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Cognitive Allegory

To study allegory is to study a fascinating range of unique historical contexts and transformations. These contexts and transformations however can only be understood in the light of the constants of human cognition.

—Peter Crisp (2005, p. 337)

Introduction

Allegory (or, shortly, *allegoresis*), as a mode of understanding, is deeply cognitive. That is a dense, ramified claim, which we can do little more than wave at in this introduction. But that claim is more than justified by the rich set of papers in this special issue, and the

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basic insights which both inform that claim and motivate this issue are straightforward enough. They are: (1) analogic operations and affinities, increasingly (but for rhetoricians erroneously) lumped under the groaningly capacious term, *metaphor*, have been fundamental to cognitive research for decades, if not centuries, if not millennia, depending on how broadly one construes *cognitive*; and (2) allegory is a discursive mode, a genre, predicated on the duality of analogic operations, chiefly in matters of agency (through personification), space (through topification), and time (through narrative—which in turn activates agency, via character and point of view; and space, via setting). Since *Metaphor & Symbol* has a growing readership from literary, rhetorical, psychological, and philosophical backgrounds—which is precisely reflected by the backgrounds of our contributors—there is some inevitable redundancy in the overview that follows. But we happily risk a few different patches of boredom here and there for these different constituencies, in order to ground the composite audience by sketching the basic characteristics of allegory, the literary and rhetorical instantiations of those characteristics in terms of genre, and the related areas of cognition. In the process we aim to bridge some disciplinary gaps, to prime the relevant vocabulary, and to adumbrate the ways in which our contributors advance knowledge of the ways in which our minds resonate to allegory, as a mode of understanding ourselves and other agents in space and time.

Allegory

*[B]eneath no small number of the fables of the ancient poets there lay
from the very beginning a mystery and an allegory*

—Francis Bacon (1905 [1609], p. 822)

Allegory enters the literary/rhetorical/philosophical record already as duality (cf. Roberts’s gloss in Demetrius 1902, p. 264): equally a critical practice (duality of interpretation) and an authorial move (intention of duality). In various polemical fragments dated to the first century BCE, Philodemus of Gadara, an Epicurean, ranted against the *allegoresis* of stoic philosopher-critics, who “rave like lunatics” and “Bacchant revellers,” exhibiting their “total insanity,” in attempts to read layers of

meaning under the literal skin of Homer (*On Piety* I.19, pp. 518-41). And, at roughly the same time, Cicero references *allegoria* as a genre, a “kind of speech,” built from “metaphors in a continuous stream” (*Orator* 94).¹ Taking our lead from these uses (and following Maureen Quilligan 1979, p. 25f), we will term the critical practice and the authorial move, *allegoresis*, the kind of speech, *allegory*.

Rhetoricians may object to this displacement. For Cicero and the ad Herennium author and much of the rhetorical tradition, allegory is certainly a figure of speech. But as such, it is enmeshed in a complex history of theory and practice implicating a range of other figures—including metaphor (in all its forms), simile, conceit, analogy, parable, fable, and so on. Figures in this tradition are not, as they are so often represented by cognitive linguists, mere devices. They are rich and various communicative moves, in ordinary language as well as oratory and literature. Some are schemes, such as antimetabole (“I meant what I said and I said what I meant”), some are tropes, such as synecdoche (“Lend me your ears”), some are largely pragmatic, such as erotema (aka, rhetorical question, as in “Do you think I’m a chump?”), some are strategies, such as prolepsis (heading off a counter-argument, as in “You may object that I am not a doctor, but you don’t need a doctor”), and some, like allegory, as Susenbrotus put it, “occup[y] the whole discourse” (1953 [c1540], 13). That is, they are best understood as genres, if not in the context of the early definitions then certainly retrospectively, through the history of discursive formations.²

¹ Among the most prominent related words are *hyponoia* (‘undermeaning’), the common term for Homeric exegesis in the Greek tradition (cf. Thiselton 2009, 72), and *permutatio*, one of the canonical tropes of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, defined as “a manner of speech denoting one thing by the letter of the words, but another by their meaning” (xxviii. 45-46), which Caplan simply translates as “allegory.”

