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Nature and Blindness Metaphors in Geoffrey  
Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and William  
Shakespeare's *King Lear*

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## Dedication

*I would like to dedicate this modest work to the tender hearts, to the  
candles of my life, to  
my dear parents.*

*A special dedication to all my lovely brothers and sisters;*

*And a particular dedication to all my dear friends.*

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## **Abstract**

The present research attempts to study the use of nature and blindness metaphors in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. It tries to shed light on the writers' motives behind the use of this linguistic device in both literary works. Throughout this study, we hope at laying a finger on the authors' overuse of metaphor in these two literary works, focusing on its structure and meaning. This research is divided into three main chapters. Chapter one presents a general survey on the basic concepts of metaphor because it is our main concern in this inquiry. Chapter two highlights a critical review of Chaucer's literature and Shakespeare's one, namely some views on both literary works. Chapter three is the investigation of metaphors of nature and blindness. Some metaphor markers will be discussed to find out the syntactic structure of metaphor and its meaning. This chapter sheds light on the reasons behind the use of nature and blindness metaphors in the two literary works. The adopted metaphor model is descriptive and it consists of particular structural and semantic components such as the tenor (T), the vehicle (V), and the topic (Tp).

**Key words:** metaphor, tenor, vehicle, metaphor markers, topic, figurative language, nature, blindness.

## **List of Abbreviations**

-**(CT)**: The Contemporary Tales

- **(G)**: Ground

-**KL**: King Lear

-**MT**: The Merchant's Tale

- **(T)**: Tenor

- **(Tp)**: Topic

- **(V)**: Vehicle

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# *General Introduction*

## General Introduction

Because literature is universal, it is the artistic field which still maintains its roots in recent approaches to language investigation. Apart from the thematic analysis, literature is also a potential field for linguistic, psychoanalytic and stylistic interests and investigation.

The present study is concerned with the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries of English literature because they were the main ages of wealthy literary productivity. This investigation is related to the two outstanding figures of English literature who are Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare. In other words, this study covers what is commonly known as Middle and Elizabethan English literature.

English Literature is often attributed to Chaucer as a father of it (Vaneckov, 2007).

Actually, there were more than six centuries of literature before Chaucer was born (Fletcher, 2002). The modern reader can make out of the general meaning of a page of Chaucer without any difficulty, but if he looks at the earliest literature he finds that he is reading a foreign tongue different from the English we know today (Duncan, 2005). This is the reason for the neglect of early literature, though today much of it can be obtained by the art of translation (Fletcher, 2002).

The appearance of the modern poetry began with the age of Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1340-1400) diplomat, a soldier, and a scholar (Fletcher, 2002). Chaucer was among many great poets who reached the shelves of the famous libraries in the world. He became a page in a noble household, and later a high official in the royal service (Smith, 2007). The poet regarded meaning as a primary importance (Duncan, 2005). Besides, he used poetry to express his knowledge of love, death, and their aspirations. He also used this literary genre to tell stories, comedy, the pathos, and the tragedy of life (Duncan, 2005). Consequently, there was a long controversy in criticism as to whether there was “continuity” between the old English poet and Chaucerian and post-Chaucerian verse such as Sir Arthur Quilter. In accordance with these changes, Chaucer wrote many literary works, for instance *Troilus and Criseyde* (1385-7), *The Legend of Good Women* 1385, and *The Canterbury Tales* 1386.

It is for the *Canterbury Tales* that Chaucer's name is the best remembered, it is a collection of stories told by thirty one pilgrims in their journey to Canterbury, with the prologue, the clearest picture of Chaucer that panorama of the medieval live existent anywhere (Fletcher, 2002). Geoffrey Chaucer keeps the whole poem alive by interspersing the tales themselves with the talk, the quarrels, and the opinion of the pilgrims (Brewer, 2002).

For this reason, he is a major influential figure in the history of English literature. His *Canterbury Tales* is read and reshaped to suit its modern audience (Vaneckov, 2007). Chaucer's works are in the curricula of schools in most European countries because they are considered and ranked among the highest literary achievements (Vaneckov, 2007).

The present study tackles one of the most famous tales from this collection which is entitled *The Merchant's Tale* as one corpus for our study. Chaucer's poetry provides the reader with vivid depictions of medieval life and it seems necessary to accompany the modern interest in medieval literature with deeper understanding of the period.

The fact that the development of English literature through history passed through many different periods, each period has its impact and significance on literature. The Elizabethan Age is an important period and a remarked point in this development. Therefore, the English literature of the Elizabethan Age is one of the great periods of European culture (Blamires, 2003). The period was one of immense and concentrated literary activity.

This period coincided with the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) (Smith, 2007). Furthermore, lyric poetry, prose, and drama were the major genres of literature that flowered in the Elizabethan Age (Halio, 2005). For most reasons, drama is one of the literary genres which lightened in Shakespearian Age (Halio, 2005). Many critics and scolders such as Staphanie Lethbridge and Jarmila Milddorf claim in their book entitled *Basic English Studies* that when one deals with dramatic texts one has to bear in mind that drama differs considerably from poetry narrative in that it is usually written for the purpose of being performed on the stage.

Although plays were mainly written for a reading audience, dramatic texts are generally meant to be transformed into another mode of presentation or medium: the theatre.

As for William Shakespeare, he wrote many plays such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*. *King Lear* is indeed such a typical Shakespearean tragedy (Halio, 2005). Its action is truly not confined to one place or a short period of time, while a subplot is introduced in it to complicate the matter (Blamires, 2003). Besides, scenes of violence are presented directly on the stage, while scenes of "comic relief" or grotesque humor appear to make the play dubious in its purity as a tragedy (Halio, 2006).

Shakespeare's play *King Lear* is thought as a masterpiece. As of this writing, it is safe to say that in the public's mind the story of Lear's physical and spiritual suffering and above all, his heart breaking end, aptly sum up the human conditions:

*When we are born, we cry that are come  
To this great stage of fools*

(KL, 171).

Consequently, the play is not always considered as a profound of bleak meditation on human experience (Smith, 2007). The reason why the poet Laureate Nathan Tate thought that the play was so deeply flawed that it could only be staged after a radical revision (Smith, 2007).

Indeed, if Shakespeare was, as most scholars suspect, a member of one or both companies, it is likely that he performed in his early and anonymous drama. A drama very much like the play he would write some eleven years. The previously mentioned play is the second corpus of the present study. Therefore, late Middle and Elizabethan centuries of English literature is characterized by the use of nature and blindness themes (Bloom, 2008). In *King Lear*, themes including those of a King who is curiously naive in the ways of human nature, a King who finds himself in a world of negated values, and a King who faced with moral blindness and unnaturalness. Such concerns are mirrored by issues of blind love, a more general inability to see reality and the cunning of womanhood in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale*. Using a range of secondary sources, this dissertation compares and contrasts the use of blindness and nature metaphors in both works.

In fact, the language of any literary work (a novel, a short story, a poem, and a play) has its impact on the reader. Figurative language is a kind of it which is widely used in literature, and it is mostly impossible to find a literary work without containing this category because it is the skeleton of the aesthetic text (Perrine, 1982). Its purpose is to serve three elements which are clarity, forth, and beauty. For this reason, many theorists considered metaphor as the open window to all the figures of speech, and it is the literary mother of this artistic language in a given text which always gives the reader the opportunity to interpret a certain meaning to different possibilities.

In Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*, there is a great number of metaphors of nature and blindness because they were introduced and criticized by many theorists and critics (Dillon, 2007).

It seems clear that there are many motives behind the choice of the two artistic literary productions. The choice of British literature is because this literature has its roots

deepened into the history of English literature. It represents different stages of the English development. In other words, these two artistic texts were written in the first early ages of literature which are the Middle and the Elizabethan ones. Also, the mentioned periods were too close to each other. Besides, the British language still in its innovations and explorations due to their beginning roots of its dictionary. Besides, these two literary figures are writers whom EFL students always try to avoid and fear reading them. In fact, before reading Chaucer and Shakespeare, we have to read about them. Besides, we have met them in every book of the history of literature, of literary criticism, of stylistics and even of linguistics. They were and will remain in the scope of interests and investigations of everyone who tries to extract language secrets because they are among many figures that helped in the creation of English language. Moreover, they are expatriate British writers and poets, and are widely considered among the most significant writers of their periods. Consequently, the language in both literary works is still considered as a case study of interest. In addition, the different metaphors in both literary texts make them attractive and worth studying. Finally, poetry and drama are two literary genres which are full of many rhetorical devices such as simile, metaphor, irony, and so on, so that the choice of the two literary productions as corpora for the present study aims at extracting and interpreting this kind of language, but particularly metaphors of nature and blindness in both texts.

Most of literary works reflect their tendencies, and literature has shown to reflect many social, cultural, religious, and economic realities in human life (Mega, 2007). For this reason, our study is concerned with Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear* in order to investigate the cultural and the social aspects in both texts, specially the metaphors of nature and blindness.

Because the use of figures of speech in different literary works has its significance, most of the authors use figurative language to decorate the text for the reader. The fact that there are many literary devices in literature, metaphor is a literary device among them. Therefore, metaphor is frequently used in both *The Merchant's Tale* and *King Lear* and mainly nature and blindness ones. The following questions arise:

1-What are the main motives behind the use of metaphors in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*?

2-To what extent does the author succeed in using metaphors to refer to themes of nature and blindness?

3-Does stylistic analysis of metaphor in the chosen literary works, Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*, provide an objective interpretation of better understanding of the roles of nature and blindness themes in both literary works?

Therefore, this study comes to answer the research questions. A set of working hypotheses is then formulated:

1-The overuse of metaphor enables the reader to have more details about a the author's style and its qualities;

2-The two writers use nature and blindness metaphors in order to develop the psychological motives of the reader about the literary works;

3-The use of metaphor in a certain literary work leads the reader to interpret the different meaning of this device effectively and objectively;

4-The use of metaphors adds a depth to the themes in the two literary works;

5- The use of metaphors creates a vivid image for the reader;

It is known that any scientific research work combines both theoretical and practical proofs. Theories on metaphor provide a model which helps the reader to interpret the text. These theories provide rules that help to analyse and interpret the corpora. Consequently, this investigation enables the reader to get a general knowledge about metaphor and its use.

The present study examines the use of metaphors in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. It is divided into three main chapters using the descriptive method. The first chapter sheds light on the basic concepts of metaphor and the different theories of it. Some of these theories are attributed to Searle (1979), Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and Fauconnier and Turner (1995). The second chapter is a critical review of Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The third chapter attempts to investigate nature and blindness metaphors in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Therefore, the investigation of the two kinds of metaphor will base on the linguistic theory of metaphor which attributed by Searle in 1979.

The conclusion is a synthesis about the results obtained from the stylistic analysis of nature and blindness metaphors in both literary works. To this point, we hope that the reader would have a clear image about the use of nature and blindness metaphors in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

# *Chapter One*

## *Basic Concepts of Metaphor*

## **Chapter one**

### **Basic Concepts of Metaphor**

#### **Introduction**

Literature is the main field of imagination, and it is full of many categories of figurative language. The quality of imagination is one of the most distinguishing features of literature (Chapman, 1973). Each author has his own style because the author's style has a big impact on the reader due to its significance in writing. Therefore, the style is the mirror of the literary work (ibid.).

The stylistic analysis of any literary work leads the reader to investigate many aspects such as the author's vocabulary and the use of figurative language (Turner, 1973). Thus, stylistics is one of the main important fields which give the reader a clear comprehension about the author and his style (Leech and Short, 1998).

In rhetorical theory, there are many categories of figures of speech (Chapman, 1973). Metaphor is one kind of these categories which is widely used in literature because it is a general term in this artistic field which includes other kinds of figures in the literary language (Hatch and Brown, 1995). In the late 1970's, linguists began to realize the significance and the importance of figurative language, mainly that of metaphor (ibid.). Therefore, this chapter tries to shed the light metaphor as a major perspective in the artistic language.

#### **1.1 Metaphor: General Overview**

One of the major rhetorical devices in literature is metaphor. It is a figure of speech in which one thing is compared with another by saying that one is the other, as in "He is a lion" (Kovecses, 2010). In this section, we are going to present a general overview on a certain aspects of this figure of speech such as nature, perceptiveness, and functions because they are the most important aspects of this device.

#### **1.2 Metaphor and Figurative Language**

The word "metaphor" is derived from the Greek verb "metaphora": "meta" means "over", and "phora" means "to carry" or "to transfer" (Hawkes, 1972). Metaphor is a figure of speech which concisely compares two things by saying that the one is the other. It is



considered as an implied comparison (without using 'like' or 'as') (Larson, 1998). Metaphor consists of three elements: topic, which is the thing being compared, image, which is the best thing that the topic is compared to, and point of similarity, that is, the same characteristic that topic and image share.

Figurative language has been widely examined by linguists in the study of literature in recent years. It is because figurative language has the essence of style and beauty. Figurative language often provides a more effective means of saying what we mean than direct statement. In the specific sense, figurative language may take the form of figures of speech.

Figurative language is used in any form of communication, such as in daily conversation, articles in newspaper, advertisements, novels, poems, etc. The effectiveness of figurative language in four main reasons (Perrine, 1982). First, figurative language affords readers imaginative pleasure of literary works. Second, it is a way of bringing additional imagery into verse, making the abstract concrete, making literary works more sensuous. Third, figurative language is a way of adding emotional intensity to otherwise merely informative statements and conveying attitudes along with information. Fourth, it is a way of saying much in brief compass. (Perrine, 1982) divides figurative language into seven types, namely metaphor, simile, personification, metonymy, paradox, overstatement, understatement, irony, and illusion.

A metaphor is an expression of an understanding of one concept in terms of another concept, where there is similarity or correlation between the two. It is the understanding itself of one concept in terms of another. Metaphor compares two unlike things, using the verb "to be". The simplest form of it is the first person as a second subject.

For example, "She is a flower". "She" as the third person is considered being equal to "flower" as the second subject. The comparison is direct, without using words "like" or 'as' (SIL, 2004).

