



METAPHORICAL REALIZATION OF LEXICAL COHESIVE SETS IN THE OPENING PAGE OF ANNE BRONTE'S "THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL"

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ABSTRACT

The two notions of cohesion and coherence give shape to the text by establishing a reasonable connectedness and flow of ideas, turning the text to a unified whole, a sort of connectedness achieved by overt and covert markers alike, which may and may not be linguistically encoded. This article builds on some hints in the literature for a look at the possibly pronounced links between metaphor and manifest text connectedness, that is, lexical cohesion, exploring the role of metaphor in achieving cohesion and coherence within the very first context-setting page of a nineteenth-century novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Mapped out in the article are the lexical cohesive sets deployed on the page analyzed, the interrelated chains, and some suggested stylistic explanations for these cohesive phenomena. It follows from the analysis that metaphors in the cohesive sets contribute to the cohesiveness and the coherent meaning of the text, accompanying lexical cohesion on many occasions on this single page of a work of fiction. What is proposed here is the possibility for further research that metaphor, cohesion, and coherence might not only go hand in hand in some types of texts, but might also be interwoven in such way as to blur the boundaries therein. All of this has implications for the analysis, exploration and understanding of text and discourse in some genres, especially literary ones, as well as attempts to think of models to accommodate lexical cohesion and metaphor at the same time.

Key words: coherence, lexical cohesion, metaphor, connectedness

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The two notions of cohesion and coherence are very important textual and discursive concepts that figure as useful tools of insight into the operations of text and discourse on many levels of discourse and text analysis. It has long been recognized that cohesion and coherence play drastic roles in giving shape to text and message by establishing connectedness, sensible flow of ideas and logical transition and compatibility in thought and logic, part of which is analyzable and visible in

actual text, i.e. the part known traditionally as 'cohesion'. Both are indeed used to refer to connectedness of spoken and written texts; they are attributed to the interrelationship between form, meaning and use of linguistic elements, making the text appear as a unified whole.

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesion refers to "the relations of meaning that exist within the text", believing that it "enables one part of the text to function as the context for another". For some other scholars, coherence refers

to the continuity of senses and the mutual access and relevance within a configuration of concepts and relevance (deBeaugrande and Dressler, 1981).

Linguistics has seen the profusion of many perspectives on the notion of cohesion, coherence, and their interrelations in a text. Halliday and Hasan (1976), for instance, stress that grammatical and lexical elements become cohesive only when they are interpreted through their relation to some other elements in the text. Meanwhile, Tanskanen (2006) argues that focusing on explicit and overt markers of cohesive relations in text ignores, more or less, the role of semantic relations in a text. She points out that over time and through much research, scholars have realized that overt markers of cohesion were not enough for text connectedness, and that cohesion was not necessary at all to make a discourse appear as a unified whole (a discourse that possesses coherence); what mattered was the unity or coherence. A set of sentences would not form a text, no matter how many cohesive links there were between them.

Bublitz (2011) points out that both notions of cohesion and coherence refer to meaning and a relation of connectedness which may or may not be linguistically encoded; whereas cohesion refers to inter-sentential semantic relations, coherence is a cognitive category depending on the language user's interpretation. Bublitz also provides an overview of research on the relationship between cohesion and coherence and arrives at a pragmatics oriented perspective; coherence becomes a "context-dependent, user-oriented, and comprehension-based notion"; so as to juxtapose it against cohesion, coherence is taken to be an invariant property of discourse. Form and structure oriented linguists who consider a text as a long sentence or a unit beyond sentence focus on *cohesion* as an imperative feature of textuality; function oriented linguists, on the other hand, who regard a text with any linguistic expression of any length, which is used to perform a special function, focus on *coherence* as the essential feature of textuality.