² There is precedent for this in the rhetorical tradition. C.B. Bradley, for instance, in sketching out his taxonomy of figuration notes that “sundry time-honored ‘Figures’ [are] conspicuous ... by their absence” from his classification. “Some of these,” he added, “such as Allegory, Fable, Parable, the old-fashioned Parallel, and even the sparkling Epigram, are no more Figures of Speech than is a Novel or an Epic. However much they

Rhetorical moves, like all other forms of culture, have evolved over the two millennia of figuration theory. New discursive formations have arisen, old ones have dropped away, others have shifted in various ways under social pressures, dividing, amalgamating, shrinking, and growing. So, for instance, the texts Susenbrotus saw as typifying allegory were quite different than the ones available to Cicero, and quite different from the ones available to us.

Moreover, the need for a technical vocabulary of the mental, verbal, and textual dimensions of language grows more acute as rhetoricians, literary scholars, and more linguists, increasingly join the project of cognitive language studies, and this vocabulary must be responsive to the goals and histories of the supporting disciplines. Cognitive linguistics, in particular, has not always been so responsive, and cognitive poetics has often compounded this disregard by adopting cognitive linguistic usages unreflexively.

To return to allegory, negotiating between literary and rhetorical disciplines, it makes the most sense, given the range of other labels for similarity-based tropes, and the wealth of literary critical exploration of the relevant texts, to recognize the word as designating a genre, rather than a figure (as figures are generally understood), and hereby declare allegory to be prototypically a didactic narrative in which abstractions are realized concretely, through topification and/or personification. While we won't chart the extensions here, this account implicates a fuzzy radial network of such related genres as political allegories, romans a clef, parables, and the like. Notice, incidentally, that this makes its scholarship necessarily hybrid, since whatever its aesthetic and cultural merits, allegory is always purposively driven. It argues, or instructs, or both, as it delights. It is, in other words, while certainly literary, an equally rhetorical genre.

Allegoresis, then, refers to a mental process of interpretation, a way of reading or listening, as well as to an artistic strategy. *Allegory* refers to a characteristic configuration of intentionally assembled linguistic features guided by the artistic strategy of allegoresis; that is, to a genre.

may involve figurative elements, they are merely kinds of Composition." (Bradley 1886, p. 141).

Both the practice and the defining features of the genre, of course, massively pre-date the first century BCE, and extend much more broadly than Archaic Greece. As Boys-Stones expresses it, allegoresis was by the time of Philodemus “an exegetical principle which had been employed for centuries by philosophers who saw deeper meaning in texts which appeared to be ‘saying something else’” (2003, p. 3). Tate (1927, p. 214) traces it at least as far as the sixth century BCE, to Pherecydes of Syros, but Saintsbury is probably closer to the mark when he identifies it as the first, necessary impulse to find conceptual depth in any revered texts, which makes it as old as criticism (Saintsbury, 1922, p. 10f). Indeed, if Gibbs’s suggestions in this issue are correct, and we believe they are, allegoresis is as old as speech. Similarly, while allegory goes back most famously to the writings of Plato, whose allegory of the cave (*Symposium* VII. 514^a–520^a) is canonical in both literature and philosophy, we can reel back to the beginnings, if not of speech entire, certainly of artistic speech. In the Greek tradition, for instance, we have such obvious personifications as Deimos (Terror), Phobos (Fear), and Eris (Strife) whom Homer has sweeping ahead of Ares on the battlefield (*Iliad* 4.440), and Hesiod’s *Theogony* has catalogues of personifications that read like any procession from a Medieval allegory. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, we have Nwm (Wisdom), who “crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors” (Proverbs 8:2), delivering a hortatory speech that would not be out of place in Boethius or di Pizan. In the *Bhagavad Gita* 13.1-2, the body is figured as an agricultural moral *paysage*. The impulse to understand at parallel levels, in short, is homologous with the impulse to create at parallel levels. One of the main premises of our workshop and of this volume — what makes our claim “cognitive” — is that specific, generic instantiations of allegory are both created by, and call upon in readers and interpreters, a universal analogic impulse in the brain/mind. Etymologically, *allegory* is from “allos” (other) and “agoreuo” (to speak literally [‘as in the agora’]): it is the root of the familiar division between the ‘literal’ and the ‘figural’.