### **1.2.1 Metaphor and Simile**

Both metaphor and simile are forms of comparison that compare words in sentences. The word simile is derived from the Latin word 'Simile', meaning 'resemblance and likenesses', technically it means the comparison of two objects with some similarities. In 1383, Shamisa has said that simile is the claim of likeness of two things in one or two attributes: "*Simile is*

*fundamentally a figure of speech requiring over reference to source and target entities, and an explicit construction connecting them"* (Gibbs, 1994). The word metaphor is derived from the Greek word 'Metaphoria', which meant 'to carry'. Metaphor is a comparison of two different phenomena which share some common points. It is a kind of condensed simile that some parts of it, like topic or similarity markers are deleted to convey the meaning connotatively. The first definition of metaphor is expressed by Aristotle as that "a shift carrying over a word from its normal use to a new one" (Richards, 1965). For instance in the sentence, 'the customer is a king', many qualities a king has, like influence, importance, power and so on are attributed to a customer. In the condensed metaphor 'a ship of state', the captain of the ship represents the government, the sea represents the flow of time, bad weather indicates a crisis and lack of wind signifies economic stagnation.

Consequently, a simile is a word that compares words in a sentence. Critics can usually tell if a simile is present in a sentence when we see the words "as" or "like". Like a simile, a metaphor compares words in sentence; however, instead, of saying that one thing is like something else. A metaphor actually makes thing becomes something very different by renaming it. This device can sometimes use words "is", «are», or «was" (and other words) to signal that a metaphor is present. However, a metaphor never uses the words like or as to compare.

### **1.2.2 Metaphor and Metonymy**

Metonymy and metaphor are two types of figurative language use. More specifically, they are different categories of tropes, as they have non-literal or secondary meanings that are related to and partly build on more basic source senses in a language system and the cognitive domains they structure and reflect. The fact that tropes include features of a source means that are semantically bi-dimensional (Alm-Arvius,2008).

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which a person, place, or thing, is referred to by something closely associated with it: "We requested from the crown support for our petition".

The crown is used to represent the monarch. Metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things without the use of such specific words of comparison as like, as, than, or resembles ( Halliday 1996; Jakobson 1996; Buhler 1982).

Metonymies and metaphors tend however to differ as regards the extent to which they can be said to exhibit poetic qualities in the Jakobsonian sense; that is, the extent to which

they draw attention to language itself, to the particular language constructions that are used to express them( Jakobson, 1996). But viewed together the occurrence of metonymy and metaphor as well as that of other exemplifies how human cognition and language constantly interact in our vast, dynamic pool of encyclopedic experiences and reactions, and in allowing us to communicate about them.

### **1.2.3 Metaphor and Oxymoron**

Oxymoron is one of the most important categories of figures of speech (Leech, 1969). It is a figure of speech that combines opposite or contradictory terms in a brief phrase such as “Jumbo shrimp.” “Pretty ugly.”, and “Bitter-sweet” (Cuddon , 1992), whereas metaphor refers to the second stage that of interpretation (Leech, 1969). Therefore, the two figures of speech are involved in the same act of comprehension because oxymoron is metaphorically interpreted (ibid.).

### **1.3 Kinds of Metaphor**

On the basis of the two main categories of metaphor suggested by ( Black, 1962) as dead and live metaphors, Newmark, (1988) offered five kinds of metaphors: dead, cliché, stock, recent and original The first three, he considers dead and the last two live metaphors.

#### **1.3.1 Dead Metaphor**

Dead metaphor that loses its figurative and connotative meanings and is used like ordinary words; the image cannot be recognized by the speaker or listener. This category *includes "concepts of space and time, the main parts of the body, general ecological features and the main human activities"* (Tajali, 2003:04). Dead metaphor has three kinds. The first kind is those which have a little metaphorical imagery. For instance, the word 'reflect' has a referential meaning of 'shining' and also, has a secondary meaning of 'superiority'. The second kind is metonymies which come instead of objects and things, like, 'crown, worm, and fork'. This group is more used in technical texts. The third kind is non technical words like 'mouth and foot' used metaphorically when combined with other words. Like, 'the arm of the chair', 'an arm of the heat' and 'a matter of live and death.

### **1.3.2 Cliché Metaphor**

Like dead metaphor, this kind of metaphor is overused so that cannot convey any figurative meaning and "*is used as a substitute for clear thought, often emotively, but without corresponding to the facts of the matter*" (Newmark, 1988). It is said that contrary to dead and stock metaphors, cliché metaphors have an indication that tells the reader the word or expression which is not an ordinary one. Like 'explore all avenues', 'stick out a smile' and 'a transparent lie'.

### **1.3.3 Stock Metaphor**

Stock metaphor is the one which deals with cultural elements and is conventional in each language. It *has certain emotional warmth and which is not deadened by overuse* (Newmark; 1988). Her life hangs on a thread, laugh in someone face, and she sees fear in my heart are some stock metaphors.

### **1.3.4 Recent Metaphor**

Recent metaphor is a live metaphor, produced by coining. Newmark (1988) called "they are neologisms fashionable in the source language community". This kind is specific to each language and includes more colloquial and informal words. 'Skint', 'Park your carcass' and 'Groovy' are examples of this kind.

### **1.3.5 Original Metaphor**

Original metaphor is another kind of live metaphor arising from writer or speaker's personal and creative thoughts and ideologies, so it is not fixed in the language and is more new and fresh(Newmark, 1988). Examples are 'In this house', 'I am close to the wet loneliness of grass', and 'I hear the sound of gardens breathing 'and' a forest of fingers.

## **1.4Theories of Metaphor**

Metaphor is one of the main figures of speech. Many linguists attempt to examine and study the nature of metaphor. They introduce three main theories which are introduced by Searle, Lakoff and Johnson, and Fauconnier and Turner.

### **1.4.1 Linguistic Theory of Metaphor**

The study of metaphor is not a new subject. Aristotle wrote of the capacity of metaphor to bring clarity and charm to poetry and prose, and warned that the use of inappropriate metaphors may cause confusion. Until the field of linguistics really began to be

developed in the early 1900s; however, metaphors was mostly regarded as a poetic device, something that could be used to make language pretty (Blasko, 1999).

With the linguistic and dialogical models of communication, researchers began to consider metaphor in a new way, as a subject in its own right (Blasko, 1999). Initially, metaphor was studied only from a linguistic point of view, so most of the early work on the topic concerns how metaphor is generated through language. Searle brought together this work in a review published in 1979. In this review, Searle argues that metaphor is primarily a linguistic phenomenon processed by the brain as language, and that the processing of metaphorical or figurative language takes more time than the processing of literal language (Searle, 1979).

One of the issues that seems important to linguists who have studied metaphor is that of meaning. They focus on questions such as what is the meaning of metaphorical utterance?. Is the true meaning of a metaphorical statement the literal meaning of the words themselves? Or does the statement mean what the speaker wanted it to mean? .Searle believes that metaphorical expressions mean what the speaker intended them to mean (Searle, 1979). This may seem like a trivial point, but it has a significant influence on the way linguists study metaphor. As Searle points out in his review, unlike in a literal and other non-metaphorical expression, the speaker's meaning in a figurative or metaphorical expression is not the same as the literal meaning. Searle identifies a sequence of three stages that a hearer goes through to interpret a metaphorical statement:

Firstly, the hearer has to recognise that the statement is figurative, rather than literal. He usually does this by working out that the literal meaning of the statement is not true. To use Searle's example, the statement "Sam is a pig", is easily proven untrue. But it isn't always that simple. Take Searle's next example, a quote from Disraeli who said, "I have climbed to the top of the greasy pole". How do we know that he did not actually climb a greasy pole?. Searle suggests that we know because of the context of the statement. When we listen to certain speakers, or know more about the context of the speaker, then we are on the lookout for metaphorical forms of speech. An example is when we read Romantic poetry, which is littered with metaphors. The reader, who is aware of this, knows to be on the lookout for figurative language.

Searle's second stage of metaphor interpretation involves the hearer finding a possible alternative meaning for a statement that he has deduced is figurative. This is done by the

hearer going back to the metaphor (X) and working out what features X has that might be present in the subject(Y).

The third stage is when the hearer goes through the possible features of X that he has deduced in stage ii, and works out which of them the speaker probably meant to apply to the subject, Y. This is a complex process, affected by factors such as context, prior knowledge and shared knowledge, or common ground. But when it works, the metaphor is understood.

Searle explains that metaphors tend to add more meaning than a literal description. This he claims is because the interpretation of figurative language involves the hearer in a much more participative way than for literal language. To understand a figurative statement, the hearer has to process the statement according to the stages described above, whereas a literal statement can be understood in a much more passive manner. Searle argues that this is why metaphors often have more expressive impact than literal language, as the hearer is much more involved in the process of recognition and understanding of the context of the statement.

In contrast to Searle's step by step analysis of how metaphor is understood, Rohrer (1995) favors a parallel model of meaning making in figurative language. Language would take longer in real time than parallel processing. This is supported by evidence from other researchers who have shown that, in most cases, language (Rohrer, 1995; Blasko, 1999). Rohrer favors a model where meaning-making in both figurative and literal language is one and the same process. He suggests that figurative meaning interpretation is probably not localised in one region of the brain, and this, he concludes, means that the model could only be substantiated after other kinds of investigation, such as neurological studies of what happens in the brain during language interpretation.

Rumelhart (1979) is in agreement with Rohrer on the parallel nature of figurative language processing. He states that:

*The distinction between literal and metaphorical language is rarely, if ever, reflected in a qualitative change in the psychological processes involved in the processing of that language*

He demonstrates this with a description of how children naturally shift between literal and figurative language. When a child cannot find an exact word or phrase to express what they want to say, they often use an alternative figurative phrase instead; for example, the child who describes a “*nasty smell in her tummy*”. The child uses a figurative term purely because

their vocabulary does not yet contain sufficient words to express literally everything they want to say. But this also shows that the language processes involved in figurative speech are the same as for literal speech. A child does not stop and think “*I will use a metaphor because I do not know the right word*”, it is a natural process, and Rumelhart surmises that the process used by adults is exactly the same.

#### **1.4.2 Cognitive Theory of Metaphor**

In the early 1980s, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson introduced the cognitive theory of metaphor. They published a radical new model of metaphor that challenged the established thinking on the subject (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). These two linguists introduced the concept that metaphor might not only be concerned with language itself, but with also about the way we think.

Indeed, they suggested that making metaphors is a cognitive process, and is something that the human brain does naturally. According to this model, our thoughts are shaped or framed by metaphor. Our brains work by relating new knowledge to old ones, and we are constantly looking at things as if they were something else.

This theory of metaphor suggested that the whole way we understand and relate to the world is metaphorical, and that linguistic metaphor is just a surface reflection of the level of cross-domain linking that happens in our minds. Lakoff and Johnson’s model then is as much to do with psychology, cognitive science and communication theory as with linguistics. In his (1992) article on *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor*, Lakoff cites Michael Reddy, a linguist who specialized in communication theory as one of his primary influences.

Reddy had written an article in 1979 entitled *The Conduit Metaphor*. Reddy’s Conduit Metaphor asserts that communicators are “containers” and that communication acts as a conduit along which information is passed from one to the other .It suggests Reddy, based upon the principles of information.

Theory and Cybernetics, which treats communication as a transfer of information between a source and a receiver. The conduit metaphor, says Reddy, has become part of common parlance in the form of some of the metaphors we use to describe, for example this statement “*Getting an idea across*”, “*Getting through to someone*” and so on. Reddy maintained that this view of communication theory has strongly influenced the way we think

about and work with language itself the conduit metaphor of communication is a cognitive model, but that this was rarely acknowledged by theorists at the time.

Lakoff points out that Reddy's article was the first instance where someone showed that "*the locus of metaphor is thought, not language*" (Lakoff, 1992). He agreed with Reddy that conceptual models such as the conduit metaphor may have a profound effect on the way that we relate to the world on how we construct our language. Lakoff, however, took this idea further, and proposed that there are actually many conceptual models upon which we build our understanding of the world, and that we use in our communication with others. Some of other mappings or metaphors that Lakoff was presented are as follows :

- LOVE AS A JOURNEY (for example, "*we've reached a dead end in our relationship*")
- TIME AS PASSING MOTION OVER A LANDSCAPE (for example Christmas is not far off")
- AFFECTION IS WARMTH (e.g. "*she is a warmhearted person*").

If metaphor were merely a case of semantics, then each metaphorical phrase would have different origins (Lakoff, 1992), and phrases such as "*we've hit a dead end in our relationship*", or "*look how far we've come, we can't turn back now*", would each form a separate metaphorical mapping. These examples, however, clearly share a common conceptual origin that of "*love as a journey*". It was this realisation that prompted Lakoff to hypothesis that metaphorical phrases could actually be surface reflections of a deeper level of metaphorical mapping. Lakoff set out on a search for further examples to confirm this theory; and he found so many more mappings that he concluded that metaphor is not the way we think. We speak in metaphor because our minds work by transferring ideas from one conceptual domain to another: When we speak metaphorically it is because we think in metaphor.

It is obviously figurative language that reflects our metaphorical turn of thought. A great deal of our every day thinking is based on metaphorical mappings (Lakoff, 1992; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Indeed, Lakoff claims that any thought which is to do with abstractions or emotions is usually metaphorical. Following this argument, it might appear that pretty much everything we say, do or think is metaphorical. This is quite a disturbing concept.



Some things are experienced and conceptualised literally. Lakoff explains that non-metaphorical concepts are the ones that are based on physical experience (Lakoff, 1992). For example: “The balloon went up” is not metaphorical. It is direct observances, and there is no transfer between conceptual domains. Some examples are as follows:

- LOVE AS A JOURNEY (for example, “*we’ve reached a dead end in our relationship*”);
- TIME AS PASSING MOTION OVER A LANDSCAPE (for example “*Christmas is not far off*”);
- AFFECTION IS WARMTH (e.g. “*she is a warmhearted person*”).

If metaphor were merely a case of semantics, then each metaphorical phrase would have different origins (Lakoff, 1992), and sentences such as “we’ve hit a dead end in our relationship”, or “look how far we’ve come, we can’t turn back now”, would each form a separate metaphorical mapping. These examples, however, clearly share a common conceptual origin that of “love as a journey”. It was this realisation that prompted Lakoff to hypothesise that metaphorical phrases could actually be surface reflections of a deeper level of metaphorical mapping.

Lakoff set out on a search for further examples to confirm this theory; and he found so many more mappings that he concluded that metaphor is not only about words. Metaphor reflects the way we think. We speak in metaphor because our minds work by transferring ideas from one conceptual domain to another: when we speak metaphorically it is because we think in metaphor.

