Language and Literature

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Book Review: Metaphor by David Punter, 2007. London and New York: Routledge, pp. vii + 158. ISBN 978 0 415 28165 2 (hbk), 078 0 415 28166 9 (pbk), 978 0 203 96588 7 (ebk)

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Language and Literature 2009; 18; 78
DOI: 10.1177/0963947009018001060 2

chapters. It would be most useful as a textbook in a history-of-English course taught with a heavy linguistics focus, but it might need to be supplemented by additional readings or by Old and Middle English grammatical material. Its strength is that while it celebrates the English language in all its variety, through all its tumultuous history, and across all its worldwide incarnations, it presents a balanced and objective perspective on a language that still faces genuine insecurity about the nature of its place in a changing world.

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The underlying thesis of Punter's *Metaphor* is that metaphor (derived from the Greek *metaphora*, 'transference') is integral to language – be it literary or non-literary – because the transfer of sense between two things is everywhere at work in language. The main body of Punter's book consists of nine chapters, each of which deals with an issue meant to shed light on this thesis. The nine chapters can be roughly divided into two categories, according to Punter's view of metaphor as a 'dialectic of similarity and difference' (p. 88): the first three chapters focus on situations wherein similarity is foregrounded, and the rest on situations wherein difference gains prominence.

Chapter 1 centres on the borderline between the two important traditions in the history of metaphor: 'metaphor as adornment' and 'metaphor as the basic structure of language' (p. 11). Chapter 2 is devoted to a discussion of the distinction between Western and Eastern metaphor in poetry in terms of the search for correspondences between the human and the natural. In the third chapter, Punter exposes to sight public uses of metaphor – both verbal and visual – as 'a way of gaining and securing power' (p. 47). Chapter 4 is concerned with the ways in which a text – notably a postmodern text – draws attention to its own textuality and thereby turns itself into a metaphor for something unwritten, an incarnation of something not printed on the page. The fifth and sixth chapters deal with the relation of metaphor to psychoanalysis. In Chapter 5, Punter brings forth the idea of '*metaphor towards nowhere*' (p. 78), a type of metaphor which, instead of persuading us that 'X is like Y' as in conventional metaphor, confronts us with the lack of real likenesses, a condition of nonsense. This type of metaphor functions like the act of dream which '*undermines* our

"dayworld" sense that the world is as it is' and thus sharpens our awareness of the fact that 'we make sense of the world only by perceiving likenesses and differences between things and other things' (p. 81).

The interdependence between similarity and difference that metaphor asserts, Punter argues in Chapter 6, forms an important way of understanding the quality of the uncanny, namely, that which destabilizes the cognitive border between the familiar and the unfamiliar, between the self and the other. In Chapter 7, metaphor as a fusion of similarity and difference leads us to the issue of 'untranslatability' in relation to deconstruction: 'metaphors are not universals' (p. 104); they are formed in a certain cultural sphere and thus carry within themselves a cultural *différance* that leads to the unstable nature of their signification. Chapter 8 demonstrates the ways in which postcolonial writers reshape existing Western metaphors to disclose *other* perspectives: e.g. by appropriating Yeats's line 'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold' ('The Second Coming'), Achebe in his novel *Things Fall Apart* coerces the reader to re-evaluate the notion of 'the centre' from an African point of view. In Chapter 9, Punter spells out how writers – especially (post)modern writers – 'let metaphors have or appear to have a life of their own' (p. 130) by empowering words to exceed their station or calling attention to themselves.

Throughout his book, Punter carefully illustrates his arguments with examples ranging from literary texts (both Western and Eastern) to newspaper articles to advertisements to critical theories (both classical and contemporary); as such, he makes his book one of the most comprehensive and in-depth introductory monographs on the concept of metaphor in print. However, he fails to attend to several points that are crucial to his discussion of metaphor.

