turn, not only to ground his reading but also to gather more associations. In his summary he admits that he could have made entirely different connections with equally valid conceptual metaphors. The purpose of parabolic reading is to show that meaning making is multi-directional and expansive, not to find the true or correct meaning. Stockwell also provides a case study, a parabolic analysis of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. His analysis sticks close to one central concept: But Stockwell allows for multiple subdivisions of that metaphor, and he reinterprets the nature of the text itself as a fairytale, a moral fable, a romance, and possibly a satire. There seems to be no end to the creative process of making meaning, a process in which conclusions reverse back to alter the nature of

premises. In *Cognitive Poetics in Practice*, Michael Burke compares the medieval conception of meaning to principles of cognitive poetics: Cognitive poetics establishes prototypes and blends, which do not have the feel of solid answers. Although I am drawn to this open-ended approach, my confidence was tested while treading the shifting spaces of parabolic reading. How far do I trust my own interpretation of my own reading? One of the study questions at the end of *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* is to? I chose Herman Melville? At sometime I will share my notes from this exercise here. Identifying the main conceptual structures was not difficult and re-reading Melville with close attention was a delight. But the connections I made between the conceptual metaphors and the global construction feel tenuous. I know I could have drawn entirely different conclusions and made altogether different connections. Texts are not like mathematical functions with a fixed output associated with each input. A text generates multiple and various meanings for each reader, meanings that change even before a reader has completely read the text. The cognitive poetic approach to literature as parable promises an approach that is systematic and allows multiplicity and contradiction. I want to write stories that enthrall readers to the point that their perception of the world around them changes. As a reader, I? But the text is only one input space among many input spaces that go into the cognitive blend that shapes my reading experience. Stockwell and Burke offer insights to how readers use the textbase to create a macrostructure. The explanation provided by cognitive poetics goes beyond the basic platitudes that bombard anyone trying to become a better writer, such as? Instead of mundane advice, cognitive poetics offers a description of the reading process that contributes to the construction of meaning. The goal is to include sufficient details in the text to allow the reader to construct a meaningful world. The world of the text is necessarily incomplete. If not, then what would the reader do? Writing is as much about what you don? In visual art this idea is called negative space. I am practicing how to track the dynamic process of reading and make connections between conceptual metaphors and global construction of meaning. I am able to recognize connections in my own writing. At least half of writing is reading to revise. Recognizing false triggers, those that a reader may use to activate unrelated blends, will enhance my revisions. I will also look for details to include in the text that suggest specific blending space. Allusions or certain styles of prose can activate intertextual blends. A setting may activate schemas that function as input spaces to enrich cognitive blends. Literature as parable has clarified aspects of the revision process for me which will help me revise more thoroughly and efficiently.

Chapter 7 : Cognitive poetics - Wikipedia

Cognitive Poetics and Literary Theory Peter Stockwell Abstract Cognitive poetics, the application of cognitive science to illuminate the study of literary reading, is maturing as a discipline. This paper argues that cognitive poetics is best seen as the latest development in the progressive evolution of stylistics.

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Chapter 8 : Cognitive Poetics: Literature as Parable « The Big Idea

Cognitive Poetics: Text World Theory I am continuing my response to Peter Stockwell's Cognitive Poetics and Cognitive Poetics in Practice edited by Joanna Gavins and Gerard Steen with an overview of text world theory.

Chapter 9 : Reuven Tsur - Wikipedia

Cognitive poetics as I conceive of it is a far cry from what goes nowadays under the label "cognitive linguistics". Cognitive linguistics does not ask the questions this paper asks; consequently it does not answer them.