



## GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTIONS AND RHETORICAL FIGURES: THE CASE OF CHIASMUS

RANDY ALLEN HARRIS  
*University of Waterloo*

**Abstract:** Many rhetorical figures are constructions in the contemporary sense of Construction Grammar, form/function pairs, and many of them are hiding in plain sight, participating in common constructions, often in clusters. This paper argues that Construction Grammar is the perfect framework to continue the rhetorical turn begun in Cognitive Linguistics by the incorporation of metaphorical and metonymical features; in fact, we might call this a rhetorical *return* to pre-Enlightenment views of language in which rhetoric and grammar were mutually informing disciplines. The argument is anchored in an extended illustration of a construction with high figural density, the A OUT OF B BUT NOT B OUT OF A construction ("You can take a boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of a boy").

**Keywords:** rhetorical figures, chiasmus, embodied construction grammar, cognitive linguistics  
**Languages:** English

IN A CLASSROOM DISCUSSION last year about the aims of cognitive sciences like linguistics, and of neurosciences like molecular neuroanatomy, I told my students, spontaneously, "I think we need to regard explorations of mind as top-down attempts to understand the brain, and explorations of the brain as bottom-up attempts to understand the mind."<sup>1</sup> They liked that formulation. I had

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a (highly modified) version of my keynote address to LACUS 2019, "You can take the linguist out of MIT, but you can't take MIT out of the linguist". I thank the organizers for the opportunity — Svetlana Kaminskaia, Kerry Lappin-Fortin, Grit Liebscher, and Dominique Louër — along with the many attendees who discussed these ideas with me after the address and in several social occasions over the course of the conference. I also thank attendees of the 2019 Henry Sweet Society conference, in Edinburgh, who responded helpfully to an attenuated version of these arguments, especially Geoffrey K. Pullum, Pierre Swiggers, and Edward McDonald. Thanks, also, to Adele Goldberg, Ben Bergen, and Nancy Chang for their support; Nancy especially, for all her help with the formalism (she has only endorsed of my liberties; I hope the others don't give her too many headaches). Among the many colleagues and students who have helped me explore these topics over the years, I would like (unfortunately neglecting legion) to single out three: Ashley Rose Mehlenbacher, with whom I first began fitting

brought many of their puzzles into a new alignment with the impromptu stroke of a very useful and ubiquitous, but linguistically neglected construction, a pattern of reverse lexical repetition (... *mind ... brain ... brain ... mind*).

Over half a century before my use, you might recall, John F. Kennedy used one of these constructions too, this classic nugget, in his inaugural address:

- (1) And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country (Kennedy [& Sorensen] 2001 [1961]).

Kennedy's (and speech-writer Ted Sorensen's) expression is almost proverbial in the American consciousness for the way in which it captures the spirit of a particular historical moment, the ethos of a particular administration, and the aspirations of a particular generation. Lots of more prosaic formulations, by Kennedy and others, surely expressed that confluence too, but they're lost, or, in any case, much less easy to recover. Why? Kennedy and Sorensen tightly matched form to function.

The form features an antimetabole, a chiasmic figure (more on that later) known to rhetoricians for millennia.<sup>2</sup> It has an oppositional and duplex structure that plays to human neurocognitive dispositions. We respond to oppositions and repetitions in ways we don't respond to blander formulations. But the Kennedy-Sorensen formulation is not pure pattern. It is not music. It is a linguistic utterance, with semantic content, illocutionary force, and perlocutionary effect. It serves a function. It expresses a perceived turning point in US culture and politics—not just a call to service, but a repudiation of the entitlement to service, a flipping of expectations and values. The structure, coming etymologically from 'turning about (*metabole*) in the opposite direction (*anti*)' elegantly captures the conceptual reversal Kennedy and Sorensen were after in the literal reversal of its argument structure (*your country* is first a subject, then a prepositional object; *you* is first a prepositional object, then a subject). Their formulation, in sum, has become so memorable, so widely known, so easily shared, so frequently invoked, quoted, and recited because of two factors, the neurocognitive pattern biases humans have for its structural properties and the snug way in which those properties match the cultural functions the formulation serves.

I argue in this article for a richer conception of grammatical constructions that furthers the reintegration of rhetorical figures into linguistics, beginning with the renewed interest in tropes, such as metaphor and metonymy, that has dominated much of cognitive linguistics over the last several decades. My argument focuses on chiasmic figures, which superficially appear to be rare

---

Construction Grammar and rhetorical figures together, Ken Hirschkop, whose recurrent prompts finally led to this publication, and the continuing inspiration of Jeanne Fahnestock.

<sup>2</sup> The word is also spelled *antimetavole* and has a variety of other names in the rhetorical tradition, including *commutatio* ([Pseudo-]Cicero 1954 [c95 BCE]:324), as well as *the counterchange* (Puttenham 2007 [1593]:293). Calvin Trillin called it, specifically of Kennedy and Sorensen's famous use, "the reversible raincoat" (Waldman 2003:161), and his label has caught on among speech writers. These various terms are frequently interchanged with *chiasmus*. I argue for a new understanding of the relation between antimetabole and chiasmus which also implicates several other figures, including antanametabole which is key to my analysis of the A OUT OF B BUT NOT B OUT OF A construction.

and fanciful flourishes, something reserved for very special linguistic circumstances, like inaugural addresses, but which are surprisingly common; as, indeed, are a great many of the stylistic patterns known as rhetorical figures.

My argument proceeds as follows: Grammatical constructions, as investigated under the Construction Grammar (CxG) framework, are form-function pairings; rhetorical figures are form-function pairings; grammatical constructions collocate and colligate; rhetorical figures collocate and colligate; rhetorical figures and grammatical constructions, in hitherto largely unnoticed ways, collocate and colligate with each other. A particular set of constructions, which I dub *The A OUT OF B, BUT NOT B OUT OF A constructions* (largely abbreviated hereafter as *A OUT OF B*, for expository convenience), illustrate these interactions in particularly revealing ways. I take it you can see the chiasmic properties in the name of this construction: the A and the B repeating in swapped positions. The quintessential A OUT OF B example even, like Kennedy and Sorensen's famous maxim, features an appearance by *country*, this time in the B-slot:

- (2) There is an old saying that "you can take a boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of a boy." (Morgan 1919:12)

## 1. CONSTRUCTIONS.

Construction Grammar sees function and form as inseparable from each other.