According to Bublitz (2011), cohesion should be kept strictly apart from coherence. It is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for coherence. From the fact that coherence is mostly

based on semantic connectivity, it can be concluded that the latter is both a sufficient and necessary condition for coherence. The remarkable number of research into these two notions bears witness to this development and abrupt change in scene of coherence research which is moving away from reducing coherence to a mere product of cohesion and (semantically established) connectivity. Hence, coherence is rarely static but frequently *dynamic* i.e. a *process* rather than a state.

Widdowson (2004) argues that cohesion is objective while coherence is subjective and judgment-centered. Martin's (1992) view is also noteworthy, suggesting that cohesion is an aspect of the study of texture, which is one aspect of the study of coherence. Texture is motivated by tenor, field, and mode and is related to register variables, whereas coherence is related to a level of context above and beyond tenor, field and mode, referred to as genre.

Another angle constituting this research is metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) describe the essence of metaphor as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another". It can play a significant role in a discourse with respect to text connectedness. Lakoff and others traditionally considered metaphor to be a systematic conceptual mapping from a source domain to a target domain. Empirical studies provide frequency counts of metaphor within different types of texts; these studies show that speakers use 1.80 creative and 4.08 dead metaphors per minute of discourse (Gibbs, 1994; Aitchison, 1994). Aristotle points out that metaphors can make a certain contribution as to the better recognition of an object; whereas modern linguists and philosophers (e.g. Black, 1954; Ricoeur, 1975; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) have gone beyond this, emphasizing the argumentative function of metaphors and their highly important cognitive role. Goatly (1997) positions metaphor on a continuum between literal and figurative uses of linguistic expression; using relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986), Goatly distinguishes creative (active) metaphors from sleeping (inactive) metaphors, the former requiring more processing efforts, but also triggering more contextual implications, being in this

sense optimally relevant. However, he also criticizes relevance theory's lack of social dimension and uses Halliday's (1994) functional grammar to classify the communicative functions of metaphor. Diaz (2001) concludes that 'Metaphor is a basic and primary mechanism of thought'. Relevant to our concern here, Diaz also maintains that 'the ways abstract sequences are displayed in texts through metaphors constitute an important contribution to textual coherence'.

Purpose and Significance

Previous studies have already placed due focus on the mechanisms and effects of coherence and cohesion, but few have looked at these concepts with respect to metaphor. With this in mind, the motivation behind this work has been the investigation of whether metaphor acts as a potential textual device that sets the stage for the text to be cohesive and coherent. The aim of this paper is, thus, to explore the role of metaphor in achieving cohesion and coherence in the opening page of a well-known nineteenth-century novel.

This study could have implications for the role of metaphor in achieving coherence; it will also lend support to the well-known and rather well-established theoretical assumption that coherence is not limited to visible markers and physical translucency as such, that rather it is beyond strictly explicit processes and can be achieved by invisible but present discursive and logical processes of meaning-making.

This paper may manage to provide further support also for the rhetorical "less is more" property of language which finds manifestation in the use made of metaphor where much more can be conveyed than appears in the syntagm. It is important to realize that metaphor is not as a violation of normal verbal meaning but that it facilitates comprehension and connectedness of discourses. This issue is an important one because metaphor is ubiquitous in language and is worth exploring as a path to reach sensible flow of ideas. This article is, thus, expected to generate some interest among researchers, teachers and applied linguists and other parties inclined to put these insights to use in actual professional practice.

Method and Corpus

This study is in a qualitative mould, growing into Mason's (1996) view on qualitative research as a type of research that does not represent a unified set of techniques or philosophies, but rather, grows out of a wide range of intellectual and disciplinary traditions.

Analyzed here was the first page of Anne Bronte's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, the cohesive sets, the related chains, their different type of relations, the possible causes of these relations, and some of the relevant stylistic devices therein. To modify the potential effects of the researchers' subjectivity and to increase conformability, the two researchers investigated the same data and revised the analysis in different time intervals. All possible aspects of the chosen context were looked into, and then our conclusions took shape based on the data.