It is not only obviously figurative language that reflects our metaphorical turn of thought. A great deal of our every day thinking is based on metaphorical mappings (Lakoff, 1992; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Indeed, Lakoff claims that any thought that is done with abstractions or emotions and that is usually metaphorical.

Fortunately, logic dictates that not everything can be metaphor. Some things are experienced and conceptualised literally. Lakoff explains that non-metaphorical concepts are the ones that are based on physical experience (Lakoff, 1992). For example, the balloon went up” is not metaphorical, neither is “the cat is on the mat”. They are direct observances, and there is no transfer between conceptual domains.

Lakoff's work caused a change in the field of metaphor research. Prior to the publication of the book entitled "Metaphors we live by", which he co-authored with Mark Johnson in 1980, metaphor was studied primarily as a linguistic specialty. After the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's contemporary theory of metaphor, there was a change of focus away from linguistic study of metaphor and toward the notion that metaphorical thought is a cognitive process that pervades our everyday cognition (Blasko, 1999; Stern, 2000).

The principle feature of Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphor is that it identifies metaphor as being a transfer between two conceptual domains, or subject areas: the source and the target. This has become known as the "two domain mapping model" of metaphor. This model is widely acknowledged as being the first move away from exclusively linguistic studies of metaphor. However, in recent years the model has been adapted and expanded to reflect new thinking in the new thinking in the area.

#### **1.4.3 The Conceptual Blending Theory of Metaphor**

In 1995, Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner published a "multi domain" model of metaphor. Although they do not entirely reject Lakoff and Johnson's two-domain model, they do propose that it exists within a framework of a larger model (Turner, 1995).

Fauconnier and Turner called a "many space model" (Fauconnier and Turner 1995). Unlike Lakoff's model of discrete conceptual domains, where metaphors are generated through transfer between different domains, the many space model proposes that metaphors are generated in non-specific "mental spaces" or representations of an object that may be real, imagined otherwise constructed by a speaker. A single mental space can represent multiple conceptual domains.

Mappings are created between the spaces to create new conceptualizations including metaphors.

Fauconnier elaborated on the many domain model in his book entitled "*Mappings in thought and language*" (Fauconnier, 1997). In this book, he again reiterated Lakoff's view that metaphor is deeper than language alone, and that our use of metaphors reflects the way our minds work.

In accordance to Fauconnier theory of metaphor, the process of metaphorical cognition can be described as a number of stages. The first stage concerns the induction of analogy.

When we use a metaphor, for example, a “computer virus”, we apply a schema from one domain to another. Thus, the concept of a computer virus connects the framework that we already have about viruses, (including perhaps ideas that concern health, disease, the spread of disease, something that we cannot be treated easily), onto our mental domain that relates to computers. But the mapping, initially at least, only goes as far as making structural similarities; we do not necessarily make detailed and technical parallels between the two domains; we do not necessarily expect to treat computer viruses in exactly the same way as human viruses.

The second stage of metaphor creation concerns categorization, and the creation of new conceptual structure. The mapped domain does not actually determine how we think of the existing domain; it simply helps us to build new way of thinking about it. Also, if reality prevents us from building this new domain, the metaphor may break down as it is proven that it “does not work”. For a computer virus the metaphor does work quite well. Yet even in this example, the mapping mostly works at a high level; at a more detailed level the computer technicians rely on their own specific tools to deal with viruses.

The third stage in Fauconnier’s model of metaphor creation is that of naming. By transferring names of things from one domain to another, we are no longer talking about one thing “*as if it were*”, another, rather we are actually saying it *is* the other thing. This means that the metaphorical mapping has (to use Fauconnier’s own words) become entrenched in our conceptual and grammatical system. This makes the mapping less obvious at a conscious level, so that it becomes unconscious and more natural in use and establishes the metaphor as a model for reasoning and new thinking about the target domain.

The final stage is one of conceptual blending. Eventually the two categories become blended, so that for example in our computer virus example; virus means both a biological virus and a computer virus. They are both now seen as “the same kind of thing”. At first, it may seem that Lakoff’s two domain model and Fauconnier’s multispecies model are in conflict, since one proposes that there are distinct conceptual domains, and the other proposes shared conceptual “areas”, (Grady 1999), however, suggest that they are not actually incompatible. Rather, the two models demonstrate two different means of making metaphor. Lakoff’s model deals with stable metaphorical relationships that remain held within long-term memory. While Fauconnier’s model demonstrates how new metaphors are created, and permits that these metaphors may be dynamic and transitory in nature.

## **1.5 Views of Metaphor**

In this section, we will deal with the main views of metaphor. There are two main views of metaphor which introduced by Kovecses (2010). There are what is called the traditional view and the cognitive linguistic one. The former considers metaphor as a system of producing language, and the latter claims that metaphor is a concept.

### **1.5.1 The Traditional View of Metaphor**

This view can be briefly characterized by pointing out five of its commonly accepted features. First, metaphor is a property of words, it is a linguistic phenomenon. The metaphorical use of “lion” is a characteristic of linguistic expression (that of the word “lion”). Second, metaphor is used for some artistic and rhetorical purpose, such as when Shakespeare writes “*all the world’s stage*”. Third, metaphor is based on a resemblance between the two entities that are compared and identified. Achilles must share some features with lion in order for us to be able to use the word “lion” as a metaphor for Achilles. Fourth, metaphor is a conscious and deliberate use of words, and you must have a special talent to be able to do it and do it well. Only great poets or eloquent speakers, such as say, Shakespeare and Churchill, can be its masters. For instance, Aristotle makes the following statement to this effect: “*The greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another; it is the mark of genius*”. Fifth, it is also commonly held that metaphor is a figure of speech that we can do without; we use it for a special effect, and it is not an inevitable part of everyday human thought and reasoning (Kovecses, 2010).

### **1.5.2 The Cognitive Linguistic View of Metaphor**

A new view of metaphor that challenged all these aspects of the powerful traditional theory in a coherent and systematic way was first developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980 in as the “*Cognitive linguistic view of metaphor* “. They challenged the deeply entrenched view of metaphor by claiming that; first, metaphor is a property of concepts, and not of words. Second, the function of metaphor is to better understand certain concepts, and not just artistic or esthetic purpose. Third, metaphor is often based on similarity. Fourth, it is used effortlessly in everyday life by ordinary people, not just by special talented people. Finally, metaphor far from being a superfluous though pleasing linguistic ornament is an inevitable process of human thought and reasoning ( Kovecses, 2010).

## 1.6 The Literary Use of Metaphor

Many critics claim that this linguistic device is simply a trope. Metaphor is a literary device deriving from the schools of classical rhetoric and intending to put an argument clearly and persuasively. Boundaries are not sharp, but devices are commonly grouped as schemes and tropes. Schemes, which include alliteration, chiasmus... etc., have more to do with expression. Tropes, which include metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche, are more powerful and deal with content. Metonymy entails using a name to stand for the larger whole: "*Whitehall* intended otherwise." where *Whitehall* stands for the British civil service. Metonymy does not open new paths like metaphor, but shortens distance to intuition of things already known. Metaphor therefore involves a transfer of sense, and metonymy a transfer of reference.

It is known that there are larger considerations in Kenneth Burke thought that tropes were ready-made for rhetoricians because they describe the specific patterns of human behavior that surface in art and social life. Hayden White (1994) sketched a theory of history which bridged the claims of art and science by defining the deep structures of historical thought in terms of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony. For many critics and writers like Derrida, the inevitable clash of metaphors in all writing shows only too well that language may subvert or exceed an author's intended meaning. He claimed that virtually all statements are, in some sense, metaphorical (Derrida, 1974), and George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have argued that the structure of thought itself is deeply metaphorical (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Like Derrida, Paul de Man saw language as an endless chain of words, which cannot be closed off to a definitive meaning or reference. The literal and figurative meaning of a text is not easily separated, and the realities posited by language are largely those accepted by the dominant ideology as truthful representations of the world.

## 1.7 The Structure of Metaphor

The obvious fact that the structural analysis of metaphor is still a controversial process, scholars attempt to follow a basic and fixed structure, and mainly the linguistic and the grammatical structures to analyse this device (Mullen, 1971).

Chomsky and Skinner profess diametric opposition to one another's theories of language, and although Skinner is concerned with meaning of expressions while Chomsky maintains his interest to be in the area of syntax rather than semantics, there is an interesting

way in which their theories can be brought together. Chomsky suggests that as language is subdivided into classes, the classes fall into a hierarchy of levels depending upon the degree of subdivision (Hall, 1964). Each successive level contains finer distinctions of category; for instance, on the third level the class “Nouns” from level two might become “Abstract Nouns,” “Concrete Nouns,” etc. Presumably all the words of the language are represented at each level, and at each level they are assigned to a category within their category at the previous level. (Some words grammatical homonyms may fall into more than one category.) The highest level comprises the minutest possible breakdowns of category: members of a given category are “mutually substitutable in the set of generated utterances. Many of them may contain just a single formative (ibid: 387). Chomsky then proceeds to demonstrate that it is theoretically possible to assign degrees of grammaticalness on the basis of the hierarchical level at which a given sequence of formatives may be derived.

If the expressions in a particular category at the highest level (level  $m$ , in Chomsky’s scheme) are mutually substitutable, and if the categories at each level are refinements of the categories at preceding levels, then it follows that all the elements of a given category at level  $m$  occurred together in a single category with other elements at all lower levels; and therefore that any given expression in a category at some lower level  $g$  may be mutually substitutable with some of the other elements in that category but not necessarily with all. For two expressions to be in the same category at any level indicates a degree of correspondence between them; on the first level, merely that they belong to the same language. If two terms are mutually substitutable, their meaning must be identical in at least one sense. If two terms are in the same category at level  $l$  and separated at level  $m$ , they must be very closely related to be distinguished only at the last division. Whatever properties cause two elements to fall into the same category at any point, therefore, are the properties in which they resemble one another; and the higher the level at which two elements *not* mutually substitutable remain in the same category, the greater the degree of similarity between them. On the lower levels, the similarity may be purely structural; but the nearer they approach to identity of meaning, the more their similarity must be semantic in nature.

If we consider, therefore, two expressions categorized together at some median level  $g$  which are not categorized together at level  $h$ , we know that their maximum degree of similarity is attained at level  $g$ . Up to that point the two expressions can under some circumstances be substituted for one another. Beyond that point, however, to employ one expression in a context which would normally contain the other is to utter an unintelligible

sequence of words or to require the reader/listener to comprehend its significance on the basis of the similarity of the substituted expression. This kind of departure from literal sense is what is known as metaphor; and it is here that Skinner's distinction may be re-introduced: the use of an expression which belongs in one category may effectively occur in the place of an expression from another category by virtue of the similarities in meaning which are *not* sufficient to identify one with the other.

Chomsky does not deal with the problem of metaphor explicitly. There are broad dark areas in his reasoning in which the question could conceivably be treated, such as his notion of the "creative aspect" of language. One tends to suspect, however, that his failure and that of other linguistic theorists to confront the matter is not, as one might initially suppose, due to the fact that metaphor is irrelevant to the central issues of linguistic analysis, but rather is a consequence of the fact that they do not know how to deal with it, and their inadequate treatment of it would inevitably expose the deficiencies of their systems.

Chomsky's "creative aspect" of language is the property by which it is possible for a person to utter acceptable grammatical sentences which are unique in his experience and do not bear any point for point analogy to sentences in his previous experience. By the same principle, the individual is able to understand without difficulty grammatical sentences of his language which are unlike any already known to him (Brace and World, 1968). Chomsky uses this phenomenon as an argument in favor of his innate universal grammar. It can also be applied to metaphorical language, however, which in its natural form (i.e., when it arises out of a need to express a new experience not covered by the speaker's vocabulary, as opposed to its deliberate or contrived use in poetic language) is a necessary innovation to describe a novel situation. It is perfectly possible, nevertheless, to imagine a commonplace expression which a person has heard frequently in its literal application, given a metaphorical meaning by application to a new situation. A child, for example, may hear the expression, "It's snowing out," used to describe a condition of the weather. The same child, in an energetic pillow fight which issues in an unexpected shower of feathers, may jubilantly exclaim, "It's snowing out!" The creativity which produces this utterance is neither Skinner's generic extension, for it is not a new instance of an old experience; nor is it Chomsky's creative aspect, for no new utterance is emitted; but rather, a familiar expression is adapted to convey a new meaning. Moreover, the child, if asked what has really taken place, is not apt to maintain that snow has actually fallen. He is not under the necessity of using the image to explain an otherwise inexpressible occurrence. He is simply taking pleasure in his ability to perceive a similarity

between the white flurry he has created and the fall of snow he enjoys in winter.

Although the creative aspect of language can be made to apply to certain kinds of metaphorical innovation, it is not unreasonable to suppose that if this were part of Chomsky's intention he would have so stated it. Assuredly Chomsky is not ignorant of the concept of metaphor; and if he had considered that a principle, such as that of creativity, within the scope of this stated theory would give a satisfactory account of the metaphorical use of language, it seems unlikely that he would have chosen deliberately to leave so critical an area as metaphor unexplained in his system.

### **1.8 The Function of Metaphor**

A metaphor is a written and spoken language device in which two seemingly different things are compared in order to better explain one of them. Metaphors can explain things more vividly and they can also lend a certain flare to your expression that it would otherwise lack. There are a number of more specific metaphor functions (Mooij, 1976).

Indeed, writing in a good way to express ideas so that metaphors make our writing more engaging (Grover, 1999). People have a hard time focusing on strict, exact descriptions that follow a "subject, verb, object" structure. By adding metaphors, you are making your writing more fun to read and encouraging people to stick with it.

Furthermore, the function of metaphor in literature is twofold (Grover, 1999). The first, and more practical, function is to allow the reader greater understanding of the concept, object, or character being described. This is done by comparing it to an item that may be more familiar to the reader. The second function is purely artistic: to create an image that is beautiful or profound or otherwise produces the effect that the writer desires. For these reasons, writers have used the metaphor since the earliest recorded stories.

The term "metaphor" is used broadly in this sense to describe any instance when something is figuratively compared to something else (Benzoukh, 2006). This includes the simile, which compares two things by using words such as like or as. In contrast, the metaphor in its usual meaning dispenses with such words, describing something by calling it another thing, as when Shakespeare's Romeo says, "*Juliet is the sun.*" Other metaphorical figures of speech include metonymy, using a single word to represent a complicated idea; for example, the word "Hollywood" is often used to describe the film industry. Metaphor in literature serves to make writing more accessible and colorful at the same time.