First, according to Punter, there are two traditions – between which the Romantic Age serves as the watershed – in the history of metaphor: the roles of metaphor as decorative and as constitutive. In the first tradition, Punter suggests that the literal is designed to be transparent so as to enable the reader to look straight through it into the figurative. By contrast, in the second tradition, which emerges 'perhaps most decisively with the romantic poets' (p. 15) the literal is no longer transparent but is meant to be soldered together with the figurative in the reader's mind. The first tradition, Punter stresses, begins with Aristotle's concept of metaphor in the *Poetics* – the discovery of the similarity in the dissimilars – which carries within itself the primacy of similarity to direct the reader's attention away from the literal towards the figurative. Punter, however, ignores the fact that Aristotle's theory of metaphor in relation to *energeia* ('liveliness') in the third book of the *Rhetoric* serves as the prototype of the simultaneous perception of the literal and the figurative in the reader's mind. Aristotle encourages orators to make 'your hearers *see* things' in order to affect and surprise them by 'using [metaphorical] expressions that represent things as in a state of activity' (Aristotle, 1984: 1411b, 190). In the expression 'with his vigour in full bloom', for instance, the literal and the figurative operate together to allow hearers to *see* the idea of a person being in full vigour. Baroque poets develop to the full this Aristotelian theory of metaphor in their pursuit of graphically marvellous metaphors (Mazzeo, 1964: 30) and thereby pave the way for Romantic poets to convey the literal and the figurative simultaneously.

Second, Punter's examination of the distinction between Western and Eastern metaphor is perhaps the most unique contribution of his book, since it is very rare that (Western) authors of introductory books on metaphor are willing or able to elaborate on such an issue. Universal correspondences, Punter explains, are common to, say, both English and Chinese metaphor. Nevertheless, universal correspondences are, for English poets (such as the Metaphysical poets), the great vehicle for forging ingenious or marvellous metaphors,

namely, demonstrating human originality; by contrast, universal correspondences are employed by classical Chinese poets to produce metaphors which 'show that there is a *convergence* between' the human and the natural (Punter, p. 35). I agree with Punter's observations; nonetheless, behind such a convergence, I want to add, lies the Daoist/Taoist notion of the harmony between man and Nature, or rather, of losing oneself in the flux of natural events, the Way (Dao/Tao). As Laozi (or Lao-Tzu) writes in Chapter 25 of *Daodejing* (or *Tao Te Ching*), 'People model themselves on the Earth. / The Earth models itself on Heaven. / Heaven models itself on the Way. / The Way models itself on what is natural' (Laozi, 2002: 25). To follow what is natural is to avoid imposing one's individuality upon Nature: Taoist-orientated 'Chinese poets would not force the perspective of the ego upon Phenomenon. This is most obvious in Chinese landscape painting in which' the lack of perspective signifies 'the artist having become the objects in Phenomenon' (Yip, 1997: 12–13).

Third, taking a cue from Derrida's idea of *différance*, Punter makes the point that cultural difference makes impossible a full translation (i.e. interpretation) of a metaphor. In Derrida, *différance* is derived from *différer*, which means both 'to differ' ('spacing') and 'to defer' ('temporalization') (Derrida, 1982: 8). It is fair to say that in the context of translation/interpretation, *différance* contains both cultural difference and historical distance. Punter, however, focuses only on how cultural dissimilarity or otherness results in the impossibility of a complete translation/interpretation of a metaphor. It should be noted that historical or temporal distance plays a no less critical role in this matter. '*Understanding*', as Gadamer reckons, '*is*, *essentially*, *a historically effected event*' (Gadamer, 1994: 300). That is to say, it is impossible to stand outside one's historical horizon and transpose oneself completely into the spirit of a certain age or text; one's understanding of it, so to speak, is always already affected by one's historical horizon. As such, 'the discovery of the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process' (p. 298). Simply put, it is *ad infinitum* deferred because of the historical distance between the text or artwork and its interpreter.

Overall, Punter's book is an important addition to the current scholarship on the study of metaphor. The considerably wide gamut of its critical itinerary will allow students of metaphor to have different viewpoints of the idea of metaphor; also, they will learn from Punter how to carefully execute arguments.

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