—Mirjam Fried & Jan-Ola Östman (2004a:12)

It has become increasingly clear, with the advent of computational corpus linguistics, the increased attention to function, and the greater understanding of neuro-cognitive architectonics shaping language studies at the beginning of the twenty-first century, that the notion of construction, in which form and function are bound, must be at the forefront of any theory of language use.<sup>3</sup> People do not speak or write by plugging words into the slots of a few all-purpose syntactic templates. They speak and write in a wealth of diverse lexical aggregates, each with a specific range of functional deployments. Some of these constructions come and go. Some are here to stay. Some seem intrinsic to a particular register, or dialect, or language, or family of languages; some to thought itself.

In the come-and-go category, we have the briefly and wildly popular "...NOT!" construction from the early 1990s. It emanated from the "Wayne's World" segment of the American television show, *Saturday Night Live*, which featured a distinctive caricature of the suburban American teen-age register. The construction sported a simple statement, usually positive or kindly, followed by a brief pause only to culminate in an emphatic "not!" that negated the preceding

---

<sup>3</sup> While the word *construction* has a long history in grammatical classification, dating at least to Cicero and Priscian (Cicero may have been the first to use it of phrasal arrangements; Priscian may have been the first to use it as a technical term), I enlist it here in direct alignment with the comparatively recent Construction Grammar framework growing out of the work of Charles Fillmore and his colleagues (Fillmore 1985, 1988, 1989; Fillmore & Kay 1987; Goldberg 1995, 1997; Fried & Östman 2004a, 2004b; Östman & Fried 2005; Hoffman & Trousdale 2013).

statement, as a kind of crude sarcasm marker. In the movie extrapolated from the segment, for instance, when Wayne abandons his partner Garth, Garth looks at the camera and says

- (3) I'm having a good time ... not! (Michaels & Spheeris 1992).

The construction was rampant in the media and around water coolers for a couple of years, and then it was gone, a disappearance no doubt hastened by overkill and the insipid movie, which garnered reviews that capitalized on the catchphrase, as in

- (4) "*Wayne's World*: Awesome ... Not!" (Turran 1992).

Transient constructions might even be local to a cluster of middle-school adolescents in one neighbourhood, or to family, or to a couple — groups who have word juxtapositions and phrases known only to them, or with particular resonances or functions only for them. In the other direction, constructions can be very general, such as the abstract form classes known as *active* and *passive*. Constructions, too, easily collocate, and any given utterance might realize a number of constructions, such as (1), which realizes, among other constructions, the stock political phrase, "my fellow Americans," the archaic/Biblical "ask not" (rather than "do not ask"), and the imperative form class.

The paradigm case for CxG, everyone agrees, is Adele Goldberg's analysis of what are traditionally known as *ditransitives*. In the classic view (let's anchor it in Chomsky's 1965 *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*), certain verbs are intransitive, others are transitive, and a few are ditransitive. Ditransitive verbs all have to do with transferring control or ownership over objects, as in (5):

- (5) Galen gave Brenna a ring.

In its full trajectory, the ownership of the ring transfers in sentence (5) from Galen to Brenna. The classic view says this transferring is a function of the verb, *give*. Construction Grammar says it is a function of the construction itself: "the ditransitive syntactic pattern is more felicitously associated directly with the construction as a whole than with the lexicosemantic structure of the verbs" (Goldberg 1992:69). Her argument is remarkably sophisticated, but it comes down to (or, at least, for our purposes, we can pretend it comes down to) the verbs in (6) – (11).

- (6) Tavares shot Marner.
- (7) Tavares whipped Marner.
- (8) Tavares passed Marner.
- (9) Tavares shot Marner the puck.
- (10) Tavares whipped Marner the puck.
- (11) Tavares passed Marner the puck.

The verbs in (6) – (8) look like the verbs in (9) – (11). But they are doing something very different. For *Aspects*, sometimes *shoot* is transitive, sometimes it is ditransitive, and the

meaning is different in both cases; *whip* is sometimes transitive, sometimes ditransitive; and so on. But Goldberg points out that the ditransitive construction—or, let's use her name, the *TRANSFER-CAUSED-MOTION Construction*—makes the verb, or whatever sort of word it used to be, do *its* bidding, not the other way around. If you doubt her, take a look at (12) – (14).

- (12) Tavares elbowed Marner the puck.
- (13) Tavares saucered Marner the puck.
- (14) Tavares goldberged Marner the puck.

None of the key words here are even verbs, strictly speaking, and the precise meaning of each may be a little hazy without more context, but the construction insists that they have to be verbs-for-the-moment if they are going to join in, evoking the action in some way, and a significant aspect of the meaning is the transfer of control: whatever elbowing, saucering, and goldberging might be, Tavares had the puck before he engaged in that activity and Marner had it when he was finished. It doesn't matter if goldberging is completely opaque or if *goldberg* is serving metonymically for a particular well-known maneuver (because, say, Goldberg is famous for her especially impressive through the legs, behind-the-back, drop-pass): Tavares had the puck; Tavares did something to the puck; then Marner had the puck. The *construction* tells you that. The form and meaning, coming as a package in CxG, arrives looking like Figure 1 for Goldberg. Mapping our examples against Figure 1, *Tavares* is AGENT and SUBJECT, *Marner* is RECIPIENT and OBLIQUE OBJECT, and *the puck* is THEME and DIRECT OBJECT, while *shot*, *whip*, *elbow*, and so on, fit into the slot labelled *PREDICATE*.

