

# Fractal Metaphor MEMORY IS IDENTITY in Autobiographical Narrative

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The present paper applies cognitive metaphor theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) to the metaphorical conceptualization of the lived experience of the writer in Kulyk Keefer's *Honey and Ashes: A Story of Family* (1998). This research aims at applying an interdisciplinary approach that integrates the methodological tools of narratology (Herman 2009) and cognitive poetics (Stockwell 2002) to a selection of extracts revealing the "split self". The focus is on how the transcultural nature of the authorial identity represented in *Honey and Ashes* can be interpreted via the idea of split self (Emmott 2002) and how such narrative strategy allows the blending of two ethnic authorial identities – Ukrainian and Canadian to be integrated into the authorial autobiographical memory.

Transcultural identity can be seen as "a personal identity based on the multiple intercultural contact experiences that can have a long-lasting effect on a person's values and worldview" (Vauclair et al. 2014: 12). More importantly, the notion of transcultural identity, in turn, becomes inseparable from the "narrative performance" of identity and a number of "situated performance events" within which the autobiographical memory is created. Narratological approaches, which have been extensively involved explicating the relationship between narrative and identity (Freeman 2001), prove to be of great value in the exploration of the representation of memory and bring into view the fictional possibilities for memory construction. As fractal engages in recursive construction, or the repetition of itself, and consequently, it looks similar across all scales, we believe that a fractal metaphor (Author 2014) gives rise to: (a) multiple correspondences and blends in conceptualization of the lived experience; and (b) visual representation of splitting selves across multiple scales.

While doing justice to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, it fails to grasp all the intricacies and the dynamic character of the metaphor's use. Adopting fractals to CMT, we contend that the metaphorical conceptualization can be enhanced through the fractal metaphor MEMORY IS IDENTITY that draws attention toward fractal split selves, i.e. its plural manifestations as the shapes of real fractals which are both embodied (in a physical body) and embedded (in a physical environment). As Kulyk Keefer argues, "I begin to doubt my own reality, knowing that during our stay here I'll be someone other than I think myself to be. A spy, looking for something that doesn't exist anymore. An envoy, making this return voyage for my mother and aunt, and in some ways for my absent sons as well. And a ghost by proxy, standing in for my dead grandparents, who would see things differently, overlaid by memory, not merely story. The ghost of a ghost, a nearsighted voyeur whose vision, even when corrected by glasses, will remain imperfect, only half-true" (Kulyk Keefer 1998: 256). Finally, "glass ghosts brought back, if not to life, then to the next best thing: to memory" (ibid: 307). Her autobiographical memory is a metaphorical bridge towards her transcultural identity, the past of her grandparents and her Ukrainian-Canadian origin. The sense of being a spy, an envoy, a ghost by proxy, and the ghost of a ghost taken together like split selves which participate in the formation of the fractal model MEMORY IS IDENTITY, thus resulting in the dynamics of multiple recursive shapes of the authorial identity.

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