Another main function is that metaphors make readers think which is mainly in education (Hatch and Brown, 1995). By changing the topic they are reading and thinking about, they have to try harder to engage with what you are writing. This in turn encourages them to think harder about the topic you're writing about, and they will come away from it better-informed because metaphors encouraged them to extend themselves

Furthermore, metaphors can relate unfamiliar issues to familiar ones in order to make them clearer to readers (Grover, 1999). For example, if you are writing about economics for an audience of homemakers, you could contrast supply and demand with food in the refrigerator: "The less salami there is in the fridge, the more the kids argue over it." By showing the similarities between an unfamiliar situation and a familiar one, a metaphor can make the unfamiliar one more familiar.

### **1.9 Problems in Interpreting a Metaphor**

Metaphor is a controversial phenomenon in literature. It is an important language tool that supports the creative nature of human thought and communication, enabling us to reason in novel, imaginative ways (Kovecses, 2010). Thus, interpreting metaphor is a hard but important problem in natural language processing that has numerous applications (Shutova, 2013).

The first problem which the reader may face in interpreting this device is how the he differs this device from the other literary devices (Rumelhart, 1979). The second is how metaphors can be identified (Kleiber, 1999). Mooij (1976) proposes an elaborate semantic definition of metaphor which is proved to be difficult to implement. This definition maintains that a metaphorical expression produces a sort of shock and strangeness in its context ( Mooij, 1976). Last and not least, the context plays an important role in the interpretation of the metaphorical expression, and how the reader successfully paraphrased it in a given situation (Shutova, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to investigate the main concepts of metaphor as a blanket literary term. It looks at some theories which give the reader a clear image to comprehend this linguistic device. In fact, the main problem concerning metaphor is how the reader interprets it effectively and objectively to get the meaning of this figure of speech in a specific context. Purposely, the next chapter will attempt a critical review of the chosen literary productions which helps the reader gets clear idea different kinds of writings.

*Chapter Two*

*Critical Review*

## Chapter Two

### Critical Review

#### Introduction

Because most of the literary works reflect its tendencies, the history of literature is the history of literary criticism (Tayson, 2006). Therefore, The Medieval and the Elizabethan Ages of literature are an important ages of wealthy literary productivity (Dancan, 2005).

Despite the fact that Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare are the famous leaders of the above mentioned periods of literature, poetry and drama are most influential literary genres of the periods. Chaucerian poetry provides the reader with vivid depictions of the medieval life and its significance in the development of literature during the history; however the Elizabethan drama maintained its literary roots in the progression of the history of literature. Thus, it is one of the great literary periods of the European culture (Blamires, 2003).

For many reasons, the critical analysis of any literary production aims at extracting and analysing the main items in this literary work. In this case, there are *The Merchant's Tale* by Geoffrey Chaucer and *King Lear* by William Shakespeare as corpora for this critical study. Therefore, the study of literature is the study of life through the eyes of an artist, and as such is an important part in the arts of education. Literary analysis is also known as literary criticism. In this context, "criticism" means a close reading and interpretation of a literary text, such as a poem, a short story, a play, a novel, or even a movie. The elements that make up a literary work are closely examined for their meaning and significance. Some of these elements are themes, characters, and plot...etc.

#### Section one: *The Merchant's Tale* by Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Review

##### 2.1.1 The Medieval Period of Literature

Literature in England in this period was not just in English and Latin but in French as well, and developed in directions set largely in France. Epic and elegy gave way to Romance and lyric (Smith, 2007). English writing revived fully in English after 1360, and flowered in the reign of Richard II (Fletcher, 2002). It gained a literary standard in London English after 1425, and developed modern forms of verse, prose, and drama. Medieval Historical Criticism deals with the interpretation of history, but not facts, so historical accounts are considered narratives and can be analyzed as such (ibid.). In "*The Merchant's Prologue and Tale*" in *The*

*Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer, Chaucer expresses this in many of places throughout the tale (Bloom, 2008).

An excerpt from *The Canterbury Tales* describes how in Medieval Times the woman is not seen as equal to a man but as more of a helper and an object (Fletcher, 2002). Also, Chaucer illustrates how many people in the Medieval Times period followed the Catholic Church very religiously and they would use an example in any way they could to emphasize the meaning of something:

*When God created Adam, flesh and bone  
and saw him belly naked and alone  
he and his endless goodness thus began  
Let us now make a help-meet for this man  
like to himself. And he created Eve  
Here lies the proof of what we all believe  
that woman is man's helper, his resort  
(CT, 359).*

In the merchant's prologue Chaucer explains how the merchant's wife is basically a woman of violent temper and speech and is not patient at all. He also depicts how if he was not married to her he would not have the slightest bit of interest in her. This connects back to how women were not seen as equal, but only as helpers to men. In addition to that, men do not have any respect towards women. Medieval Historical criticism is expressed all throughout the entire *The Canterbury Tales* in many other places:

*I have a wife, the worst that there could be  
for if a friend were coupled with my friend were coupled to my wife  
She'd overmatch him, you can bet your life  
Why choose a special instance to recall  
her soaring malice? She's a shrew in all.  
There's a wide difference I'm bound to say  
between Griselda's patience and the way  
my wife behaves; her studied cruelty  
surpasses everything. If I were free  
never again, never again the snare  
(CT, 356)*

### 2.1.2 *The Merchant's Tale: A General Overview*

The *Canterbury Tales* is the most famous and critically acclaimed work of Geoffrey Chaucer, a late fourteenth century English poet (Dancan, 2005). Little is known about Chaucer's personal life, and even less about his education, but a number of existing records document his professional life (ibid.). Chaucer was born in London in the early 1340s, the only 45 son in his family (Bloom, 2008). His diplomatic travels brought him twice to Italy, where he might have met Boccaccio, whose writing influenced Chaucer's work, and Petrarch (Smith, 2007).

In or around 1378, Chaucer began to develop his vision of an English poetry that would be linguistically accessible to all obedient neither to the court, whose official language was French, nor to the Church, whose official 55 language was Latin (Fletcher, 2002). Instead, Chaucer wrote in the vernacular, the English that was spoken in and around London in his day (ibid.). Undoubtedly, he was influenced by the writings of the Florentines Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, who wrote in the Italian vernacular (ibid.). Even in England, the practice was becoming increasingly common among poets, although many were still writing in French and Latin (Smith, 2007).

Chaucer lived through a time of incredible tension in the English social sphere. The Black Death, which ravaged 80 England during Chaucer's childhood and remained widespread afterward, wiped out an estimated thirty to fifty percent of the population (ibid.). Consequently, the labor force gained increased leverage and was able to bargain for better wages, which led to resentment from the nobles and propertied classes (Dancan, 2005). These classes received another blow in 1381, when the peasantry, helped by the artisan class, revolted against them (Fletcher, 2002). The merchants were also wielding increasing power over the legal establishment, as the Hundred Years War created profit for England and, 85 consequently, appetite for luxury was growing (Bloom, 2008). The merchants capitalized on the demand for luxury goods, and when Chaucer was growing up, London was pretty much run by a merchant oligarchy, which attempted to control both the aristocracy and the lesser artisan classes (ibid.). Chaucer's political sentiments are unclear, for although *The Canterbury Tales* documents the various social tensions in the manner of the popular genre of estates satire, the narrator refrains from making overt political statements, and what he does say is in no way thought to represent 90 Chaucer's own sentiments (Bloom, 2008).

Chaucer's original plan for *The Canterbury Tales* was for each character to tell four tales, two on the way to Canterbury and two on the way back. But, instead of 120 tales, the

text ends after twenty-four tales, and the party is still on its way to Canterbury. Chaucer either planned to revise the structure to cap the work at twenty-four tales, or else left it incomplete when he died on October 25, 1400 (Bloom, 2008). Other writers and printers soon recognized *The 95 Canterbury Tales* as a masterful and highly original work (ibid.). Though Chaucer had been influenced by the great French and Italian writers of his age, works like Boccaccio's *Decameron* were not accessible to most English readers, so the formats of *The Canterbury Tales*, and the intense realism of its characters, were virtually unknown to readers in the fourteenth century before Chaucer (Dancan, 2005). William Caxton, England's first printer, published *The Canterbury Tales* in the 1470s, and it continued to enjoy a rich printing history that never truly faded. By the English Renaissance, poetry critic George Puttenham had identified Chaucer as the father of the English literary canon. Chaucer's project to create a literature and poetic language for all classes of society succeeded, and today Chaucer still stands as one of the great shapers of literary narrative and character (ibid.).

### **2.1.3 Language in *The Canterbury Tales***

*The Canterbury Tales* is written in Middle English, which bears a close visual resemblance to the English written and spoken today. In contrast, Old English (the language of *Beowulf*, for example) can be read only in modern translation or by students of Old English (Harrison, 1966). Students often read *The Canterbury Tales* in its original language, not only because of the similarity between Chaucer's Middle English and our own, but because the beauty and humor of the poetry all of its internal and external rhymes, and the sounds it produces would be lost in translation (ibid.).

The best way for a beginner to approach Middle English is to read it out loud. When the words are pronounced, it is often much easier to recognise what they mean in modern English (Danton, 2004). Most Middle English editions of the poem include a short pronunciation guide, which can help the reader to understand the language better. For particularly difficult words or phrases, most editions also include notes in the margin giving the modern versions of the words, along with a full glossary in the back (ibid.). Several online Chaucer glossaries exist, as well as a number of printed lexicons of Middle English (Fletcher, 2002).

### **2.1.4 The Literary Analysis of *The Merchant's Tale***

#### **2.1.4.1 The Plot Summary**

At the Tabard Inn, a tavern in Southward, near London, the narrator joins a company of twenty-nine pilgrims. The pilgrims, like the narrator, are traveling to the shrine of the martyr Saint Thomas Becket in Canterbury. The narrator gives a descriptive account of twenty-seven of these pilgrims, including a Knight, Squire, Yeoman, Prioress, Monk, Friar, Merchant, Clerk, Man of Law, Franklin, Haberdasher, Carpenter, Weaver, Dyer, Tapestry-Weaver, Cook, Shipman, Physician, Wife, Parson, Plowman, Miller, Manciple, Reeve, Summoner, Pardoner, and Host. The Host, whose name, we find out in the Prologue to the Cook's Tale, is Harry Bailey, suggests that the group ride together and entertain one another with stories. He decides that each pilgrim will tell two stories on the way to Canterbury and two on the way back. Whomever he judges to be the best storyteller will receive a meal at Bailey's tavern, courtesy of the other pilgrims. The pilgrims draw lots and determine that the Knight will tell the first tale.

*The Merchant's Tale's* prologue features an opinion from the merchant about the nature of marriage. His attitude is marked by dislike for the sacrament, and he feels that marriage is primarily a detriment to men. His attitude is apparently due to the dislike of his wife. The tale itself begins with an explanation of January, the knight of sixty years from Lombardy who has recently become Christian and is pondering his fate regarding the hereafter. Because of his transformation, January has decided that it would be prudent to take a wife. He calls upon his men to hear their opinion. Out of obligation, the knight's men agree with him and thus agree to aid January's search for a wife. After a time of searching, January has pondered his choice of women and decides that he wants a local commoner by the name of May who is of exquisite beauty for her class in society. He marries her and is highly anxious after the ceremony to have sexual relations with her. Damian, one of January's servants is immediately taken by May and falls ill due to the thought that he may not have her. After a time, Damian seeks out May and tells her his feelings, and she joins him in the lust. May and Damian begin communicating via letters. Shortly after May and Damian begin their affair, January loses his sight. Due to his jealousy and paranoia, he insists that May be constantly by his side and will not go anywhere without his hand on her. This makes it more difficult for May and Damian to communicate, but they manage through their continuing use of letters. Within the letters, Damian and May begin to plot a day in which their love may be manifested in a tree in January's beloved garden. The day comes and January goes into the garden with May, under the pretense of wanting to enjoy each other. May decides she wants fruit from a tree above, and asks January to lift her into the tree, where Damian is waiting. The two quickly begin

having sex, and two gods on a nearby hill discuss the activities. One of the gods, Pluto, declares that he will grant January his sight so that he may see the unfaithful behavior of his wife. Proserpina declares that she will provide May with a striking response that will leave January with no argument. The two gods carry through with their plan, and upon January's regaining of sight, he sees May and Damian. May comes down and explains that once January regained his sight, he was not seeing clearly and merely hallucinated May and Damian in the tree. To this point, January could not respond in anger and instead forgave her and moved past the event. The tale ends here with an epilogue that reiterates the merchant's dislike of marriage and woman's deceitful ways.

#### **2.1.4.2 The Themes**

Many themes are depicted in *The Merchant's Tale*, such as love, marriage, and consequences for bad actions. All of these themes are shown throughout the reading and construct the basis of the tale. The themes, listed above, foreshadow the ending for analytical readers of this tale.

##### **Marriage**

Marriage is one of the more immense themes that takes place in the tale. The tale begins with a knight, named January, in which his youth is wearing down while he is rising up in age. He is a knight for Christ sake and is still happily un-married, and he takes notice of this when Chaucer states

*To take a wife is a most glorious thing  
Especially if a man is old and hoary  
Then she's the fruit of all his wealth and glory*

(CT, 279).

January, like most honorable figures, wants to pass down his genes to his son, so the legacy of January remains for many generations and generations to come. Unfortunately, while choosing a wife to marry, he ends up picking a very unloyal wife and this leads into the next theme which is consequences for critical mistakes.

##### **Consequences for critical mistakes**



From the last statement above, January basically was not getting any younger and he wanted to wed a wife that pleased him in a variety of different ways. He goes and ask his fellow companions about this decision he is considering upon and Justinus comes in and exclaims:

*You're old enough- that's not what i disparage  
To think before you enter into marriage  
Especially if your wife is young and fair...*  
(CT, 365).

Justinus basically says that January should consider and think about this decision longer, because marriage is not a joke. It is a big deal and it is only right to marry someone you love and care for, not by just choosing a woman out of the blue. Another crucial mistake that January does is his description of the girl that he wanted to marry was a very un-intelligent move. As he states:

*The woman must on no account be old  
Certainly under twenty, and demure  
Flesh should be young though fish should be mature...*  
(CT, 361).