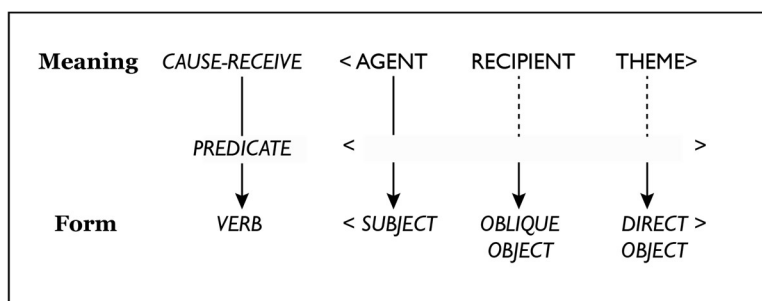


Figure 1. Form and meaning of the TRANSFER-CAUSED-MOTION Construction (adapted from Goldberg (1995:90, Figure 3.7)).

Construction Grammar is a family of approaches, which share lots of resemblances, not a monolithic theory with a singular, sanctioned set of tools. It is a framework, which can be realized in various formalisms, with allegiances to various other bodies of knowledge, domains or frameworks—for instance, sociolinguistics, neurocognition, or abstract descriptivism. The most expressive formalism for my purposes (embedded in the most conceptually satisfying theory) is the one developed in Embodied Construction Grammar (Bergen & Chang 2005, 2013).

We'll need its formalism later on to capture the features of our A OUT OF B example, so now is as good a time as any to introduce its instruments.

If we think of Figure 1 as a proof-of-concept for CxG, Figure 2 is closer to a production model.

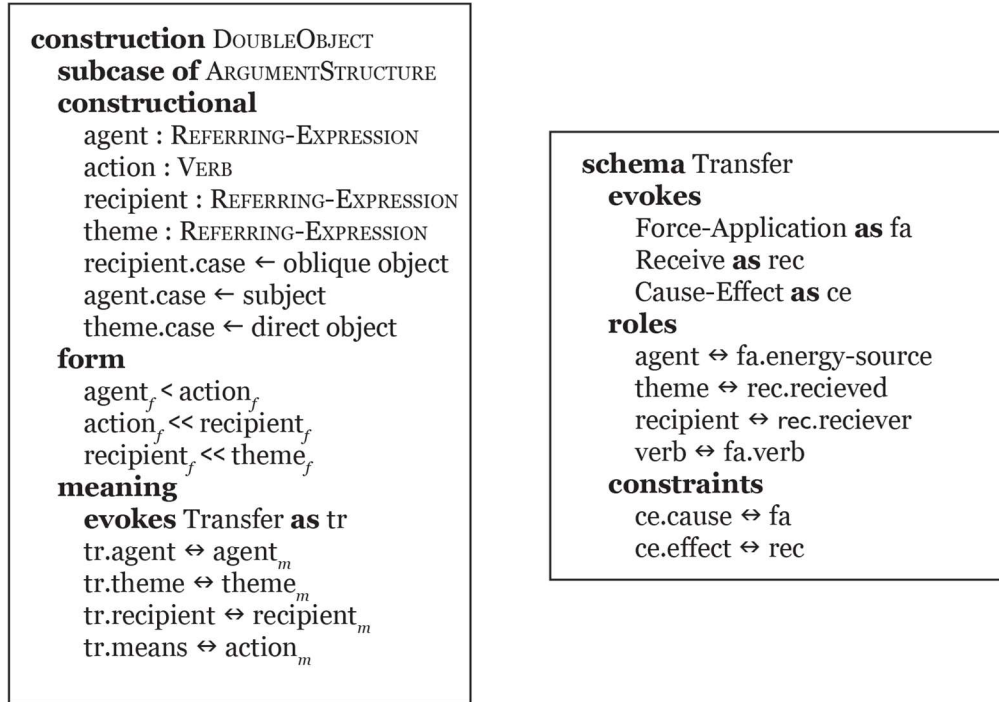


Figure 1. The DOUBLEOBJECT construction and the Transfer schema it evokes in the Embodied Construction Grammar formalism (adapted from Bergen & Chang (2005: 166, Figure 14; 170, Figure 18)).<sup>4</sup>

A production model needs to flesh out the form and meaning poles of constructions, which ECG does with a **form** block and a **meaning** block, along with a **constructional** block that sets out the inventory of constituents and units (units, an innovation beyond the basic ECG formalism are necessary for rhetorical figures, which can involve elements that do not fit the traditional notion of constituent; more on this later). Let's start with the **meaning** block, which **evokes** the Transfer schema; or, rather, lets start with the Transfer schema, which is the foundation of the construction's meaning. Walking through the Transfer schema representation, we see that it brings together the Force-Application schema, the Receive schema, and the Cause-Effect schema; it **evokes** them, *evoke* being the ECG term for recruiting schemata. This grouping of other schemata either pushes us off into more and more representations or into a bit of hand-

<sup>4</sup> I have played somewhat fast and loose with the ECG formalism and simplified its representations a bit. Most flagrantly, I have set aside the **self** role and indicated its **before** relation with the operator '<,' its **meet** relation with '<<.' I have also included the roles oblique object and direct object, to bring the representation in line with Figure 1.

waving. I'll wave at this point. We don't have time and space to comprehensively explicate all implicated schemata (but see Bergen & Chang 2005:167, Figure 15, for the details). Fortunately, all three schemata are fairly self evident: the first concerns the application of force; the second, some event of receiving; the third, an activity that causes some effect. Mapping these schema against (9) - (14), it's easy enough to see that all of them implicate the application of force which causes an effect that mediates a receiving event (force is applied to a puck, which causes it to participate in an event such that someone receives it).

One of the elegancies of the ECG formalism is the use of assigned variables (or "aliases") to chart relations among the implicated schemata: The Force-Application schema is deployed throughout the representation as *fa*, the Receive schema as *rec*, and Cause-Effect as *ce*. The participant roles for Transfer require an agent, a theme, a recipient, and a means. In turn, all of these roles are associated with the evoked schemata. That's the job of the double arrow ( $\leftrightarrow$ ). So, the agent is identified through Force-Application as the source of the energy, the theme through Receive schema as the thing that gets received, and the recipient through the same schema as the receiver. To say that (9) - (14) are realizations of the Transfer schema, then, is to say the following:

- Tavares is the agent and the energy-source, in all cases (agent  $\leftrightarrow$  fa.energy-source).
- Tavares is also the cause of the event in all cases, the one who applies the energy to the theme (ce.cause  $\leftrightarrow$  fa).
- The effect of that directed application of force is that the puck is received (ce.effect  $\leftrightarrow$  rec).
- Marner gets it (recipient  $\leftrightarrow$  rec.receiver).
- Shooting, whipping, ... goldberging identify the various means by which the puck has force applied to it, causing it to end up with the receiver (verb  $\leftarrow$  fa.verb).