Cognitive science has confirmed literary and rhetorical criticism in revealing the literal/figural division as more of a graded “continuum of linguistic understanding” (Gibbs 1994, p. 243) than a binary dichotomy, and nowhere is this clearer than in the panoply of genres that reward allegoresis directly—allegory, the quintessential expression of intentional duality, but also fables, parables, apologues, morality plays,

satires, parodies, *romans à clef*, and, on a more 'unconscious' and cultural level, folktales and myths. All of them are fundamentally other-than-literal genres. They all feature characters, settings, and events which insist audiences map them in some way back to another, more literal state of affairs. Love "really is" a feeling, audiences know, but they go along with the narrative ride in which Love walks and talks "as if" it were an autonomous agent.

While all of these genres certainly wear the adjective *allegorical* comfortably (that is, while they are all explicitly designed to reward allegoresis), we reserve the noun *allegory* for the specific genre that had its most sustained literary peak in the Middle Ages, crowned by achievements like *The Divine Comedy*, *The Romance of the Rose* and *Piers Plowman*, with significant later members like *The Faerie Queene*, *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Paradise Lost*. The genre is characterized by abstract personifications, concepts that walk and talk, like Reason and Conscience (*Piers*), Gluttony and Lust (*Queene*), Fellowship and Knowledge (*Pilgrim's*); by topifications, conceptually laden landscapes like the Celestial City (*Pilgrim's*), the Cave of Error (*Queene*), and the undisputed heavyweight champion of this trope, the croft called Covet-not-men's-chattel-nor-their-wives-nor-any-of-their-servants-lest-you-annoy-them (*Piers*); and by narrative motifs of interaction among characters (including personifications) and settings (including topifications) overwhelmingly within the frame of a journey or quest (*Piers*, *Queene*, *Pilgrim's*). Such works define the prototype at the heart of an allegorical radial network, in which the other genres participate at some remove. Fables and apologues, for instance, are populated with cunning foxes, simple geese, steady tortoises, scatterbrained hares, randy roosters—not full-fledged personifications, but animals-as-agents epitomizing specific qualities. Parables are notable for the role setting plays in the moral argument, quintessentially in Luke's parable of the sower (8:1-3), or Matthew's workers in the vineyard (20:1-16), and the totemic Valley of the Shadow of Death (Psalms 23, famously recycled in *The Pilgrim's Progress*). Morality plays, like sitcoms, work within a limited set of narrative frames in which linked events (chiefly offences and their punishments, good deeds and their rewards) circumscribe the moral lesson. Satires depend crucially on a recognizably parallel other-than-literal level of meaning, which frequently exaggerates the traits of characters or the features of setting toward abstract,

even ideological levels. Parodies maintain a ridiculing commentary on one text or authorial voice by distorting its features in a systematically dual way. *Romans à clef* present a parallel universe of characters, settings, and narrative events which map back to features of a particular presupposed literal world. Folktale and myth alike abound with elusive figures encoding agency and place, and putting recognizable names and bodies onto otherwise hard-to-grasp ordinary processes, social or natural. As with all discursive formations (and much like that kernel discursive formation, the word), the boundaries among these genres are both fuzzy and mutable. So, for instance, we get such developments as a video beast fable that works solely on the basis of names, sequence, and relative position because it adopts the cultural frame of "the horse race"—a frame especially ripe for this move because its flamboyant naming conventions easily supports handles like Nasty Attitude, Drinking Heavily, and Up-Yours-Keith (See Oakley and Crisp, this issue).

Literary criticism has seen many insightful theoretical and critical investigations of allegory—Tuve's (1966) *Allegorical Imagery*, Quilligan's (1979) *Language of Allegory*, Paxson's (1994) *Poetics of Personification*, the recent Stanford volume *Thinking Allegory Otherwise* (2010) to name a few—yet the quintessential moment for allegory studies was perhaps Paul de Man's declaration that “all language is allegory,” claiming allegory as the “master trope” of all discourse (De Man, 1979). We might view this declaration, in the heyday of deconstruction, as the final put-down of Coleridge's insistence that allegory was a stale, mechanical genre, grossly inferior to the encompassing and protean power of the romantic symbol. Indeed, in retrospect de Man's formulation of allegory came to resemble Coleridge's enhanced conception of the symbol in a number of ways, chiefly in its ubiquity and in its ability to explain everything. Allegory, for de Man, was the key to communication, as symbol had been for Coleridge, at least in poetic communication. For de Man, understanding all language as allegorical—as always speaking about something else, speaking otherwise—crystallized an ancient problem of reference, of the troublesome relationship of words to things, language to the world. His theory of allegory revolves around the arbitrariness of signs, that central vortex of deconstruction, insisting on the fact the words we employ cannot point directly to the external world itself, but only to other words; narrative frames only to other narrative frames; perspectives to other

perspectives. Our utterances, poetic or everyday, do not reach to the world; rather, they are *about* the world. Meanings that pertain to the extralinguistic world are not produced directly, but—to quote a celebrated remark about *Piers Plowman*—are instead only “connived at” (Bloomfield 1967 p 14).