He is going for a very young potential wife and this is a mistake because as a extremely common situation, this woman can be considered a "gold-digger", because you know this under twenty year old is not messing with any broke knights. To conclude, marriage is a very huge decision which should take time and be based off of love and not for desire.

Love

Love is sprinkled everywhere in "*The Merchant's Tale*" and this particular tale shows much more than a lousy love story. The term "love is blind" is thrown around a lot and in this tale, the famous saying came into mind. As January was scouting for possible wives, he happens to come across one and as Chaucer describes:

*He banished all the others from his heart  
He chose her on his own authority  
For love is always blind and cannot see...*  
(CT, 366).

Love at first sight is phony and is an excuse to love someone only due to their looks. May, the woman he admires, might be the hottest woman on Earth, but she can have a horrible personality. He didn't truly love this woman and she didn't truly love him, it is like a sixth grade relationship that is going to end up failing. He cannot see that this "love" he has for this woman is not real and it is metaphorically speaking blind. In the picture presented below it is of a woman and a man hugging and the man has a blindfold on meaning he is blind in a way (the male is January and the female is May). What is more, hugging is a way of showing love and affection for someone, but it does not mean it is true love. Fake love is an epidemic in this crazed world and nothing can stop it. She could be holding another guy's hand and he will never notice. January and May can be married all they want, but their relationship is outrageous and no true love is being possessed.

#### Moral Message

The overall moral message of "*The Merchant's Tale*" is that everyone gets their just desserts. May and January married and were pronounced husband and wife, in reality May was more interested in Damian, who was a squire of January. May takes advantage of the fact that January is stricken with blindness and cannot see a soul. She assumes that the coast is clear and has an affair with Damian and all of a sudden January gets his eyesight back and sees his wife cheating on him. This just shows that bad things happen to bad people.

#### **2.1.4.3 The Setting**

The story took place in The Tabard Inn; the road to Canterbury in the fourteen century, after 1381.

#### **2.1.4.4 Point of View**

In the General Prologue, the narrator speaks in the first person, describing each of the pilgrims as they appeared to him. Though narrated by different pilgrims, each of the tales is told from an omniscient third-person point of view, providing the reader with the thoughts as well as actions of the characters.

#### **2.1.4.5 Characters' List**

The Merchant: The Merchant prefaces his tale by explaining that he understands the concepts of weeping and sorrow due to the despair of his marriage. Instead of telling of his own misfortune, he tells a tale about someone else who had similar experiences. Chaucer seems to approve of the Merchant. It is unclear whether the merchant really despises marriage because the entire tale is wrought with irony.

**January:** January is the main character around which this tale is based. He is a knight from Lombardy, roughly sixty years old, and the story explains that until this point, January has been good with the ladies but not a gentleman himself. At this old age, it seems apparent that he is turning from his heathen ways and decides to partake of the sacrament of marriage. For whatever reason, he decides to take a wife and asks that any suitable young woman be brought to him so that they may wed. January is not judicious in his choice of a wife, and even though his rationale for deciding to get married seems logical and holy, his haste proves otherwise. January represents old age and the common susceptibility of men to the antics of women. In the same sense, January also represents the desires of men and is portrayed as a man who is somewhat ignorant to reason. At one point in the narrative, January becomes blind, both in the literal and figurative sense. It is at this point that the reader is aware of May's unfaithful activities towards January. January suffers in one way or another from several of the seven sins. January's name implies the tired, winter-like qualities of his character whereas May's name conveys the aura of her youthfulness and spring-like stage in life.

**May:** May is a common town girl whom January has seen in the streets and decides unilaterally to wed. May initially seems innocent and beautiful, but as the story goes on, it becomes apparent that she is not innocent, because of her apparent background of sexual encounters with other men and her unfaithfulness to January after they have been married. May represents the desires of the common female, which is to pursue her will whether or not that means contradicting and cheating on her husband.

**Damian:** Damian is January's top servant. He is an attractive man who instantly falls in love with May as soon as he sees her. May and Damian determine that their love is mutual, and they write letters to each other, particularly often after January has become blind. Damian proves that he is not loyal to January and that he is not of great virtue or dignity.

**Placebo:** Placebo is one of January's brothers. He strongly supports January's decision to get married and also the way in which he wants to do it. He favors the sacrament of marriage.

**Justinus:** Justinus is another of January's brothers. He strongly opposes January's decision to get married. He has become disenfranchised with the concept of marriage primarily because of his own wife. Justinus is presented as the opposition, but this is ironic because Justinus seems to concur with that of the tale and the merchant.

**January's Men:** January's men are important because January seeks council with them as to his decision about marriage. They ultimately support him, probably out of duty, and they conform

to his wishes about finding a wife for him. It is brought forth that January's decision was partially justified by the support of his men, because the tale mentions a Bible verse in which it is claimed that wise men seek council about important matters with others.

The Gods: The gods in this story, oddly enough, appear to be of Pagan origin. Many times throughout the tale, these Pagan gods are referenced as a source of wisdom and justification. Pluto is responsible for January regaining his sight, and Pluto's wife (Proserpina) is responsible for supplying May with an appropriate response to January's interrogation as to her adulterous behavior.

#### **2.1.4.6 Characterization**

In "*The Merchant's Tale*", the focus is on three on three main characters who each have different desires (Bloom, 2008). First, January is an old knight who wants to marry a young woman.

*Married man achieves a state of bliss that's orderly and fortunate* (CT, 358). This shows that he believes marriage is good, which would lead one to believe that he wants to have a wife.

He soon meets May and marries her, meeting his desire. One can infer that January is pleased with his wife because he wants his guests to leave the wedding so that they could be alone together. "*I wish these guests would hurry up and go!*" (CT, 370) January proclaims anxiously.

The next character, May, is married to January. May is in her twenties, and could be considered deceiving. It seems as though things only went downhill after their wedding, "*She didn't think his games were worth a groat,*" (CT, 373). One can infer that she was unhappy during her marriage as she admits, "*She could not rid her heart of Damian*" (CT, 376). After January is blinded, May soon meets her desire of having an affair with Damian.

Lastly, Damian is a squire of January who is also young. After January and May's wedding day, he becomes ill and is not able to serve the knight. Feeling bad, January makes an effort to see him, "*I'll visit him myself; and so shall May*" (CT, 374). This proves that January does appreciate him, indicating that he is like-able and a well worker. Feeling better, Damian wants to continue things with May, "*Holding her hand and never letting go*", (CT, 379).

This proves Damian's love for May, which is eventually met as they have an affair.

Damian's outrageous goal was met in the end as he has an affair with her in January's beloved garden.

## **Section Two: *King Lear* by William Shakespeare: A Critical Review**

### **2.2.1 The Elizabethan Period of Literature**

The Elizabethan age of literature was the epoch of English history of the Queen Elizabeth it's regain (1558-1603) (Dancan, 2005). Historians often depict it as the golden age of in English history.

William Shakespeare was alive and well during the Elizabethan era. This is the time period in which he produced his works (Smith, 2007). Likewise, the art in this time period took huge strides from his previous years (ibid.).

### **2.2.2 *King Lear*: A General Overview**

*King Lear* was written in 1604 or 1605, as far as can be established. It certainly incorporates material from Samuel Hartnett's *A Declaration of Several Popish Impostures*, London, (1603), an exposure of a fraudulent case of spirit possession, and it was registered with the Company of Stationers on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1607. The Quarto was published by Nathaniel Butler at the sign of the Pied Bull in 1608, and a significantly different version included in the Folio of 1623(Mack,2000).

*King Lear* was rewritten in 1681, twenty-one years after the re-introduction of the Monarchy. The play was no longer considered suitable in Shakespeare's version, and Nahum Tate rewrote it in line with Restoration notions of 'decorum' (Tayson, 2006). Although Tate's version is justly reviled, it is in some ways truer to its sources (Raphael Holinshed's *The Third Volume of Chronicles* (1587) and an anonymous play *King Leir*) in allowing Cordelia and Lear to survive (ibid.). However, in the Holinshed version, Cordelia does eventually hang herself in prison. *King Lear* was undoubtedly too uncomfortable for Restoration tastes, and it remains a troubling and harrowing play. Shakespeare's version was not restored in performance until 1838(Mack, 2000).

The range of critical opinion expressed on *King Lear* in nearly four hundred years is obviously too extensive and varied to retail here (Tayson,2006). In particular the vast

expansion of literary criticism in the Twentieth Century renders an inclusive review impossible (ibid.). As usual, there are no contemporary accounts of Shakespearean performances, and the first critical response is implied, therefore, in a wholesale rewriting of the play by Nahum Tate in 1681(ibid.). Although the critical response is varied almost all critics agree on three points; *King Lear* is ‘great’; *King Lear* is bleak; as Maynard Mack says, ‘*King Lear* is a problem’( Mack; 2000).

Tate’s ‘Dedication’ to *The History of King Lear* states:

*Tw’as my good Fortune to light on one Expedient to rectify  
what was wanting in the Regularity and Probability of the Tale*

Tate’s ‘expedient’ was to invent a romance between Cordelia and Edgar. The terms Tate uses throw some light on Restoration critical theory. ‘Regularity’ is a matter of form, of adherence to a set of dramatic and aesthetic rules, although questions of ‘decorum’ have a moral dimension. More modern interpretations find a high degree of integration in the form of *King Lear*; although the play deals with chaos it is a highly wrought artifact, both linguistically and dramatically. Tate’s ‘probability’ has remained a concern for critics, notably A.C.Bradley, but there is a third and perhaps more significant factor Tate does not explicitly address here, although it clearly concerned him: *King Lear* seems to lack a comfortable moral overview, a position from which the events of the play can be seen to uphold some over-arching moral position, or postulate a moral direction in the world.

The moral interpretation of the play depends on the ‘fitness’, or justice of the outcome for each individual and of the play as a whole. The judgment of ‘fitness’ may be based, as for S.T. Coleridge, on the predominant characteristic of each character, or on an Old Testament view in which God punishes the characters for their sins. Other Christian interpretations, such as G. Wilson Knight, see renunciation of the world as the moral lesson to be drawn.

For Samuel Johnson the play was too much to bear. ‘There is no scene which does not add to the aggravation of distress...’ The pressure mounts relentlessly throughout, and the tragic conclusion seems ‘contrary to the natural ideas of justice:

*I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia’s death that I know not  
whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I  
undertook to revise them as an editor.*

(Lagett, 1988)

In 1811, A.W. Schlegel disagreed with the verdict that there was an improper conclusion to the play, feeling that ‘After so many sufferings, Lear can only die.’ (*Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*). The poet John Keats wrote a sonnet on Lear, not one of his finest works, (Jan. 1818), and had previously (Dec. 1817) commented on the play in a letter, praising its:

*Intensity, capable of making all disagreeable evaporates, from their  
being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth.*

(Bate; 1989: p 168).

A.C. Bradley’s *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) includes an influential chapter on Lear which sees the play as the story of Lear’s education and redemption. Bradley also notes the play’s size; ‘*King Lear* is too huge for the stage’; ‘*King Lear* seems to me Shakespeare’s greatest achievement, but it seems to me *not* his best play’. Bradley goes on to enumerate a large number of instances in which he finds the plot and character motivation faulty. These are too numerous to reproduce here, but most are at least arguably accurate. Bradley’s chapter on *King Lear* is often cited; Jonathan Dollimore mentions him with approval in *Radical Tragedy* (1989). Bradley does however criticise the blinding of Gloucester as ‘revolting or shocking’ (neither of which could be considered objections in the age of Quentin Tarantino). Bradley concludes that ‘Shakespeare, set upon the dramatic effect of the great scenes...was exceptionally careless of probability, clearness and consistency...’

G. Wilson Knight, in his highly Christian interpretation of Shakespeare’s Tragedies *The Wheel of Fire* tries to justify the cruelties of the play by reference to an overarching Christian redemption. His chapter on *Lear* draws valuable connections with comedy but follows Bradley in seeing the play as primarily the story of Lear’s education and redemption. This is the only way, it seems, that a positive message can be extracted from the tragedy. Much of the critical history of *King Lear* is an attempt to ameliorate the bleakness and cruelty of the play by reading a religious moral into it.

In an influential essay which refuses this interpretation compares *King Lear* with Samuel Beckett’s *Endgame*, Jan Kott finds that:

*King Lear makes a tragic mockery of all eschatologies: of the heaven  
promised on earth and the Heaven promised after death...of  
cosmogony and of the rational view of history; of the gods and good  
nature, of man made in ‘image and likenesses. In King Lear both the  
medieval and Renaissance orders of established values disintegrate.*

*All that remains at the end of this gigantic pantomime is the earth  
empty and bleeding.*

(Bate, 1989p: 168)

Kott's bleak view seems close to the moral universe of *King Lear*; despite the efforts of Wilson-Knight, J.F. Danby and others, *Lear* seems nihilistic. To take the view that the sufferings of Gloucester and Lear, and the death of Cordelia are justified by their behavior seems ruthless and brutal, the product of an evil morality.

If *King Lear* is not morally Christian, some critics have taken the view that it is about power. This is certainly Jonathan Dollimore's view in *Radical Tragedy*: 'King Lear is above all a play about power, property and inheritance.' (Bate; 1989). This view sees the play as being merely realistic in its view of society as a ruthless struggle for power.

*Lear* remains, then, 'great', 'bleak', and 'a problem', not easily reduced to one theme or interpretation, like much of Shakespeare's late work it provokes many and varied critical responses. It can be 'Christian', 'Patriarchal' (Bate; 1989). 'Nihilistic', about redemption, power, loyalty or renunciation, it is both tragic and comedic. Shakespeare's flexibility and adaptability, what Frank Kermode calls the 'patience' of the play, allow a variety of interpretations in line with whatever cultural assumptions are current. This is Shakespeare's great strength, and it springs from his ability to present the viewpoint of each character as independently justifiable, an inherently dramatic talent which resists final closure and definitive interpretation.

### **2.2.3 The Literary Analysis of *King Lear***

#### **2.2.3.1 The Plot Summary**

Lear, the aging king of Britain, decides to step down from the throne and divide his kingdom evenly among his three daughters. First, however, he puts his daughters through a test, asking each to tell him how much she loves him. Goneril and Regan, Lear's older daughters, give their father flattering answers. However, Cordelia, Lear's youngest and favorite daughter, remains silent, saying that she has no words to describe how much she loves her father. Lear flies into a rage and disowns Cordelia. The king of France, who has courted Cordelia, says that he still wants to marry her even without her land, and she accompanies him to France without her father's blessing.