With the foundation in place, we can turn to the Construction that puts the Transfer schema to work. The DOUBLEOBJECT construction is a subcase of (a type of) the ARGUMENTSTRUCTURE construction—a high-level construction that expresses micro-narratives ("scenes") of entities realizing some event, all of which you can see playing out in the **constructional** block. The REFERRING-EXPRESSIONS (pretty much traditional Noun Phrases) are assembled into the skeleton of an event here by way of the VERB: an agent, a theme, and a recipient, all with relevant syntactic coding (signalled by the one-headed arrows), connect up with each other through an action. The **form** block tells us that the agent precedes the action in this construction (agent<sub>f</sub> < action), the subscript signalling that we are concerned with the phonological or orthographical representation of the agent, its signans, —in (9) - (14), *Tavares*. The signantia for the action (*shot*, ... *goldberged*), in turn, immediately precedes that of the recipient, *Marner* (action<sub>f</sub> << recipient<sub>f</sub>), itself immediately preceding the theme, *the puck* (recipient<sub>f</sub> << theme<sub>f</sub>). That is, we get exactly the order we see in (9) - (14). The **meaning** block now spells out the way our characters and actions realize the Transfer schema; that is, it specifies what we see in the bulleted list above, with the subscript *m* signalling that we are in the company here of concepts. The agent<sub>m</sub> of (9) - (14) is our *idea* of the Toronto Maple Leafs' captain, John Tavares.

## 2. RHETORICAL FIGURES.

Do I know what "rhetorical" means?

—Homer Simpson (Appel 1995, 17:45)

The devices and maneuvers that have accreted under the term *rhetorical figures* are many and diverse, but a four-way taxonomy puts them into reasonable order: schemes, tropes, chroma, and moves<sup>5</sup>. I explicate all four, but only schemes and tropes are relevant for my subsequent argument; and they are perhaps the only figures that interact in a significant way with grammatical constructions.

The scheme and trope categories are among the oldest in figuration, and, construed according to a simple *signans* / *signatum* division, the most basic and the easiest to see. Figures are easiest to describe in terms of *deviation* from literal or bland language, and I will adopt that fiction for the purposes of discussion, complicating it once we have our taxonomy in place; but it *is* a fiction. Schemes can be seen as *formal deviations*, shifting away from conventional expectations in the usage of *signantia* ('forms'). Tropes are conceptual deviations, shifting away from conventional expectations in the usage of *signata* ('meanings').

Here are some prototypical schemes:

- (15) Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie,  
Kissed the girls and made them cry.

The schemes in (15) include rhyme (repetition of one or more word-final syllables—*Georgie* / *Porgie*, *pie* / *cry*) and alliteration (repetition of word-initial consonants—*Porgie* / *pudding* / *pie*). Ordinary language has words and phrases that exhibit rhyme (*hot pot*; *nit-wit*; *red sky in morning*, *sailors take warning*) and alliteration (*dodo*, *mish-mash*, *look before you leap*), but they stand out against a backdrop of words and expressions in which final syllables and initial consonants don't closely match each other. When rhyme or alliteration show up in flurries, or in strategically isolated expressions, we know that we are in the presence of special sorts of language events, like poetry, oratory, or county music. But that does not mean either that rhyme and alliteration depend on linguistic resources not present in ordinary language or that rhyme and alliteration are themselves absent from ordinary language.

Here is a prototypical trope, personification:

- (16) Imagine you are a human brain. What would you care whether the lumbering life-support system that carries you around can easily decode the ingenious product you had made for it? That life-support system had made life hard for you by inventing thousands of words you were expected to store for it and by insisting on stringing those words together and

---

<sup>5</sup> This taxonomy is mine, partially articulated in Chien & Harris (2010) and Harris (2013). It is heavily influenced by the taxonomic efforts of rhetoricians over the ages, from the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herrenium* ([Pseudo-]Cicero 1954 [c95 BE]) to Group  $\mu$ 's *General Rhetoric* (Dubois et al. 1986), but it is equally influenced by twentieth century ordinary language philosophy.



pushing them out of its mouth. You had loyally stored the words so that they were instantly accessible and created algorithms that automatically gave shape to the word / thought salads that were all the clumsy brute could manage on its own. Now it says it can't process the stuff? Enough already. (Bickerton 2014:13)

Ordinary language exhibits personification (*Mr. Clean, I'm a mac / I'm a PC, the weather is mocking me*). Indeed, most languages have very basic tools for personification (a *writer* is a person who writes, a *sailor* is a person who sails. The agentive morpheme takes the word for an activity and converts it to the word for a person who habitually or professionally performs that activity), and, as with all tropes, the salience of a given personification often recedes through time and familiarity until goes largely unnoticed, so that our daily expressions are littered with inconspicuous-unto-invisible personifications (*the camera loves her, opportunity knocks, time waits for no one*). When personification occurs in novel and striking ways, it is noticed and usually taken as evidence of design, of deviation away from a basic things-are-things-not-people level of signification. Tropes are the sole figurative concern of Cognitive Linguistics, and only a few of those: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche.

The other two categories, chroma and moves, are less established, and the figures they cover generally commingle with tropes in other taxonomies, or show up in a separate classification altogether, such as 'figures of thought.' But they provide useful tags for understanding the range of rhetorical devices and maneuvers that have traditionally been called figures but do not sort neatly onto either side of the *signans/signatum* boundary. Chroma are deviations of intention. Moves are specific discourse strategies—deviations, if at all, of presumed default discourse patterns.