The allegorical state of affairs advanced by de Man was a triumph of disenchantment, marvelously removing the traction of anyone who claimed to be using or interpreting allegories authoritatively (preachers in sermons, politicians in speeches, didactic poets) by denying that their utterances were unique or that they had any final referential ground. By re-creating allegory as a master trope, he paradoxically removed its traditional claims to mastery—to the institutional mastery of specially trained readers, or the demagogic mastery of parable as the speech of the common man—which were inevitably tied up with genre. What we were left with instead was a vision of allegory as an enormous vista of anxiety or *jouissance* coterminous with the whole of human language: not a genre but a predicament. In our terms, de Man argued compellingly that allegoresis is the fundamental—in fact, the only possible—mode of linguistic comprehension.

Cognitive approaches to literature tend to align themselves with varying degrees of explicitness and commitment against poststructuralism, yet in the case of Cognitive Allegory, the present volume and the workshop which gave it its name, we can identify a number of continuities with de Man’s position. First would be an appreciation of its grandeur, the scope of its argument for allegory: just as de Man intuited that the problems of allegory were the problems of human language *in toto*, most of our participants assume, from varying perspectives, that allegory calls upon universal cognitive resources in the brain/mind, that allegorical artifacts are particularly useful in teasing out the embodied processes via which humans speak, write, and think. But we are not with de Man all the way. Allegorical artifacts are “particularly” useful here, which implies that, *contra* de Man, it is worth respecting the generic boundaries that have traditionally circumscribed allegory in order to use them more pointedly as test cases of particular cognitive patterns or impulses. All language may be allegorical, but some uses of language are more allegorical than others.

Nor, of course, is the phenomenon restricted to literature. Allegorical drama, sculpture, woodcuts, painting, tapestry, and the like, are well known; as cultural media shift and expand, more allegorical varieties develop. With the 20th century, radio (e.g., Alfred Kreymborg's *The Planets*) and cinema (e.g., Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*) expanded the allegorical genres. With the 21st century, the expansion continues. Peter Crisp and Todd Oakley's contribution to this issue, for instance, charts the allegorical dimensions of a YouTube video (which originated as an audio recording), and a well known series of TV and web ads, running from 2006 to 2009, capitalized heavily on allegoresis. "I'm a Mac," said, the slim, hip guy. "And I'm a PC," added the dumpy, unhip guy.³ Even the famed "desktop metaphor" that has characterized graphic interfaces for decades is far closer to allegory than it is to metaphor, classically understood. It is what Peter Crisp calls a "prolonged doubling." It is this very cross modality that argues most strongly for the pervasiveness of allegoresis and the deeply cognitive basis of allegory.

Cognition

Allegory breaks down the division between the mind of the text and the mind of the reader as the two are engaged in a circuit.

— Gordon Teskey (1994, p. 200)

While the word is one of the great pleonasms of our age, *cognitive* can still be used with some specificity. The word comes, of course, from *cognitivus* (roughly, 'knowledge'), and we use it here, in consonance with most cognitive rhetoricians and poeticsians, but unfortunately not all, to invoke the architecture of knowing. While the boundary can easily get blurry, a central distinction is called for, if only in principle. Very roughly, it is helpful to conceptualize knowledge in terms of a cognitive substrate (how we know) and a noetic superstrate (what we know). The substrate, for instance, involves general principles of analogy, association, sequence, symmetry, and the like—staple themes in

³ After years of unsuccessful attempts to counter these ads, Microsoft adopted a very similar strategy in 2008, with a wide variety of users all declaring, "I'm a PC." To reject the tubby-guy-in-a-suit personification of the Mac ads, however, Microsoft used a series of synecdoches, each individual user declaring herself/himself to be the whole.

philosophy of mind, the psychology of learning, and aesthetics, back to Aristotle. The superstrate involves the individual and cultural clusters of knowledge. Sperber and Wilson, for instance, use *cognitive* in this noetic sense in their term, *cognitive environment*, which they define as "a set of facts that are manifest to" an individual, adding that one's total cognitive environment is "the set of all the facts he can perceive or infer ... a function of his physical environment and his cognitive abilities" (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: pp. 39-41). Whatever Sperber and Wilson want to call this domain of factual resources, for us it makes more sense to call it a *noetic* environment.