One chief method used in this study is known as "Grounded theory" which is a known principle in qualitative studies. It avoids placing preconceived notions on the data, letting the data guide the analysis (Mackey and Gass, 2005). Attempts were made to examine the cohesive sets and the chains from different vantage points to arrive at a more complete picture. We examined all the chains of the sets with respect to their stylistic play, their relations to the whole meaning of the set, the type of relations, and determined the metaphorical ones. We did not impose any bias into the investigation; as far as possible, it was the data that determined the path and quality of the analysis, without any predetermined constraints. This, roughly, captures the framework of analysis leading to the analysis of literary discourse discussed in the following.

Cohesion Analysis of the First Page of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

The first page of a novel would and can be theoretically regarded as the *context-setting* discourse, i.e. the only tangible platform from which one can postulate the linguistically available context of the fiction to start from; it is what sets the communicative act in motion, the first opening move by the author to engage the reader in the act of communication.

By the same token, and as relevant to the purposes of the moment, such a first page would be the linguistic paradigm in which possible *mother* cohesive sets for upcoming metaphors, so to speak, will necessarily be found and used to detect the subsequent metaphorical sets used in the subsequent sections of the work of fiction in question. All this is, of course, hypothetical, subject to variation in different styles and in different contexts.

Bublitz (2011) has ideas about lexical cohesion that are relevant here. Traditionally, since Halliday and Hasan (1976), repetition has been taken to be a significant part of lexical cohesion; meanwhile, synonymy itself, as a major type of lexical cohesion, has been traditionally regarded as a type of repetition. Bublitz believes that an alternative outlook on repetition can be through the lens of the three essential properties of it: *quality*, *quantity* and *distribution*. He argues that Quality is best looked at as a scale which represents a continuum of fixity vs. looseness of form and indicates the degree of formal as well as semantic correspondence between the parallel items involved; there is a cline from total equivalence to paraphrastic substitution. He then takes Quantity to refer to the length of the repeating item; it is likewise best represented on a scale with a single word (or even phone) at one end and a string of utterances at the other. Finally, Distribution is a cohesive concept that captures the distance between the repeated and the repeating item, which can be anywhere between closely adjacent and considerably removed.

In the analysis presented below, the Quality of the cohesive chains is paraphrastic repetition, but there is rather close semantic correspondence between the members of the chain/set, suggesting the strong coherence this beginning piece of the discourse in this novel represents. Also, in terms of Quantity, and for the purposes of the moment, we have come up with phrase- to clause-long cohesive elements in each chain, as it seems the concepts in cohesive harmony cohere on a clausal rather than a single-word basis. As the unit of analysis is in most of the cases one page of the novel, the repeating items (the cohesive members of the chain) are

rather adjacent, removed some lines on one single page at the most distant.

- "You must go back with me to the autumn of 1827. My father, as you know, was a sort of gentleman farmer in —shire; and I, by his express desire, succeeded him in the same quiet occupation, not very willingly, for ambition urged me to higher aims, and self-conceit assured me that, in disregarding its voice, I was burying my talent in the earth, and hiding my light under a bushel. My mother had done her utmost to persuade me that I was capable of great achievements; but my father, who thought ambition was the surest road to ruin, and change but another word for destruction, would listen to no scheme for bettering either my own condition, or that of my fellow mortals. He assured me it was all rubbish, and exhorted me, with his dying breath, to continue in the good old way, to follow his steps, and those of his father before him, and let my highest ambition be, to walk honestly through the world, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, and to transmit the paternal acres to my children in, at least, as flourishing a condition as he left them to me. 'Well!—an honest and industrious farmer is one of the most useful members of society; and if I devote my talents to the cultivation of my farm, and the improvement of agriculture in general, I shall thereby benefit, not only my own immediate connections and dependents, but in some degree, mankind at large, hence I shall not have lived in vain.' With such reflections as these, I was endeavouring to console myself, as I plodded home from the field, one cold, damp, cloudy evening towards the close of October. But the gleam of a bright red fire through the parlour window had more effect in cheering my spirits, and rebuking my thankless repinings, than all the sage reflections and good resolutions I had forced my mind to frame;—for I was young then, remember"