Here is a prototypical chroma, erotema, known colloquially as a 'rhetorical question':

- (17) Shylock: If you prick us, do we not bleed?  
(Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, 3.1)

The default function of questions is to elicit information. But erotema deploy with a different intention. Shylock is not looking for an answer. He is making an assertion: we are just like you. You bleed. We bleed. His intention is not to *solicit* information, but to *assert* it. Rhetorical questions show up regularly in daily language (*What am I, stupid?!* ), and their usage makes clear that chroma rely more broadly on the context of utterance in a way that schemes and tropes do not. In Group  $\mu$ 's terms, chroma are "in principle circumstantial" (Dubois et al. 1981:131). They are understood, that is, as deviations not with reference to the sign, but to the context in which the sign is deployed. We need to know the circumstances of Shylock's utterance are such that he is not looking for information about Jewish anatomy, and that the circumstances of the ordinary language example are such that the expression is rarely used to request an intelligence assessment.

Rhetorical moves are strategic maneuvers of a wider structural sort, outside the familiar linguistic domains of form, meaning, and intention. They are quite different from schemes, tropes and chroma; not figures at all, properly construed. But they have historically been lumped

in with figures. Here is a prototypical move, paralipsis (assertion in the guise of avoiding assertion):

- (18) And lately, when, by procuring the death of your former wife, you had made room in your house for another, did you not add to the enormity of that crime, by a new and unparalleled measure of guilt? But I pass over this, and choose to let it remain in silence, that the memory of so monstrous a piece of wickedness, or at least of its having been committed with impunity, may not descend to posterity. I pass over, too, the entire ruin ... (Cicero 1833 [63 BCE]:1.159)

Cicero feigns a wish to preserve delicate posterity from corruption by a record of monstrous wickedness, while making sure the magistrates get a catalogue of that wickedness<sup>6</sup>. Moves, again, are not really figures, but they have this in common with figures: they also draw on resources common to ordinary language. Paralipsis, for instance, is effectively the same tactic we call *innuendo* when it occurs in gossip.

Before leaving this incredibly brief account of figuration, I want to be clear that this taxonomy does not imply that only schemes have form, only tropes have conceptual content, only chroma embody intention, only moves evince strategy. *Every semiotic event* evinces form and meaning (*signans* and *signatum*), *every symbolic event* evinces intention, and *every communicative event* evinces strategic maneuvering. The taxonomy merely notes that sometimes the form or the concept or the intention or the strategy has additional salience, understood as a divergence from default expectations (perhaps an idealized bland set of expectations holding of the sort of speakers Chomsky once described as constituting a "perfectly homogeneous speech-community"—1965:3). Those salient departures are rhetorical figures, and some strategies of argumentation have historically been classed with these stylistic maneuvers. I will say nothing further about chroma or moves.

Rhetorical figures are not special linguistic tricks executed only by poets and orators, however, just as running and jumping are not special bodily tricks of professional athletes. Everyone runs and jumps. The relative few who can't run or jump have fallen out of sync with the evolutionary template of the species, because of injury, genetic misfires, or the like. The relative few who can run or jump extraordinarily well, gifted athletes, have genetic advantages (and usually social advantages to go with them, the time and resources to pursue one thing devoutly)—like poets and orators. Which brings us back to the notion of deviation.

It is not the *figure*, the linguistic pattern itself, that stands out, that seems to deviate from the daily language of the street. It is a few specific instantiations of that pattern, very often in collocations with other patterns (Tu 2019). Take our example from Kennedy and Sorensen. It is universally regarded as an example of antimetabole, defined succinctly and representatively by the modern authority on figures, Richard Lanham's *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, as "inverting

---

<sup>6</sup> The passage also includes erotema (rhetorical question), of course, since Cicero is not looking for his 'addressee,' Cataline, to answer his question about unparalleled guilt, as well as another chroma, apostrophe, in which the apparent addressee is only a false front. The address to Cataline is fully intended to be 'overheard' by the real addressees, the magistrates.

the order of repeated words" (1991:184). But one can say the 'same thing' in other inversions of repeated words that do not have quite the punch of (1); for instance, sentence (19):

- (19) You shouldn't be concerned with whether your country has stuff it can do for you; rather, consider what duties and responsibilities you have with respect to your country.

This satisfies the pattern Lanham identifies, it holds the meaning of (1) fairly stable, and it even retains (1)'s chiasmic elements (*your country, you*), but you've probably forgotten it already, and if I hadn't been grooming you to notice reverse repetitions, there's a good chance you wouldn't even have spotted them here. That's largely because it's *only* an antimetabole, with very little other figurative action in play. On the other hand, you surely noticed that there was something particularly sticky and eloquent about (1) the very first time you heard or read it, long before seeing it in this essay. That's because it exemplifies not only antimetabole, but a clutch of other rhetorical figures that work in concert to make that specific utterance salient, memorable, aesthetically pleasurable, and effective. I'll give you some names for these patterns later on, but we've already mentioned the slight derangement of verb and negator of "Ask not," and if you glance quickly back, you'll easily notice other repetitions in (1) (*ask, what, can do for*), the semantic opposition (*ask not/ask*), a much greater syntactic parallelism than (19), and a better sense of rhythm. It is examples like (1) that drew rhetoricians' attention to linguistic patterns in the first place, and it is the curation of examples like (1) over the millennia to exemplify individual figures, rather than the conspiracy of figures they really are, that has given us the legacy of figures themselves as special linguistic patterns that deviate from ordinary language rather than just, well, the way people talk. (For a more detailed account of figurative combinatorics, see my article "Ploke" (Harris 2020:5-8).)

### 3. CHIASMUS.

Suit the action to the word, the word to the action.  
—William Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, 3. 2)

Chiasmus is frequently—and somewhat understandably, given the exquisite form/function coupling it is capable of—regarded as a “rhetorical circus trick” (Poole 2006), a highly complicated and specialized device only for the rhetorically gifted, attained only after years of specialty training and practice. You need to be a Kennedy to try it without a net. Let's put the lie to that before going any further.