The noetic aspects of knowledge, that is, are the materials of knowledge, or in phenomenological terms, part of the contents of consciousness.⁴ As such they may be culturally constrained. In Oakley and Crisp's contribution, for instance, the cultural and historical specificities of their two object texts, *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Third Race at The Honeymoon is Over Downs*—the discontinuities that divide those two works, as 17th and 21st century artifacts—are elements of the noetic superstrate. These discontinuities contrast with the *cognitive* structure that merges them—the analogic and narrative dimensions of the substrate—as allegorical texts.

One further distinction needs to be made, between the affinities and the real-time processes they implicate. So, for instance, it is clear from millennia of research, in rhetoric, linguistics (prominently including the ancient traditions of grammar), psychology, literature, philosophy of mind — to the extent that those enterprises can be segregated — that the human mind has a deep and abiding attraction to analogic moves. They are prominent in reasoning, aesthetics, and education, and they are pervasive in

⁴ Noetic means "available to conscious awareness," for example, to Gallagher in *How the body shapes the mind* (2005), as opposed to those autonomous functions that do not enter into awareness, although they necessarily constrain the terms of awareness, which he refers to as prenoetic (e.g. the body schema).

daily communication.⁵ An equally deep and abiding attraction exists for same-domain representational moves, known as metonymy in rhetoric and literary studies. In reasoning and education, the corresponding moves are known as exemplification and sampling. Another affinity corresponds to antithesis in rhetoric and literature, comparison in reasoning and education. Another is synecdoche in rhetoric, reductionism in reasoning and education.

Raymond Gibbs's paper focusses primarily on evidence for the pervasiveness of the analogic affinity, the other three primarily on the processes (Thagard's, via his multiconstraint theory of analogy; Oakley and Crisp's, Kasten and Gruenler's, via Conceptual Integration Theory).

Cognitive allegory

Where semiological models cramp or exclude important insights into recurring questions about allegory, the semantic fine print of cognitive rhetoric makes problems more coherent and tractable and preserves the insights of critics of various stripes.

—Michael Sinding (2002, p. 505)

To chart the relevant texts contributing to the line of thought leading inevitably to a cognitive approach to allegory would be difficult indeed. There are only a few direct antecedents to the works in this collection, almost all of them by the visionary Peter Crisp (2002, 2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2008; see also Sinding 2002), all of which we heartily recommend to readers. But there are three particular lines of scholarship that lead powerfully to the position undergirding this collection (and inspiring the workshop at the University of Waterloo in the summer of 2009 which brought all of the contributors together, with a group of like-minded scholars, and kindled this special number).

⁵ Likewise, James Paxson (2010) discusses the ubiquity of allegorical structures in scientific discourse from Euclid to modern physics, and Gregory A. Mark (1987) discusses the importance of personification in American business law.

First, there is the ancient view that figuration is the aesthetic and/or purposive manifestation of dispositions which form everyday discourse and reflect common thought, with metaphor always the poster child. While rhetoricians always paid their closest attention to the crafted figures, they recognized that figures are not weird and shiny decorations hung onto otherwise literal speech, but, rather, that figures are built out of the same basic resources that shape daily language. Quintilian, for instance, notes that metaphor is "so natural a turn of speech that it is often employed unconsciously" (8.6.4), and he says much the same of synecdoche (8.6.19) and allegory.⁶ Periodically in the rhetorical tradition—with scholars such as Giambattista Vico, George Campbell, and Alexander Bain—the psychological implications of figuration were made more explicit. Friedrich Nietzsche, a rhetorically informed philosopher, was the most insistent on this point, again centering on metaphor: "The formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive," he said, "which one cannot for a single instant dispense with in thought" (Nietzsche (1979 [1873], p. 88). But it is in the 20th century, with rhetoricians, like I. A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, Ernesto Grassi, and Groupe µ, that figurative tradition turns most fully toward the mind. Most explicitly, we have Richards's declaration, in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, that "*Thought* is metaphoric, ... and the metaphors of language derive therefrom" (1936, 94).