Our text being this foundation-laying first page of Anne Bronte's Tenant of Wildfell Hall, to orient our understanding about how it coheres, we have to wrap our minds around the discursive context of it. Here, we are faced with the account a young man gives about his feelings towards and musings about the conflicting future his mother, himself and his father envisaged for him. He and his mother believe in taking risks, building on ambition to move beyond the present conditions of life, and, in this case, securing a better position in life than afforded merely by farming, which has been the occupation the story-teller's father deems most desirable and safe. But the father, especially as he lies dying, is of the profound conviction that farming is the road to a healthy conscience, service to fellow human beings, and a safe heritage for the progeny.

Below, we talk about some of the cohesive chains for this set that can be detected on this page. But before that, a few points are in order. In line with Hadidi and Nazerfar (2014), the symbol (→) is used to show that there is prospective or retrospective relationship of lexical cohesion in the discourse patterning, i.e. the cohesive item or chain points prospectively forward, or retrospectively backwards, in such a way that the following or preceding cohesive chain logically and coherently follows from, or ripples downwards towards, each other, and is discursively substantiated in real-time unfolding text by their retrospective or prospective counterparts, thereby establishing coherence in discourse.

This is a line of thinking accommodated from Sinclair (2004), although the intention here is not to explore an inherent bond between his discursive concept of 'Prospection' and cohesion in the logogenesis of (unfolding) text; we use Prospection in a rather different way here. What is important to point out is that future research has, and will do very well, to pick up specifically on the role of prospection in cohesion. Also, the sample analyses below will bring it home that the ties of concepts like 'chain', 'leap', and 'metaphor' with cohesion are worthwhile and under-researched ones and will be rewarding fertile grounds for research into cohesion.

1. *Gentleman farmer*→

2. *Quiet occupation*→
3. *My father thought the surest road to ruin ambition was* →
4. *My father thought change was but another word for destruction*→
5. *He assured me it (bettering either my own condition, or that of my fellow mortals) was all rubbish*→
6. *Continue in the good old way*→
7. *Follow his steps*→
8. *Walk honestly through the world*→
9. *Looking neither to the right hand nor to the left*→
10. *Transmit the paternal acres to my children in as flourishing a condition as he left them to me*→
11. *An honest and industrious farmer is one of the most useful members of society*→
12. *Devote my talents to the cultivation of my farm*→
13. *The improvement of agriculture*→
14. *Benefit my own immediate connections and dependents and mankind at large*→
15. *I shall not have lived in vain*

It is important to note here that the prospective move indicated by the right-facing arrow (→) should not suggest that there is no retrospective relationship between these elements; the way we see it, successive prospected members of this chain can, just as well, evoke their preceding elements in this piece of discourse. In fact, it would be an expected course of events to see such a simultaneous prospective/retrospective capacity in each member of a cohesive chain in a coherent text.

We have taken this set to comprise 15 chains. These are synonymous chains, *repeating* one and the same semantic content mentioned above: the narrator's father thinks to be desirable and safe only one line of occupation in life, which is farming. As he lies dying, he spells out his profound belief that farming is the only path to a lightened conscience, helping fellow human beings out of frequent hardship, and a sacred legacy left for one's children and grandchildren. We argue that, out of these twelve chains in this cohesive set, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are metaphorical chains.

Chain 2 (*quiet occupation*) borrows from the source domain of a quiet person being a less

threatening and a more reliable one, depicting farming, as in the rest of the cohesive set, as an occupation that is a safe, modest and clean source of livelihood.