- (20) When the going gets tough, the tough get going. (traditional; often attributed to Knute Rockney or Joseph Kennedy)  
 (21) A place for everything and everything in its place. (traditional)  
 (22) Football is a gentleman's game played by hooligans. Rugby is a hooligan's game played by gentlemen. (traditional, especially at prep schools and elite universities)  
 (23) Those who can't do, teach, and those who can't teach, do. (traditional)

- (24) Instead of the taxonomic linguist having a just complaint against the mentalist for appealing to occult entities the mentalist has a just complaint against the taxonomic linguist for excluding from linguistics, *a priori* and arbitrarily, just what it is most important for this science to do. (Katz 1964:137)
- (25) Some transformationalists argue that all conjoined structures are the result of derived conjunction. They affirm that sentences such as "Mary and Bob are similar" derive from sentence pairs such as the following:  
     Mary is similar to Bob.  
     Bob is similar to Mary.  
 The above sentences are examples of symmetric predicates (predicates in which if NP<sub>1</sub> — X — NP<sub>2</sub> is true, then NP<sub>2</sub> — X — NP<sub>1</sub> is true, where X represents the verb phrase). (Bornstein 1977:203)
- (26) I maintain that *X resembles Y* and *Y resembles X* are semantically distinct (even granting their truth value equivalence): The former characterizes X with reference to Y, and the latter describes Y with reference to X. We can similarly employ either *X is above Y* or *Y is below X* to describe precisely the same conceived situation, but they differ in how they construe this situation; in the former, Y functions as a point of reference—a kind of landmark—for locating X, whereas the latter reverses these roles. (Langacker 1986:10)
- (27) Two roles, r<sub>1</sub> and r<sub>2</sub>, are semantically compatible if either r<sub>1</sub> can be construed as an instance of r<sub>2</sub>, or r<sub>2</sub> can be construed as an instance of r<sub>1</sub>. (Goldberg 1995:50)
- (28) I-language is acquired through exposure to E-Language, while E-language is the output of speaker's I-Language. (Taylor 2012:9)

... I could go on. I have a database with hundreds of such instances. I even have some from that most resolutely antirhetorical of linguists, Noam Chomsky ("[T]he best rhetoric," he has said, "is the least rhetoric" 2003 [1991]:376):

- (29) [Y]ou can communicate with your pet dog, and your pet dog can communicate with you. (Chomsky 2013)

Linguists have paid chiasmus scant attention, and rhetoricians have not done much better<sup>7</sup>. The major exception in the latter category is Jeanne Fahnestock. Especially in her *Rhetorical Figures in Science*, she not only provides a brilliant treatment of antimetabole specifically, but also resurrects the long-dormant approach to figures that sees them as encapsulating argumentative functions, and maps out systematic form/function relationships among a larger array of neglected rhetorical figures.

Her then-colleague at the University of Maryland, the cognitive scientist, Mark Turner, observed of the figuration program she resurrected that the "justifications for construction

---

<sup>7</sup> The only linguist I am aware of to discuss chiasmus is Nunberg (1998), who smugly gets many things wrong, saying, for instance, that its "roots [are] in Shakespeare and Milton" though they run historically to our earliest records. He calls scholars like Fahnestock and me part of "a thin line of English department pedants" vainly defending rhetorical figures against the Philistines. This paper is such a defence; Nunberg, such a Philistine.

grammar are essentially identical to those for the original classical rhetorical program of analyzing figures" (1998:56); namely, to identify "a conventional pairing of a form and a meaning" (1998:44). He also turned his attention to antimetabole:

Some schemata, like *antimetabole*, have as their conceptual half a highly abstract set of connections between elements, with negligible suggestion of the categories to which these elements might belong. Their abstract conceptual pattern fits many different kinds of specific scenes and even many different abstract meanings. Consider, for example, "electricity induces magnetism and magnetism induces electricity." To be sure, its *words* concern electromagnetism and causation, but its *antimetabole figure* does not: the formal pattern of the figure is a doubled expression that includes A and B in its first half and their transposition in its second, while the paired conceptual pattern of the figure is [a] symmetric relation between A and B. Obviously, this conceptual pattern provides no suggestion of the categories to which A and B belong. We can apply it, at least in principle, to any kind of A and B. (Turner 1998:45)<sup>8</sup>

Turner, unfortunately, contributes here to the terminological confusion that has dogged the study of rhetorical figures for almost its entirety by extending the term *antimetabole* further than it should go. But he is absolutely right that the formal pattern realized in antimetabole, often specified in the formula, ABBA, applies to a wide range of constituents (and ad hoc units). For clarity, I reserve the term *antimetabole* for its most common usage, "inverting the order of repeated words" (Lanham 1991:184; my emphasis). Other constituents that invert and repeat include phonemes, (30) – (31); referents, (32) – (33); and syntactic phrases (34) – (35):

- (30) She sells seashells by the seashore. (traditional)
- (31) I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy. (unknown; sometimes attributed to Tom Waits)
- (32) Old King Cole was a merry old soul  
And a merry old soul was he. (traditional)
- (33) Don't call me; I'll call you. (traditional)
- (34) It is boring to eat; to sleep is fulfilling. (Burton 2007)
- (35) Exalts his enemies, his friends destroys. (Dryden 1760 [1681]:184)

There is one specific chiasmic inversion that is important for the remainder of my analysis of the A OUT OF B construction to go through. We've seen a few examples of it already, including one often attributed to John F. Kennedy's father, Joseph. I repeat it here for convenience:

- (20) When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

---

<sup>8</sup> See also his student's fascinating exploration of chiasmic data, Patricia Ann Lissner's (2007) PhD dissertation, "Chi-Thinking: Chiasmus and Cognition."

At first glance, this may look just like an antimetabole, but look again: the two instances of *tough* are not the same word. In the first occurrence, it is an adverbial, paraphrasable as something like *difficult*; in the second, it is a nominal, paraphrasable as *resolute*. The two instances of *going* reveal a similar pattern: different lexical classes, different meanings. I call this figure *antanametabole* (a blend of *antanaclasis* and *antimetabole* for reasons that will soon be clear). Antanametaboles are inverse repetitions of the same signans, when at least one of them has a different sense (evokes a different signatum). The difference between an antimetabole and an antanametabole probably seems pedantic at this stage, but it is crucial to understanding A OUT OF B.