Second, there is the recent set of homologous developments in linguistics, often in ignorance of, and frequently with contempt for, the rhetorical tradition. The watershed for these developments is George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By*, which introduced the term "conceptual metaphor" for analogic frames like LIFE IS A JOURNEY. That frame structures some of our talk about life in terms of talk more primarily associated with journeys. "Oriana is just starting out," we say, and "Galen is on the fast

⁶ Quintilian's example of how allegory functions in "[our] most common understanding, and our daily conversation," incidentally, is remarkably close to Lakoff and Johnson's set-piece example of what they call "conceptual metaphor," ARGUMENT IS WAR. Quintilian identifies phrases "to fight firm," "to aim at the throat," and, "to draw blood" (8.6.51) as characterizing an 'allegorical' treatment of argumentation in ordinary language.

track," and "Abe is over the hill," and so on. Lakoff and Johnson's influential insights, and the work that has come out of them, are tremendously important for the positions adopted and developed in this issue; in many ways, *Metaphors We Live By* is the well spring not only of cognitive linguistics, but of cognitive poetics and cognitive rhetoric as well. Conceptual Integration theory (or Conceptual Blending), for instance, which figures heavily in two papers in this issue, is indebted to *Metaphors*, and Gibbs's *Poetics of Mind* research program, which he turns fully on allegory in this issue, is anchored in Lakoff and Johnson's work. *Metaphors We Live By* is doubly helpful for building a framework in which to investigate the cognitive dimensions of allegory because, above and beyond its general case for the cognitive underpinnings of metaphor (and, less so, metonymy), there are specific analyses of analogic frames in which the source is a journey, centrally LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which is virtually definitional of allegory.

The third line of scholarship leading unavoidably to the conclusion that allegory manifests mental structure is cognitive narratology. The great Homeric poems, and oral epics generally, leverage a range of mental dispositions for their mnemonic properties, but their overall structure, and many of their substructures, are narrative. Adages, too, those bits and pieces of oral culture still floating about in the literate and digitized 21st century, if they don't have an explicit figurative basis (the assonance of "a stitch in time saves nine," for instance; the consonance of "Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater"), have either an implicit narrative ("The road to hell is paved with good intentions") or a sponsoring narrative ("That's just sour grapes"); very frequently they both explicit figuration and implicated narrative ("Don't cry over spilled milk"). Recognizing these aspects of story, literary studies of narrative took a decidedly cognitivist turn in the later 20th century, marked by work like van Dijk and Kintsch's *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension* (1983) and Fludernik's (1993) *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction*, and, more recently, Herman's (2002) *Story Logic*. But the vision of narrative as resonant with mental structure has spread well beyond literary studies. Developmental psychologists, for instance, are investigating how narrative affects comprehension (see, e.g., (O'Neill et al., 2004, O'Neill and Shultis,

2007, Atance and O’Neill, D. K. 2005), and an important recent book applies cognitive narrative to prudential reasoning, Leslie Paul Theile’s (2006) *The Heart of Judgement*.⁷

These three lines of research—revealing the fundamental linkage between Figuration and Cognition, exploring the specific mental structuring of Analogic Frames, especially journey frames, and uncovering the importance of Narrative to thought, memory, and reasoning—led the pageant of Scholarship towards this Special Issue on Cognitive Allegory, and the Impeccable Articles it contains.

The essays

[A]llegory is a mix of making and reading combined in one mode.

—Angus Fletcher (2010, p. 10)

The four essays in this special issue of *Metaphor and Symbol* are early, brief excursions into the cognitive landscape of allegory. Much remains to be said, and major features of allegory in the generic tradition remain to be explored from this angle—especially personification, narrative, and topification—but they are models for further work. Drawing collectively on psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, computer science, literary studies, and rhetoric, all of the papers, in different ways, explore how studies of allegory as a genre, specific allegories, and allegoresis as a cognitive disposition, need to move beyond isomorphic source/target analogic pairing.