Chain 3 (*My father thought ambition was the surest road to ruin*) is a primary metaphor borrowing from the domain that compares a road to a successive set of actions leading to a goal.

Chain 4 (*follow his steps*) might also be a domesticated and primary metaphor (Rohrer, 2007; Grady, 2007), but in line with the same coherent meaning in the set, it has the father strongly advising his son to follow every step that he took; the reader clearly understands that what is meant is not physical steps.

Chain 5 (*walk honestly through the world*) may comprise two metaphors, but it conveys the same contextual meaning regardless. The combination 'walk honestly' can only make sense once we look at 'walk' first; this first word in the metaphorical phrase borrows, as its source domain, from the simple physical act of walking, and is used to designate every important action one takes in life. Non-metaphorically, one can't walk honestly, unless *walk* is interpreted metaphorically. Once that is in place, *walking honestly* would refer to the care and caution one should exercise over all the small and big actions and steps one takes in life, which is what the father means by his advice.

Chain 6 (*looking neither to the right hand nor to the left*) is a straightforward enough metaphor which borrows from the act of *looking* to convey the same coherent meaning in the set; living cautiously, cleanly, modestly and helping mankind and family alike, especially when taken in combination with *neither to the right hand nor to the left* which borrows from the domain of looking straight ahead as conveying an undistracted path for a person walking.

The previous cohesive set clearly evidenced at least one coherent meaning that was clarified above. But there are other meanings that render this piece of discourse coherent. The second cohesive set we think this page manifests constitutes these chains:

1. *I succeeded him not very willingly*→
2. *Ambition urged me to higher aims*→

3. *Self-conceit assured me*→
4. *In disregarding its voice*→
5. *I was burying my talent in the earth*→
6. *Hiding my light under a bushel*→
7. *My mother had done her utmost to persuade me that I was capable of great achievements*→
8. *Bettering either my own condition*→
9. *Or that of my fellow mortals*→
10. *Rebuking my thankless repinings*→
11. *Sage reflections*→
12. *Good resolutions*

Of these 12 chains, there are metaphors that can be observed in 7 of them: chains 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, and 10 can be said to contain metaphors.

Chain 2 (*ambition urged me to higher aims*), like many of the metaphorical chains in this set, has an element in the structure of the clause that is a non-human agent described as if it were a human one. *Urge* is typically preceded by a human agent as subject, but, here, we have *ambition* acting as subject of *urge* as if it genuinely were a human being that *urged me to higher aims*.

The same stylistic device is at play in the next chain (*self-conceit assured me*); *assure* is a verb typically associated with a human agent as subject. Here, *self-conceit* is being used as if it were a human being doing the assuring, as was *ambition* (doing the urging).

Chain 4 (*in disregarding its voice*) follows cohesively from the previous chain, picking up, by pronominal reference, *ambition* as its referent, and repeating the previous two occasions of attributing human qualities to non-human agents, by having the narrator talking about how he was *disregarding ambition's voice*.

Chain 5 (*I was burying my talent in the earth*) has a human subject associating the verb *bury* with a direct object that is not a material entity; a suggested reading would argue that this lends force to the act of burying *talent*, treating the effacing of the *talent* as if it cannot ever be salvaged after it has been *buried*.

Chain 9 (*Or that of my fellow mortals*) could be looked at as containing a primary religious-looking metaphor through which human beings are associated with a major quality of being *mortal*. In

terms of the tenor of the story, the writer/narrator seems to imply the importance of bettering the life condition of his fellow human beings within a lifetime that is short, limited and transient, as stipulated by his dying father.

Chain 10 (*rebuking my thankless repinings*) contains a fairly creative metaphor. *Rebuke* can be considered a verbal process type with a Target that is a human agent in the unmarked scheme of things. But here, it has been associated with *my thankless repinings* as Target, conveying the sense that the narrator is very unhappy with the way his regretful and miserable reflections are going and is trying to *rebuke* them.