#### 4. THE A OUT OF B, BUT NOT B OUT OF A CONSTRUCTION.

Aristotle's classic dictum that language is sound with meaning should be reversed. Language is meaning with sound.

—Berwick & Chomsky (2016:101)

The Canadian satirical program, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, did a 'report' on the lies and dirty tricks of the Conservative Party of Canada in the 2019 federal election, zeroing in especially on its leader, Andrew Scheer, who Canadians were surprised to learn shortly after the campaign began was an American citizen. The announcer inevitably compared him to the reigning champion of political lies, at least in the West, US President Donald J. Trump. "Seems you can take the boy out of America," the announcer said, "but you can't take the America out of the boy" (22 *Minutes*), exemplifying a construction that leverages multiple rhetorical figures. It's the A OUT OF B construction exemplified earlier in what might be its *ur*-realization, the boy/country, /country/boy example of (2). Here are a few more data:

- (36) You can take the girl out of the trailer park, but you can't take the trailer park out of the girl. (Hilderbrand 2011:np)
- (37) You can take the man out of the woods, but you can't take the woods out of the man. (Paulsen 2012:50)
- (38) You can take the girl off the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the girl! (Bowen 2016:33)
- (39) I could take Tarzan out of the jungle. *Could I take the jungle out of Tarzan?* (Maxwell 2012:254)
- (40) It was found easier to take the evacuee out of the slum than to take the slum out of the evacuee. (Waller 1940:30)
- (41) After twenty-five years in the field. I've traded the front seat of a 4 x 4 for a swivel chair and a desk. The change did not come easily for me. As the old saying goes — it's a lot easier to take the man out of the field than to take the field out of the man. (Oklahoma DWC 1995:61)
- (42) [I]t was easier to take the girl out of the brothel than to take the brothel out of the girl. (Walker 2011:72)

- (43) It was much easier to take Kuhn out of Harvard than Harvard out of Kuhn. (Fuller 2001:387)

There is some variation in these constructions, most notably with (40) – (43), which manifest a particular cognate construction (which we can call the *EASIER TO TAKE A OUT OF B, THAN TO TAKE B OUT OF A* construction) that relaxes the certainty we find in the A OUT OF B construction. But they all satisfy the conform to a pattern that fits the definition of *construction* in CxG: “an *abstract*, representational entity, a conventional pattern of linguistic structure that provides a general blueprint for *licensing* well-formed linguistic expressions” (Fried & Östman 2004a:18).

The features of these instances that match the sorts of phenomena that CxGrammarians study include: the appearance of the same or similar words (*LET ALONE* construction, *WHAT’S X DOING Y* construction) and a defined stability of syntax (*TRANSFER-CAUSED-MOTION* construction, *XYZ* construction); it is also an idiom (even a cliché or “snowclone”), a chief inspiration and enduring preoccupation of CxG. Most importantly, like the *TRANSFER-CAUSED-MOTION* construction, the functional meaning is not a product of lexical properties. It does not come compositionally out of plugging some appropriate words into some well-formed syntactic arrangement. It “comes from the ... construction itself” (Goldberg 2003:221). It is the juxtaposition of the A-out-of-B clause and the not-B-out-of-A clause in the construction that determines the analogical and correlational meanings; that, by giving us a literal account and then flipping it on its head, engineers the figurative construal. The construction ‘makes’ the person (analogically) into a container and the location (correlationally) into an attitudinal complex.

Cx Grammarians are strongly aligned with Cognitive Linguistics, and Cognitive Linguists have paid considerable attention to analogical and correlational meaning extensions, but there is more figuration going on here than these familiar tropic extensions. Our construction is highly figurative in a way that is quite common to constructions and almost wholly ignored by both Cognitive Linguists and Constructionists. Here is a summary of the figurative components realized in (36) – (43):

- i. epanaphora (the repetition of a word or word group at the beginning of phrases or clauses): *take*, in the presence of a small set of other lexemes (*can take, could take, easier to take, than to take*)
- ii. mesodiplosis (medial lexical repetition between two similar or identical lexical units): *out of* (excepting (38); see ix below)
- iii. antanametabole (ABBA pattern of signantia with different signata—crudely, the same words with different senses): A = *the boy*, B = *the country*, for (2); A = *the girl*, B = *the trailer park*, for (36); etc.
- iv. antithesis (opposing predications), *can/can’t*, in (36) – (38)

- v. container analogic frame (the term for an object, entity or concept not normally construed as a container used to analogically frame it as a container, as signalled by *take ... out of*): *the boy* in (2); *the girl* in (36); etc.<sup>9</sup>
- vi. correlational frame (the term for an object, entity or concept when it is used to reference a correlated object, entity, or concept): *the country* in (2); *the trailer park* in (36); etc.<sup>10</sup>
- vii. reification (an abstract or otherwise non-substantial concept is depicted as a physical object): *the country* in (2); *the trailer park* in (36); etc.
- viii. parison (repetition of syntactic phrases, often referred to as "parallelism"): [V [Det N]<sub>NP</sub> [P [Det N]<sub>NP</sub>]]<sub>VP</sub> (*take a boy out of the country, take the country out of the boy* of (2), etc.)

Also playing smaller parts in these instances:

- ix. synonymia (the recurrence of a signatum with a different signans): *off/out of, in* (38)
- x. prozeugma (one term governs two or more subsequent arguments; this phenomenon was explored transformationally, and in some other generative frameworks, under the notion of deletion): "easier to take Kuhn out of Harvard than [*to take*] Harvard out of Kuhn," in (43)

These figures unquestionably contribute to the *form* of A OUT OF B in a way that affects its memorability and therefore supports its propagation. Repetition, for instance, is perhaps the chief agent for fixing something in memory and it is rampant in this construction, but sequential position, contrast, reversal, analogy, and correlation, all activated by the various figurative elements of this construction, are equally important aspects of our neurocognitive repertoire for memory as well; and for perception, for categorization, for reasoning, and so on.