⁷ While not part of the cognitive trajectory directly, we also want to pay homage to the medievalists, both those numerous scholars who have paid minute and respectful attention to allegories of all kinds across a thousand years, and to those nineteenth and twentieth-century luminaries in a variety of fields whose work hearkened back to the age of logic, particularly to the work of Augustine, Aquinas, Ockham and the nominalists, and who must include, at minimum: Hegel, Adorno, Heidegger, Pierce, Derrida and Joyce, all of whom thought deeply about allegory. See Cole and Smith, *The Legitimacy of the Middle Ages: The Unwritten History of Theory* (2010) for coverage of most of these theorists.

Two of the essays, roughly characterized, concern allegoresis, while incorporating specific allegorical examples. The other two essays focus on the generic properties of allegory by analyzing specific allegorical texts, while incorporating a models of allegoresis (the same model in both cases, Fauconnier and Turner's Conceptual Integration framework). The two essays which chart allegoresis directly are Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr.'s, "The allegorical impulse" and Paul Thagard's "The brain is wider than the sky;" the two which investigate the implications of specific allegorical works are Madeleine Kasten and Curtis Gruenler's " The point of the plow, " and Todd Oakley and Peter Crisp's "Honeymoons and pilgrimages."

Gibbs argues convincingly for an allegorical impulse that characterizes a fundamental aspect of human language use; that is, for the pervasive presence of allegoresis in ordinary language. It is a commonplace of cognitive linguistics, poetics, and rhetoric that analogic frames are at work in clusters of domain-specific ordinary language terminology which map into other domains ("hot under the collar," "steaming mad," "burning off his anger," and so on, deploying terminology from a thermal domain in an affective domain, via so-called "conceptual metaphors"). But Gibbs charts how some of these terminologies draw on narrative as much as analogy, creating mini-allegories in expressions such as "skate on thin ice" and "go out on a limb." He also reports on several experiments in allegorical interpretation, revealing how naturally readers draw analogic inferences from texts, advancing an embodied simulation approach to allegoresis.

Thagard applies psychological and neural theories to explore the analogies in allegories. He brings in suggestive new theories of neural representation, prominently implicating emotion, in concert with his multiconstraint theory of analogy, to explore the way in which allegoresis operates on texts (and, in the wrong textual environment, operates inadequately). The multiconstraint theory understands analogy as conforming to three sorts of constraints in the mapping between domains—similarity, structure, and purpose—and all of these constraints activate emotional responses as a function of specific analogies and their noetic environment. In particular, Thagard lays out (and visualizes in cognitive-affective diagrams) the relational and emotional mapping in key analogic moves of the beast fable, *Animal Farm*, which activates emotional currents associated with revolution and betrayal.

The two papers which focus more fully on specific allegories argue a very similar point, that allegory, which was declared otiose if not dead by Romantic poets, remains vibrant because its defining features appeal to the fundamentals of cognition. They each take a prototypical allegory, plumb it with the tools of the Conceptual Integration framework, and show how later, post-Romantic texts successfully deploy many of its features. Neither claims that personification allegory of the sort that dominated medieval art forms is a significant, or even viable cultural presence. But both show that the cognitive affinities on which allegory capitalized continue to shape literary and popular culture.

Kasten and Gruenler build their argument through analyses of *Piers Plowman* and *Candide*, with special reference to the figure, *enigma*, which evokes duality of meaning in a particularly challenging way, and which Medieval rhetoricians regarded as a type of allegory; most intriguingly, they show how enigma can be revealingly framed in terms of double-scope blends. Oakley and Crisp follow a similar path, resting their argument on analyses of the most famous allegory of all, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the fascinating, but also quotidian and ephemeral, audio-cum-YouTube-video allegorical horse race, *Third race at the honeymoon is over downs*. The differences in period, culture, media, tone, content, intention, duration — in short, the differences in almost every stylistic and noetic respect — are remarkable, yet they are united by a common basal appeal to allegoresis. Extracting that common base, Oakley and Crisp then show the critical effectiveness of Conceptual Integration, showing how it can plot more precisely the way the two texts diverge in their reliance on allegoresis, Honeymoon working narrowly in terms of its blended space, Pilgrim's distributing its effects more broadly throughout the whole integration network.

All four essays are both empirical and theoretical. All four enhance our understanding of discourse and the mind. All four serve as a foundation of Cognitive Allegory studies.

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