Some Comments, Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

This analysis demonstrated that it is possible for a work of fiction as established and reader-winning as *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* to evince cohesive sets which are mostly interwoven with and simultaneous with some sort of metaphorical language. In each individual case above, metaphors in the cohesive sets and chains were found to contribute both to the cohesiveness of the text and, more importantly, to the coherent meaning and style of the literary discourse.

Perhaps, as argued, for example, in Farahani and Hadidi (2008), cohesion and metaphor can be viewed as two simultaneous, interlocking systems in a systemic-functional thinking. Within the lexical cohesion analyzed here (synonymy/repetition), as discussed in Hadidi and Nazerfar (2014), one could argue that one explanation for this systemic simultaneity is the quest for delivering literary-aesthetic functions, offering readers the quaint breed of pleasure true literature aspires to, and nurturing an esoteric leaning for creativity in them. Similarly:

It also appears that the boundaries between and across the subtypes of cohesion undergo a sort of blurring. In other words, in the novel, the procedures which lead to the phenomenon of 'metaphor', in turn, are sometimes the result of the synergistic collaboration of 'cohesive devices' and the types therein, in the knowledge that metaphor, in its many guises, is the most significant, overriding and overarching macro-

semantic force in fiction-text in general and in the novel in particular. The noteworthy number of metaphorical expressions that co-occur and co-exist with cohesion underscores the involved textual and discursive bonds that exist between metaphor and cohesion, and the need to research the cohesive expressions in unfolding text that have metaphor built into them and are clearly deployed along metaphorical lines for significant paradigmatic motivations as opposed to their non-metaphorical counterparts. This textual and stylistic synergy seems to be a strong stylistic tendency with strong and long-term intertextual standing worthy of research work. In other words, the fact that metaphor and cohesion as two separate semiotic potentials are carried by one and the same expression or chain of related expressions in discourse is an interesting one and could justify attempts to integrate elements into the theory of cohesion that explain this dual role (Hadidi and Nazerfar, 2014: 52).

Another implied link between cohesion and metaphor can be found in combining the two lines of thinking below. According to Sanders *et al* (1997), understanding a discourse may be regarded as the construction of a mental representation of the discourse by the reader. In this regard Zinken and Musolff (2009) argue that a text is understood by filling the "gaps" between the mind of the reader and the writer or between the minds of the interlocutors; this "gap" is filled by the semantic and structural elements, discourse connectedness plays an influential role at filling those gaps, in other words it seems as an formidable job to speak about "understanding" a text without considering cohesion; to have a cohesive text, words are used congruently and directly related to the context, but this is not always the case, and that is when the metaphor is used with its incongruity and indirect relation, while the text is cohesive. So "understanding" the metaphors of a text helps "understanding" the text itself.

Another important link implied in the words of Musolff and Zinken (2009) is the important and possibly very useful concept of 'the pressure of coherence', considered to be 'an especially important principle of metaphor variation'. They

argue that principle is what makes the user of language adjust his or her metaphors to the surrounding context.

It is likely that the principle can explain a large amount of metaphor variation in naturally occurring discourse on the basis of the interplay between universal embodiment, differential experience, and the changing context of communication (Musolff and Zinken, 2009: 23).

Further research can be pursued into other dimensions of the nature of this synergistic / interlocking systemic choices made at the semantic and clausal strata, with different realization patterns, across different genres, although it seems media/political discourse (Musolff, 2004) and the language of literature would evidence more of such simultaneous patterns. Such systemic choices can also be explored within the 'meaning-as-choice' view (Halliday, 2013).

In the literature on metaphor, there are frequent (albeit implied) indications that metaphor can now be considered a necessary tool for processing and understanding communication; however, the links of systemic synergy between cohesion/coherence and metaphor, and the contributions of metaphor to cohesion/coherence cannot be simply taken for granted and have to be brought to analytic light using targeted research on different occasions of language in use.

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