Lear quickly learns that he has made a bad decision. Goneril and Regan swiftly begin to undermine the little authority that Lear still holds. Unable to believe that his beloved daughters are betraying him, Lear slowly goes insane. He flees his daughters' houses to wander on a heath during a great thunderstorm, accompanied by his Fool and by Kent, a loyal nobleman in disguise.

Meanwhile, an elderly nobleman named Gloucester also experiences family problems. His illegitimate son, Edmund, tricks him into believing that his legitimate son, Edgar, is trying to kill him. Fleeing the manhunt that his father has set for him, Edgar disguises himself as a crazy beggar and calls himself "Poor Tom." Like Lear, he heads out onto the heath.

When the loyal Gloucester realizes that Lear's daughters have turned against their father, he decides to help Lear in spite of the danger. Regan and her husband, Cornwall, discover him helping Lear, accuse him of treason, blind him, and turn him out to wander the countryside. He ends up being led by his disguised son, Edgar, toward the city of Dover, where Lear has also been brought.

In Dover, a French army lands as part of an invasion led by Cordelia in an effort to save her father. Edmund apparently becomes romantically entangled with both Regan and Goneril, whose husband, Albany, is increasingly sympathetic to Lear's cause. Goneril and Edmund conspire to kill Albany.

The despairing Gloucester tries to commit suicide, but Edgar saves him by pulling the strange trick of leading him off an imaginary cliff. Meanwhile, the English troops reach Dover, and the English, led by Edmund, defeat the Cordelia-led French. Lear and Cordelia are captured. In the climactic scene, Edgar duels with and kills Edmund; we learn of the death of Gloucester; Goneril poisons Regan out of jealousy over Edmund and then kills herself when her treachery is revealed to Albany; Edmund's betrayal of Cordelia leads to her needless execution in prison; and Lear finally dies out of grief at Cordelia's passing. Albany, Edgar, and the elderly Kent are left to take care of the country under a cloud of sorrow and regret.

#### **2.2.3.2 The Themes**

There are many themes tackled in this play which are as follows:

## Justice

*King Lear* is a brutal play, filled with human cruelty and awful, seemingly meaningless disasters. The play's succession of terrible events raises an obvious question for the characters namely, whether there is any possibility of justice in the world, or whether the world is fundamentally indifferent or even hostile to humankind. Various characters offer their opinions: "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; They kill us for their sport," Gloucester muses, realizing it foolish for humankind to assume that the natural world works in parallel with socially or morally convenient notions of justice (4.1.37–38). Edgar, on the other hand, insists that "the gods are just," believing that individuals get what they deserve (5.3.169). But, in the end, we are left with only a terrifying uncertainty although the wicked die, the good die along with them, culminating in the awful image of Lear cradling Cordelia's body in his arms. There is goodness in the world of the play, but there is also madness and death, and it is difficult to tell which triumphs in the end.

## Authority versus Chaos

*King Lear* is about political authority as much as it is about family dynamics. Lear is not only a father but also a king, and when he gives away his authority to the unworthy and evil Goneril and Regan, he delivers not only himself and his family but all of Britain into chaos and cruelty. As the two wicked sisters indulge their appetite for power and Edmund begins his own ascension, the kingdom descends into civil strife, and we realize that Lear has destroyed not only his own authority but *all* authority in Britain. The stable, hierarchal order that Lear initially represents falls apart and disorder engulfs the realm.

The failure of authority in the face of chaos recurs in Lear's wanderings on the heath during the storm. Witnessing the powerful forces of the natural world, Lear comes to understand that he, like the rest of humankind, is insignificant in the world. This realization proves much more important than the realization of his loss of political control, as it compels him to re-prioritize his values and become humble and caring. With this newfound understanding of himself, Lear hopes to be able to confront the chaos in the political realm as well.

## Reconciliation

Darkness and unhappiness pervade *King Lear*, and the devastating Act 5 represents one of the most tragic endings in all of literature. Nevertheless, the play presents the central relationship that between Lear and Cordelia as a dramatic embodiment of true, self-sacrificing love. Rather than despising Lear for banishing her, Cordelia remains devoted, even from afar, and eventually brings an army from a foreign country to rescue him from his tormentors. Lear, meanwhile, learns a tremendously cruel lesson in humility and eventually reaches the point where he can reunite joyfully with Cordelia and experience the balm of her forgiving love. Lear's recognition of the error of his ways is an ingredient vital to reconciliation with Cordelia, not because Cordelia feels wronged by him but because he has understood the sincerity and depth of her love for him. His maturation enables him to bring Cordelia back into his good graces; a testament to love's ability to flourish, even if only fleetingly, amid the horror and chaos that engulfs the rest of the play.

#### **2.2.3.3 The Setting**

This Shakespearean tragedy takes place in Britain in the old ages.

#### **2.2.3.4 Point of View**

Obviously, *King Lear* play is written in third person narration objectively.

#### **2.2.3.5 Characters' List**

Shakespeare always familiar with his character, he presents vivid language in which he describes their inner's nature and relationship because "There no kind of Shakespearean characters" (Cater and McRae, 1996:89).

**King Lear:** The aging king of Britain and the protagonist of the play. Lear is used to enjoying absolute power and to being flattered, and he does not respond well to being contradicted or challenged. At the beginning of the play, his values are notably hollow he prioritizes the appearance of love over actual devotion and wishes to maintain the power of a king while unburdening himself of the responsibility. Nevertheless, he inspires loyalty in subjects such as Gloucester, Kent, Cordelia, and Edgar, all of whom risk their lives for him.

**Cordelia:** Lear's youngest daughter, disowned by her father for refusing to flatter him. Cordelia is held in extremely high regard by all of the good characters in the play the king of France marries her for her virtue alone, overlooking her lack of dowry. She remains loyal to Lear despite his cruelty toward her, forgives him, and displays a mild and forbearing temperament even toward her evil sisters, Goneril and Regan. Despite her obvious virtues,

Cordelia's reticence makes her motivations difficult to read, as in her refusal to declare her love for her father at the beginning of the play.

Goneril: Lear's ruthless oldest daughter and the wife of the duke of Albany. Goneril is jealous, treacherous, and amoral. Shakespeare's audience would have been particularly shocked at Goneril's aggressiveness, a quality that it would not have expected in a female character. She challenges Lear's authority, boldly initiates an affair with Edmund, and wrests military power away from her husband.

Regan: Lear's middle daughter and the wife of the duke of Cornwall. Regan is as ruthless as Goneril and as aggressive in all the same ways. In fact, it is difficult to think of any quality that distinguishes her from her sister. When they are not egging each other on to further acts of cruelty, they jealously compete for the same man, Edmund.

Gloucester: A nobleman loyal to King Lear whose rank, earl, is below that of duke. The first thing we learn about Gloucester is that he is an adulterer, having fathered a bastard son, Edmund. His fate is in many ways parallel to that of Lear: he misjudges which of his children to trust. He appears weak and ineffectual in the early acts, when he is unable to prevent Lear from being turned out of his own house, but he later demonstrates that he is also capable of great bravery.

Edgar: Gloucester's older, legitimate son. Edgar plays many different roles, starting out as a gullible fool easily tricked by his brother, then assuming a disguise as a mad beggar to evade his father's men, then carrying his impersonation further to aid Lear and Gloucester, and finally appearing as an armored champion to avenge his brother's treason. Edgar's propensity for disguises and impersonations makes it difficult to characterize him effectively.

Edmund: Gloucester's younger, illegitimate son. Edmund resents his status as a bastard and schemes to usurp Gloucester's title and possessions from Edgar. He is a formidable character, succeeding in almost all of his schemes and wreaking destruction upon virtually all of the other characters.

Kent: A nobleman of the same rank as Gloucester who is loyal to King Lear. Kent spends most of the play disguised as a peasant, calling himself "Caius," so that he can continue to serve Lear even after Lear banishes him. He is extremely loyal, but he gets himself into trouble throughout the play by being extremely blunt and outspoken.

Albany: The husband of Lear's daughter Goneril. Albany is good at heart, and he eventually denounces and opposes the cruelty of Goneril, Regan, and Cornwall. Yet he is indecisive and lacks foresight, realizing the evil of his allies quite late in the play.

Cornwall: The husband of Lear's daughter Regan. Unlike Albany, Cornwall is domineering, cruel, and violent, and he works with his wife and sister-in-law Goneril to persecute Lear and Gloucester.

Fool: Lear's jester, who uses double-talk and seemingly frivolous songs to give Lear important advice.

Oswald: The steward, or chief servant, in Goneril's house. Oswald obeys his mistress's commands and helps her in her conspiracies.

### 2.2.3.6 Characterization

The art of is an ancient characterization from the ages of Aristototle. In the analysis of the characterization of the character, we would like to find a character trait for each category . Based on the character we choose and the traits of that character, the reader should be able to make a definitive claim about that character, which will be his thesis. Kim Kay who writes of characterization in which he claims that:

*Character traits fall into three main categories: physical, identity, and social/moral. Physical traits refer to the character's appearance, not only their looks, but also their style of clothing and body language. A character's identity is made up of personality traits, such as habits and quirks, vices, psychological/emotional problems, and behavior. Their identity also includes external things, such as occupation, education, and hobbies. Social/moral traits define how a character interacts with others and his or her code of ethics.*

Mrs. Saadoun's lecture of characterization on: 23/04/2013

### *King Lear*

Lear's basic flaw at the beginning of the play is that he values appearances above reality. He wants to be treated as a king and to enjoy the title, but he doesn't want to fulfill a king's obligations of governing for the good of his subjects. Similarly, his test of his daughters demonstrates that he values a flattering public display of love over real love. He doesn't ask "*which of you doth love us most,*" but rather, "*which of you shall we say doth love us most?*" (KL.1.49). Most readers conclude that Lear is simply blind to the truth, but Cordelia is already his favorite daughter at the beginning of the play, so presumably he knows

that she loves him the most. Nevertheless, Lear values Goneril and Regan's fawning over Cordelia's sincere sense of filial duty.

### *Cordelia*

Cordelia's chief characteristics are devotion, kindness, beauty, and honesty to a fault, perhaps. She is contrasted throughout the play with Goneril and Regan, who are neither honest nor loving, and who manipulate their father for their own ends. By refusing to take part in Lear's love test at the beginning of the play, Cordelia establishes herself as a repository of virtue, and the obvious authenticity of her love for Lear makes clear the extent of the king's error in banishing her. For most of the middle section of the play, she is offstage, but as we observe the depredations of Goneril and Regan and watch Lear's descent into madness, Cordelia is never far from the audience's thoughts, and her beauty is venerably described in religious terms. Indeed, rumors of her return to Britain begin to surface almost immediately, and once she lands at Dover, the action of the play begins to move toward her, as all the characters converge on the coast. Cordelia's reunion with Lear marks the apparent restoration of order in the kingdom and the triumph of love and forgiveness over hatred and spite. This fleeting moment of familial happiness makes the devastating finale of *King Lear* that much crueler, as Cordelia, the personification of kindness and virtue becomes a literal sacrifice to the heartlessness of an apparently unjust world.

### *Edmund*

Of all of the play's villains, Edmund is the most complex and sympathetic. He is a consummate schemer, a Machiavellian character eager to seize any opportunity and willing to do anything to achieve his goals. However, his ambition is interesting insofar as it reflects not only a thirst for land and power but also a desire for the recognition denied to him by his status as a bastard. His serial treachery is not merely self-interested; it is a conscious rebellion against the social order that has denied him the same status as Gloucester's legitimate son, Edgar. "Now, gods, stand up for bastards," Edmund commands, but in fact he depends not on divine aid but on his own initiative (*KL.2.22*). He is the ultimate self-made man, and he is such a cold and capable villain that it is entertaining to watch him work, much as the audience can appreciate the clever wickedness of Iago in *Othello*. Only at the close of the play does Edmund show a flicker of weakness. Mortally wounded, he sees that both Goneril and Regan have died for him, and whispers, "*Yet Edmund was beloved*" (*KL.3.23*). After this ambiguous

statement, he seems to repent of his villainy and admits to having ordered Cordelia's death. His peculiar change of heart, rare among Shakespearean villains, is enough to make the audience wonder, amid the carnage, whether Edmund's villainy sprang not from some innate cruelty but simply from a thwarted, misdirected desire for the familial love that he witnessed around him.

### Goneril and Regan

There is little good to be said for Lear's older daughters, who are largely indistinguishable in their villainy and spite. Goneril and Regan are clever or at least clever enough to flatter their father in the play's opening scene and, early in the play, their bad behavior toward Lear seems matched by his own pride and temper. But any sympathy that the audience can muster for them evaporates quickly, first when they turn their father out into the storm at the end of Act 2 and then when they viciously put out Gloucester's eyes in Act 3. Goneril and Regan are, in a sense, personifications of evil they have no conscience, only appetite. It is this greedy ambition that enables them to crush all opposition and make themselves mistresses of Britain. Ultimately, however, this same appetite brings about their undoing. Their desire for power is satisfied, but both harbor sexual desire for Edmund, which destroys their alliance and eventually leads them to destroy each other. Evil, the play suggests, inevitably turns in on itself.

## 2.2.4 The Style

*King Lear*, like Shakespeare's other plays, is written in a combination of verse and prose.

### 2.2.4.1 The Use of Verse in the Writing Style

Reading *King Lear* often feels like reading a very lengthy poem and that's because Shakespeare's characters often speak in verse (Dunton, 2004).

The nobles typically speak in unrhymed "iambic pentameter" also called "blank verse". Don't let the fancy names intimidate you it's pretty simple once you get the hang of it. Let's start with a definition of "Iambic Pentameter":

An "iamb" is an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one. "Penta" means "five," and "meter" refers to a regular rhythmic pattern (ibid.). So "iambic pentameter" is a kind of *rhythmic pattern* that consist of *five iambs* per line (Riding. It's the most common rhythm in English poetry and sounds like five heartbeats: ba-DUM, ba-DUM, ba-DUM, ba-DUM, ba-DUM (ibid.).

Let's try it out on this line from *King Lear*:

Since NOW we WILL diVEST us BOTH of RULE

Every second syllable is accented, so this is classic iambic pentameter (Dunton, 2004). When the lines have no rhyme scheme, we call it "Unrhymed Iambic Pentameter," which is also known as "Blank Verse."

Blank verse, as we've said, is typically reserved for the nobility and other important characters since it's kind of a formal way to speak (ibid.). In the first half of the play, King Lear speaks almost entirely in blank verse, which is befitting of his social station.

### **2.2.3.2 The Use of Prose in the Writing Style**

Not everyone in the play speaks in blank verse, which we've established is an elegant, high class way of talking. In Shakespeare's play's, characters lower on the social scale don't talk in a special poetic rhythm; they just talk (Ford, 1982).

In *King Lear*, it's worth noting that prose speech is often a sign of madness (ibid.). When Lear goes insane, he often rants in prose and then switches back to eloquent blank verse, which alerts the audience to the fact that Lear is losing his mind (Bradley, 1904).

## **Conclusion**

The study of literature is the study of literary criticism through the eyes of artist because the literary theory is the eye of the literary text. Therefore, the reader-response theory is one of the main influential and practical models for the reader.

The obvious fact that Chaucer and Shakespeare are the most commonly criticised writers' of their periods; their style is the most influential element in this study. Thus, the critical analysis of any literary production enables the reader to extract and interpret all the



elements of fiction in addition to the style of the author for better understanding of this piece of literature.

To sum up, *The Merchant's Tale*, and *King Lear* are two pieces of literature which are full of various used figures of speech including metaphors of nature and blindness that are the frequently used in the next chapter.

# ***Chapter Three***

***Investigating Nature and Blindness  
Metaphors in Chaucer's The  
Merchant's Tale and Shakespeare's  
King Lear***

## Chapter Three:

### Investigating Nature and Blindness Metaphors in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

#### Introduction

Geoffrey Chaucer's and William Shakespeare's works have received much of critical attention for their individual, social and political implications. The literary critics see that they embody various themes such as: justice, love, marriage, reconciliation, nature and blindness etc.

Linking these two classic works which are Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear* respectively of the Middle and the Elizabethan English Ages of literature are the themes of nature and blindness. In *King Lear*, themes abound including those of a King who is curiously naive in the ways of human nature, a King who finds himself in a world of negated values, and a King faced with moral blindness and unnaturalness. Such concerns are mirrored by issues of blind love, a more general inability to see reality and the cunning of womanhood in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale*. Using a range of secondary sources this dissertation compares the use of blindness and nature as a metaphor in both works.

When reading *The Merchant's Tale* and *King Lear*, one notices how the two writers devote many paragraphs describing nature and blindness throughout the narrative within the events of the story. Critics agree that it is used not only for artistic and aesthetic ends but also for the role it plays on the characters and the events of the narrative as a result they are very good symbols. Aspects of nature and blindness are depicted by the two writers.

#### 3.1 Blindness Metaphor

In both of literary works, the themes of nature and blindness are included. In Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale*, blindness theme is clearly discovered throughout the poem:

*The garden through which site moves has echoes not only of Paradise, and so of the innocence which first attached to Adam and Eve, but also of the ironic and contested garden in The Merchant's Tale, where blindness and innocence, foolishness and insight, also play a part.*

(Bloom, 2008).

Whereas blindness's theme in Shakespeare's *king Lear* is usually defined as the inability of the eye to see but, as Shakespeare proves, it can also refer to a mental flaw. Shakespeare uses two important characters in this play to display some type of blindness, *King Lear* and Gloucester. Perhaps their blindness was the cause of the terrible decisions that each of them seemed to make.

Although *King Lear* is not physically blind, he displays many acts of mental blindness. He displays his lack of sight when he is deceived by two of his daughters. He is made vulnerable to destruction by his lack of insight. This is a very surprising characteristic because he is a king. A king should be aware of things going on in his presence. *King Lear's* blindness also causes him to banish his daughter, Cordelia, because he does not see the love she has for him. *King Lear's* vision improves throughout the play but not before he also banishes a very loyal follower, Kent. The terrible decisions that King Lear makes, ultimately leads to his own downfall.

Gloucester was also plagued by mental blindness. He was blind to see the good in his bastard son, Edgar and the evil ways of his son, Edmund. He allowed Edmund to cloud his vision with evil ideas that Edgar was plotting to kill him. It was not until the Duke of Cornwall removed his eyes that he was able to see the truth concerning the loyalty/love and disloyalty/hatred of his sons. He stated, "*I stumbled when I saw*" (*KL*, 4. 01). This ironic statement made by Gloucester speaks volumes.

*King Lear* and Gloucester both display the characteristic of only seeing what is presented on the surface. Their attitude and confidence proves to be a major downfall in the course of their life. Shakespeare used this theme throughout the play in order to tell people that everything in the universe cannot be seen solely with the eye, but with the heart and soul.

Because blindness metaphor is one of our concerns in this section, the illustration will be extractions from *MT* and *KL* in the same time trying to compare between them using the structure, the function, and its aim after the interpretation of this device as well. Therefore, this investigation will base on the linguistic theory of metaphor. One of the basic issues that face the linguists in the studying of the metaphor is the meaning. Searle believes that metaphorical expressions mean what the speakers intended them to mean (Searle, 1979), this was of most significant point that the linguists try to cover. Searle points out in his review which published in 1979, unlike in a literal or other non-metaphorical expression; the

speaker's meaning in a figurative metaphorical language is not the same as the literal meaning.

### 3.1.1. Blindness Metaphor in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale*

The frequent use of blindness metaphor can easily be detected in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale*:

1-The old knight in the story represents the human being who has different types of desire and who longs for several things to satisfy himself. Some of these natural desires may take over, such as the one described in the following person:

*And sixty years a wifeless man was he,  
And followed ever his bodily delight  
In women, where of his appetite,  
As these fool layman will, so it appears.*

*(MT; Lines:47,48,49,50)*

(T) in this metaphor (woman) is compared to food which is the omitted vehicle in the example and this can be deduced from the ground which links them (where of was his appetite). The topic is the description of a man's desire.

2-The way women are looked at differs considerably since everyone has their own criteria that allows them to judge one of these perspectives sees the woman as a man's way to reach Heaven since she becomes his hell and his sanction. The following depicts this attitude:

*Despair not but retain in memory,  
Perhaps she may your purgatory be!  
She may be God's tool; she may be God's whip;  
Then shall your spirit up to Heaven skip  
Swifter than does an arrow from the bow!*

*(MT; Lines:460,461,462,463,464)*

The metaphor in this example has a tenor (she) which refers to the woman, a vehicle to which it is associated and compared (God's whip). The ground shared between the two is (the sanction) they represent and the hell one is obliged to endure. The topic is the description of the woman.

3-January is described as a man who drinks wine; different kinds of wine in order to make his love stronger. One night, he came back home hastily and goes forth to his wine. An account of his behavior is provided in "*The Merchant's Tale*" as follows:

*He drunk of claret, hippocras, vernage,  
All spiced and hot to heighten his love's rage:*

*(MT;Lines:596,597)*

In the example above, a metaphor is composed of a tenor which is (love), a vehicle which is the human being and is not explicitly mentioned in the versus, but it can be extracted from the ground (rage). Thus, love is compared to a human being who becomes angry.

4-The character (May) in *The Merchant's Tale* proves that she is very important for January's happiness; with her, he experiences new powerful feelings. She is his paradise.

*And January lay down close beside  
His fresh young May, his paradise, his bride.*

*(MT;Lines:610,611)*

In this example, the tenor (fresh young May) and the vehicle is (his paradise). What brings these two elements together is the ground share between them (the comfort) they bring to the character's life (January). The topic is the description of May.

5-Jealousy, is a feeling experienced by the human being and is caused by the powerful feeling of love towards someone else in some cases, such as in the line of verse bellow:

*And therewithar the fire of jealousy  
Lest that his wife should fall to some folly,  
So burned within his heart that he would fain  
Both him and her some man had swiftly slain.*

*(MT;Lines:862,863,864,865)*

The metaphor here has a tenor which is (jealousy) that is compared to another element (fire) both the tenor and the vehicle share a ground (they burn).

6-Women in the metaphor are usually compared to different elements, such as flowers, stars, the moon, etc. Another element he added to this list is the dove as shown in the following example:

*Rise up, my wife, my love, my lady free;  
The turtle's voice is heard, my dove so sweet;  
The winter's passed, the rain is gone, and the sleet;  
Come forth now with your two eyes columbine!*

*(MT;Lines:986,927,928,929)*

In this example of metaphor, the tenor is the (wife), the vehicle is the (dove) and the shared ground is the (sweetness) they both have. The topic is the description of the wife.

### 3.1.2 Blindness Metaphors in *King Lear*

On the other hand, blindness metaphors in *King Lear* are also frequently used in the play such as:

1-love is a theme frequently referred in the play *King Lear* written by Shakespeare. The degree of love is sometimes shown to bring a sense of blindness when it reaches its peak. this can be exemplified by the following:

*GONERIL: Sir,*

*I love you more than words can wield the matter;*

*Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty;*

*Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;*

*No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor;*

*As much as child o'er loved, or father found;*

*A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;*

*Beyond all manner of so much I love you.*

(KL, Scene 1; 07)

In the example above, metaphor components are (T) is (love), (V) is (weapon) which is omitted and not explicitly mentioned and (G) that brings the tenor and the vehicle together wield to show the degree of love. (Tp) is the description of love.

2-the following example is also a blindness metaphor in which the degree of love is also emphasized. The character expresses his mentions to his woman:

*Cordelia: Then poor Cordelia!*

*And yet not so; since, iam sure, my love's*

*More richer than my tongue.*

(KL, Scene 1; 08)

In this statement, the playwright uses the same way of expressing ideas in which uses a comparative way as in the previous example. Consequently, the writer wants to affair and exaggerate his love to the woman he loves in order to convince her. In fact, there are the

following components of metaphor here: (love) is the (T) and (tongue) is the (V). They are joined together by (G) which is the (richness). (Tp) here is the description of love as rich.

3-The state of mind is also used in *King Lear* as a way to express strong emotions embodied in love as can be seen in the following example:

*CORDELIA: Unhappy that I am ,  
I cannot leave my heart into my mouth:  
I love your majesty according to my bound;  
nor more nor less*

(KL, Scene 1; 09)

In this metaphor, the element of blindness is expressed through the use of (T) which is the (heart) and (V) which does not appear and can be referred to as something heavy such as a big stone. (G) is the inability to push them and make them visible. (Tp) is the description of love that exceeds all the limits.

### 3.2 Nature Metaphors

Nature metaphors which refer to metaphors that employ elements from nature in its restricted forms or its broader meaning that refer to the human nature.

#### 3.2.1 Nature Metaphors in *The Merchant's Tale*

1-Chaucer reports the merchant in the prologue to this tale as to have described himself as a married man who longs to be afraid from his bound to his wife who is cruel woman and declared that he would never marry again if he got read of read.

*Were I unbounded, as May I prosperous be!  
I'd never another time fall in the snare.*

(MT;Lines:14,15)

In this example, the tenor is (I)that refers to the merchant ; the vehicle is omitted (animal ); the ground is deception since the merchant feels deceived by the idea of marriage which he now sees as an ambush or snare he is trying to avoid.

2-The sixty-year-wife less knight believes that having a wife is “a glorious thing” since she brings happiness and blessings to her husband’s life especially if he is an old man.

*To take a wife, it is a glorious thing,  
Especially when a man is old and hoary;  
Then is a wife the fruit of wealth in the glory.  
Here the wife is compared to a tree*

(MT;Lines:57,58,59,60)



3-The speaker tries to prove that man needs to have a wife who would bring happiness and comfort to his life and does so through the illustration he provides with the story of Adam and Eve. He refers to the woman as man paradise.

*A wife is man's help and his comfort,  
His earthly paradise and means of sport;  
(MT;Lines:120,121)*

Here, the wife is compared to paradise. The former is the tenor while the latter is the vehicle. The ground is the comfort both a wife and earthly paradise bring to a man's life. The topic is the description of the wife.

4-The speaker shows the importance of the woman in the life of the man and considers their happiness as inseparable. He refers to them as a unity.

*For if you love yourself, you love your wife;  
No man hates his own flesh, but through his life  
He fosters it and so I bid you strive  
To cherish her, you shall never thrive.  
(MT;Lines:174,175,176,176,177)*

(T) in this example is the woman referred to as (your wife), (V) is one's (own flesh) and (G) is unity that the woman is part of the man's life-and the inability of a man to hate his wife because she resembles his flesh and no one is able to hate himself and (Tp) is the power of love and its effect it has on one's life.

5-The sixty-year-old knight (January) starts considering the benefits of marriage for a man his age since he is wifeless. He concludes that a wife could bring difference and happiness to his life.

*For which this January, of whom I told,  
Did well consider in his days grown old,  
The pleasant wife, the virtuous rest complete  
That are in marriage, always honey-sweet;  
(MT;Lines:182,183,184,185)*

The metaphor in this example is comprised of two (Ts) which are the pleasant life and the virtuous rest complete that are compared with (V) is honey in the sense that they bring sweetness to life which represents (G) and that links the two elements together. (Tp) is the description of matrimony.

6-The character called May in the story visits Damian, sits by his side on the bed, tries to comfort him but he gives her a purse and a letter and begs her not to tell anyone about that. Then,

*This purse she hid in bosom of her gown*

*And went her way; get no more of me.*

*(MT;Lines:733,734)*

(T) is the gown is compared to a woman but this element (V) is omitted. We recognize that through the ground which is mentioned having a bosom because a gown is not supposed to have this quality that is usually attributed to human being. The (Tp) of this metaphor is the description of the gown.

7- The human being has different memories; some of which are good and special, others are painful and some are bitter sweet. One tries to always remember the good memories and to forget the painful ones. The following metaphor shows this:” *Oblivion is peace; I say no more*”.(MT; Lines:296)

Here, the tenor in the example of (oblivion) which means to the state of forgetting something or some experience one lives. The vehicle (peace) while the ground they share is the fact that they bring (relief) to a tormented mind. The topic is the description of oblivion.

### **3. 2.2 Nature Metaphors in King Lear**

*King Lear* is often noted that a Shakespearean tragedy, as a typical Elizabethan or Jacobean play, is in almost diametric opposition to a classical tragedy: whereas the latter is a controlled and concentrated drama achieving its tightly-knit simplicity by observing “the rules” such as the “unities of time, place, and action,” the decorum of action,” and the “purity of genre”; the former simply disregards all these “rules” and abandons itself to such an extent that it often leaves the reader or audience/spectator the impression of having an expansiveness and looseness for its vitality( Danziger and Johnson, 1961). Therefore, *King Lear* is in fact such a typical Shakespearean tragedy. Its action is truly not confined to one place or a short period of time, while a subplot is introduced in it to complicate the matter. Besides, scenes of violence are presented directly on the stage, while scenes of “comic relief” or grotesque humor appear to make the play dubious in its purity as a tragedy (Schlegel A. W; 30-33).

Additionally, most competent critics seem to agree that the play, in fact, has its own unity. A. W. Schlegel, for instance, thus exclaimed in reference to the play’s double plot:

*The incorporation of the two stories has been censured as destructive of the unity of action. But whatever contributes to the intrigue or the denouement must always possess*

unity. And with what ingenuity and skill are the two main parts of the composition dovetailed into one another!.

Robert B. Heilman believes that:

*The unity of King Lear lies very little on the surface; it can be described only partially in terms of plot relationships; in fact, as in all high art, it is a question of theme; and theme extends itself subtly into the ramifications of dramatic and imagistic constructs.*

Yet, instead of telling the reader a dominating theme, Heilman just gives him a number of possible themes in the play:

*...deeds rather than words are the symbols of love,” “errors with regard to the nature of kingship, the nature of love, and the nature of language, etc.*

Other critics have considered the overall theme of the play. Jan Kott, for example, has argued vigorously that the theme of *King Lear* is “the decay and fall of the world”. Also, in “*The Folger Guide to Shakespeare*” it is suggested that “the theme of the play may be described as the education and purification of Lear” (Wright & Lamar, 1973).

The most themes proposed for the play are justifiable in their own right. But I must call our attention to the fact that the play is not merely Lear’s story; it is Gloucester’s as well. Hence, to make the theme focus on any one character is not quite proper. We may well say that *Hamlet* is about the character of Hamlet, but not so well that *King Lear* is about the character of Lear. Shakespeare has indeed produced a good number of “character tragedies” (*Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, etc., in addition to *Hamlet*). But to reduce *King Lear* to one single character named in the title is to forget improperly the double plot Shakespeare contrived purposely to demonstrate the play’s dominating theme.

In his “Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool,” George Orwell thus remarks with his critical acumen:

*Shakespeare has a habit of thrusting uncalled-for general reflections into the mouths of his characters. This is a serious fault in a dramatist, but it does not fit in with Tolstoy’s picture of Shakespeare as a vulgar hack who has no opinions of his own and merely wishes to produce the greatest effect with the least trouble. And more than this, about a dozen of his*

plays, written for the most part later than 1600, do unquestionably have a meaning and even a moral. They revolve round a central subject which in some cases can be reduced to a single word. For example, *Macbeth* is about ambition. *Othello* is about jealousy, and *Timon of Athens* is about money.

After this, Orwell adds “*The subject of Lear is renunciation, and it is only by being willfully blind that one can fail to understand what Shakespeare is saying*”.

Orwell’s critical acumen is really worthy of our admiration. He claimed that Shakespeare did write a number of “*one-word plays*,” of which *Lear* is but one, though not an obvious one. If we want to give other definite examples, we can refer to *Troilus and Cressida* with its theme of fidelity, *Measure for Measure* with its of justice, and *Coriolanus* with its of pride. However, in the case of *Lear*, I cannot agree with Orwell that “*it is only by being willfully blind that one can fail to understand what Shakespeare is saying*.”

1-In Shakespeare’s play: “*King Lear*”, the relationship between the three daughters of the king (Goneril, Regan and Cordelia) shows that they are so close to one another and they love their father and obey him, especially in the beginning of the play when the three daughters express their tender feelings of love towards their father. This can be exemplified through the following lines:

*REGAN: Sir, I am made of the self-same metal as my sister,  
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart I find she names my very deed of love*  
(*KL; Scene;1:8*)

And prize me at her worth. In my true heart I find she names my very deed of love; (T) in this example is the (I) that refers to the king’s daughter (Regan); (V) is the (sister) who is Cordelia; the common ground between the two is (being made of the self-same metal) which means that they have the same origins and the same father whom they both love; and the topic is the description of the King Lear’s daughter.

2-The description of women in terms of their resemblance to elements of nature is a recurrent feature that can be traced in Chaucer’s “*The Merchant’s Tale*” and Shakespeare’s “*King Lear*”. The following example from “*King Lear*” “proves this tendency:

*King of France: this is most strange,  
That she, that even but now was your best object,  
The argument for your praise, balm of your age,  
Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time*

*Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle  
So many folds of favor.*

*(KL;Scene;1:15)*

Here, the King of France expresses his confusion after *King Lear* belittles his daughter Cordelia in front of him. He describes her as the King's "best object" and then, he considers her the balm of king Lear's age which proves the use of nature to describe women. This metaphor is composed of a (T) is (she) which refers to Cordelia, (V) (balm of (his) age), shared (G) is (being precious and valuable) and (Tp) is (the description of *King Lear's* daughter; Cordelia).

3-In the play *King Lear* written by Shakespeare, one can find some reference to different elements that define the identity of a particular society and its nature and this is made obvious in this example:

*King of France: (addresses King of Burgundy):  
What say you to the lady? Love's not love  
When it is mingled with regards that stand  
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?  
She is herself a dowry.*

*(KL;Scene1:16)*

The last sentence of this extract from the play represents a metaphor that comprises a (T) is (she) which refers to *King Lear's* daughter Cordelia and (V) is (a dowry) and this word refers to the amount of money the parents of a woman give to the man she marries. (G) is shared between the two is the quality of being(precious), and (Tp) of this metaphor is the description of Cornelia(*King Lear's* daughter).

4-The full in "*King Lear*" exceeds all the limits when he asks for one of the King's daughters' hand. The King feels of fended and he intends to have the full whipped. The full, then, defends as follows:

*FULL: truth's a dog must to kennel;  
he must be whipped out,  
when Lady the brach may stand by the fire and stink.*

*(KL;Scene4:36)*

In this example,(truth) is(T). It is compared to (a dog) which is (V) of the metaphor. (G) is shared between the two of them is that they both the truth and the dog get at time taken to a place where they are no longer heart.

### 3.3 The Comparison

To examine the portrayal of human nature and its relation to nature, I intend to look to the subplot contained within *King Lear*. Gloucester, as we learn from the beginning of the play has two sons, Edgar who is legitimate and Edmund who is illegitimate. Edmund's illegitimacy and his actions that stem from it highlight the distinction between nature and the 'natural' social order. Both of Gloucester's sons are his by nature, as can be seen from his admission that Edmund's 'breeding, sir, hath been at my charge, but he goes on to acknowledge that the distinction between Edgar and Edmund is one enforced by society, for Edgar is his son 'by order of law...who is yet no dearer in account. The distinction between nature and what society deems as natural is underlined by Edmund's rejection of the 'natural' ties of children to their fathers in favour of the laws of nature, as we can see when he declares, 'Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law. My services are bound. In fact the Nature to which Edmund is appealing is the animal law, where appetite is the driving force behind all action.

On other hand, Chaucer draws an attention to the worst in human behaviour within the tale, and continually highlights his character's negative attributes as a form of slapstick comedy. This 'popular' humour is made through vividly clear sexual descriptions, as even the merchant apologises for his blunt imagery, claiming he is a 'rude' man.

Consequently, the reader gets many ideas throughout the analysis of corpora. In *The Merchant's Tale*, the use of figures of speech is simple than *King Lear's* play in the structure and the function. For this reason, the reader obtains many features in the development of literature and in the use of language, in addition to the use of nature and blindness metaphors which aims at clarifying some points for the reader. Therefore, they create a good image for him.

### Conclusion

This chapter attempted to investigate some examples of the different nature and blindness metaphors in *The Merchant's Tale* and *King Lear*, laying a finger on the author's motives behind the use of such a linguistic device. Through this investigation of the use of such blindness metaphors, the authors describe their characters and their actions for instance in their behavior and mainly in love. Thus, the setting plays an important role and has a resource to blindness metaphors. On the other hand, they describe their characters attitude through nature metaphors in many situations and actions. Also, they have recourse to this linguistic device to intensify the meaning of any word in both literary works and to create meaning without using new words.

## ***General Conclusion***

## General Conclusion

All in all, literature is the artistic field of imagination. Thus, it is full of many rhetorical devices such as metaphor, irony, simile...etc. The obvious fact that any literary device has its significance in the literary work and the reader, metaphor which is a blanket literary term has its impact on the style of the author and mainly Chaucer's and Shakespeare's way of writing.

The present study was divided into three main chapters. The first chapter tried to shed the light on the basic concepts of metaphor and the main views and theories concerning the literary use of this linguistic device. In this context, there are three main literary theories which are the linguistic theory of metaphor, the conceptual blinding theory of metaphor, and the cognitive theory of metaphor. In addition to the classical view and the cognitive view of metaphor so that there many functions and the main problems in where the reader may face during his reading and the analysis process.

For most reason, the analysis of nature and blindness metaphors in both literary works has its importance throughout this investigation. In *King Lear*, themes including those of a King who is curiously naive in the ways of human nature, a King who finds himself in a world of negated values, and a King faced with moral blindness and unnaturalness. Such concerns are mirrored by issues of blind love, a more general inability to see reality and the cunning of womanhood in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale*. Moreover, using a range from this kind of metaphors to interpret them depends on the situation and the context. Moreover, this stylistic analysis based on the linguistic theory of metaphor which attributed by Searle in 1979.

Indeed, the style is the mirror of the literary work in which he reflects the writer's attitude. Furthermore, the critical analysis of any literary production enables the reader extracting and interpreting all the elements of fiction for better understanding of these two pieces of literature. The plot gives the reader a clear image about the events of the story so that the setting is when and where of the story. Purposely, themes are the fundamental ideas which the reader explored after reading any literary work. Consequently, the critical analysis of the period leads the reader to investigate more about the author, the style, and mainly the themes.



Chaucer's and Shakespeare's writing styles are full of many rhetorical devices. Metaphor is one of many other figures of speech. This study aimed at extracting and interpreting this linguistic device, in particular metaphors of nature and blindness metaphors. Additionally, this study aimed at comparing these two kinds of metaphors with an analysis of the roles of them in both literary productions.

The process of analysis of the two literary works tended to involve the behavior of the tenor (T) which parallels a field of study in which metaphors were more likely to evoke an interpretation involving the behavior of the vehicle (V).

Actually, the writers have various objectives behind the use of nature and blindness metaphors in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. They use these kinds of metaphors in a number of ways to facilitate the narrative in both literary works. To a large degree, they use these two kinds of metaphors to create a vivid image for the reader about all the main events in the two literary works. Besides, there is a psychological motive behind the use of this stylistic device in which aiming at involving the reader in a cognitive mode and process with a view to enhance the narration.

What is more, the use of nature and blindness metaphors is complementarily to each other. First and foremost, the motive behind the use of nature metaphors leads to blindness ones. However, the nature of the actions, characters, and the setting leads the characters to the blindness in many ways.

The present study raised many question. The distinction between the nature and blindness metaphors in both literary productions deserves closer investigation because it is interesting issue to tackle. Furthermore, it will be interest to compare between them in the two literary works in an attempt to explicate the relationship between the two texts.

Finally, we hope that the reader got a clear image about the main points of this investigation and improve his vocabulary through the interpreting these kinds of metaphor in a certain context.

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## Abstract

The present research attempts to study the use of nature and blindness metaphors in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. It tries to shed light on the writers' motives behind the use of this linguistic device in both literary works. Throughout this study, we hope at laying a finger on the authors' overuse of metaphor in these two literary works, focusing on its structure and meaning. This research is divided into three main chapters. Chapter one presents a general survey on the basic concepts of metaphor because it is our main concern in this inquiry. Chapter two highlights a critical review of Chaucer's literature and Shakespeare's one, namely some views on both literary works. Chapter three is the investigation of metaphors of nature and blindness. Some metaphor markers will be discussed to find out the syntactic structure of metaphor and its meaning. This chapter sheds light on the reasons behind the use of nature and blindness metaphors in the two literary works. The adopted metaphor model is descriptive and it consists of particular structural and semantic components such as the tenor (T), the vehicle (V), and the topic (Tp).

**Key words:** metaphor, tenor, vehicle, metaphor markers, topic, figurative language, nature, blindness.

## المخلص

في محاولة لدراسة توظيف كل من الاستعارة المقتبسة من الطبيعة و الاستعارة المترجمة حرفيا بالاستعارة العمياء، و ذلك في كل من حكاية التاجر لتشوسر و مسرحية كينغ لير لشكسبير. وذلك بعرض تسليط الضوء حول دوافع الكاتب خلف توظيف مثل هذه الأدوات اللسانية في كلن منهما . و التي نأمل من خلالها نأمل ان نبين المغلات في استعمال مثل هذه الاستعارات شكلا ومضمونا في كلتا العملين. و بناءا على ذلك جاء هذا البحث مقسما إلى ثلاث فصول أساسية. حيث استعرض في فصله الأول بحثا عام حول الاستعارة و الذي من خلاله أفصنا و أحطنا بكل خبايا و أسس توظيف هذا المحسن البديعي، و ذلك نظرا لما تكتنفه من أهمية لهته الدراسة. أما في فصل الثاني فقد جاء في شكل مقالة تحليلية و نقدية لأعمال تشوسر و شكسبير الأدبية . في حين تم القيام بتحقيق حول الطبيعة و الاستعارة و العمى في الفصل الأخير. حيث أن بعض من علامات الاستعارات نوقشت لاستخراج بناء الكلمات في بنية الاستعارة و معانيها. في مجمله يسلط الضوء في هذا الفصل حول الأسباب خلف استعمال الاستعارة و العمى في كل من العملين المذكورين سابقا. و هذه الاستعارات هي عبارة عن نماذج منتقاة ذات تركيبة و دلالات معينة تتمثل الفحوى و الأداة و الموضوع.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الاستعارة، المشبه، المشبه به، وجه الشبه، موضوع التشبيه، الطبيعة، العمى.