But these figures also contribute irreducibly to the *meaning* of A OUT OF B as well.

We can chart out the meaning of (2), and (36) – (43), in the following way. The first occurrence of the A designates a biological person in the world (a boy, a girl, a man, Tarzan, Kuhn) and the first occurrence of the B designates a geographical location (the country, the trailer park, the woods, the jungle, Harvard). The second occurrence of B, however, is a sensibility or attitude or complex of beliefs correlationally associated with the location, often negatively valenced in some way, but not always. Rusticity or bumpkinhood are implied for (2) and (38), something like trashiness for (36), maybe sexual crudity for (42), and so on, which do not seem approbatory, though in (41) *the field* could be positive. The example from Steve Fuller's biography of Thomas Kuhn could go either way, but his explication of 'Harvardness' as, in part, an "aristocratic mentality" (Fuller 2001:387) certainly leans negatively. But the second B-slot is clearly conveying an attitude in all cases, not a physical location. The best term for a

---

<sup>9</sup> Analogic framing usually appears in the literature as *conceptual metaphor*. Since the phenomena are not, strictly speaking, metaphors, and since, in any case, all metaphors are conceptual (so the adjective is redundant), I try to avoid that term. See Mehlenbacher & Harris (2017:99-101).

<sup>10</sup> Correlational framing usually appears in the literature as *conceptual metonymy*; for similar reasons to those in note 8 I try to avoid that term.



collective attitude comes out of rhetoric, *ethos* (Halloran 1982, 1984); we could gloss Fuller pretty efficiently with *artistocratic ethos*, for instance, which in turn is effectively his definition for *Harvard ethos*; our other examples map easily into *country ethos*, *trailer-park ethos*, *slum ethos*, and so on. We can identify the correlational frame, then, as LOCATION FOR ETHOS.

Finally, the second B is (analogically) a container—that is, evokes the analogic frame, A PERSON IS A CONTAINER—from which the correlated ethos, now reified, cannot be (easily) removed. What absolutely drives the meaning of this construction is the collocation of antanametabole (the ABBA pattern), epanaphora (the fact that the AB and the BA are framed by the same verb, *take*), mesodiplosis (the fact that the A and B repeat in reverse order around the same constituent, *out of*), and parison (the fact that the A and B, by changing positions in the same syntactic frame also thereby change semantic and grammatical roles: A is first the object and theme, B the complement and source; then B is the object and theme, A the complement and source).

While CxG has not been used to represent rhetorical figures, it is, as Turner observed, highly suited to the purpose. Chiasmus, for instance, is a piece of cake to describe. It is just a matter of relative position, so it is a form schema, as expressed Figure 3. It is a subcase of the high-level form schemas, Rhetorical Figure (I will leave this notion unformalized, one of many). It **evokes** Repetition, giving us two pairs of units, four in total, designated as As ( $a_1$ ,  $a_2$ ) and Bs ( $b_1$ ,  $b_2$ ); the signans of one of the As, its form, precedes one of the forms of B ( $a_{1f} < b_{2f}$ ), and then the form of the other B precedes the other form of the A ( $b_{1f} < a_{2f}$ ). (Notice that it does not have to be *only* the signans that repeat in reverse order; rather, it is *at least* the signans).

<p><b>Schema:</b> Chiasmus  <b>evokes</b> Repetition as rep  <b>subcase</b>  Rhetorical Figure  <b>constructional</b>  rep.a1, rep.a2 : A  rep.b1, rep.b2 : B  <b>constraints</b>  <math>a_{1f} &lt; b_{1f} &lt; a_{2f} &lt; b_{2f}</math></p>
--

Figure 3. The Chiasmus form schema.

Equally important to A OUT OF B is the figure, antanaclasis, in which a signans repeats, but with a different signatum, as in (44), in which the senses of the two instances of *institution* are quite different.

- (44) Marriage is a wonderful institution, but who would want to live in an institution?  
(traditional, often attributed to Groucho Marx or H.L. Mencken)

The Antanaclasis schema, which leverages polysemy or homonymy for rhetorical effect, is given in Figure 4. It **evokes** an extraordinarily common schema, Repetition, which just gives us multiple versions of the same linguistic unit. The only **constructional** requirement is that there must be two of the same constituent ( $a1, a2 : A$ ); the **form** block requires that the repeating unit is a word; the **constraints** insist that the signantia are the same ( $a1_f = a2_f$ ), but that the two signata must be different ( $a1_m \neq a2_m$ ). Notice that there is nothing here about order, about the lexical category, the roles they play, and so on. Most rhetorical figures, I suspect, will have this kind of bare-bones specification. The function of antanaclasis is more perlocutionary than locutionary. It might be deployed for humour, as in (44), or for fallacious reasoning (i.e., equivocation), for poetic resonance, or for polysemous appeal (see Ceccarelli 1998). But in terms of the meaning that supports these effects, it clearly leverages the universal linguistic phenomenon of multiple signification, which I am treating in Figure 4 as a schema that specifies a strategic ambiguity generated by the co-presence of two instances ( $a1$  and  $a2$ ) of a polysemous word or of two homonymous words.

<b>Schema</b>	Antanaclasis
<b>evokes</b>	Repetition as rep
<b>subcase</b>	
	Rhetorical Trope
<b>constructional</b>	
	rep.a1, rep.a2 : A
<b>form</b>	
	A : WORD
<b>constraints</b>	
	$a1_f = a2_f$
	$a1_m \neq a2_m$
<b>meaning</b>	
<b>evokes</b>	Multiple Signification as ms
	ms.a1 $\leftrightarrow$ $a1_m$
	ms.a2 $\leftrightarrow$ $a2_m$

Figure 4. The Antanaclasis form schema.

Antanaclasis and chiasmus colligate as the figure anantametabole, often deployed for comic effect. Occurring on the *Tonight Show* when Jay Leno was still the host, (45) is typical of antanametaboles.

- (45) Women don't want dates on their condoms; they want condoms on their dates. (Jay Leno, qtd in Hauptman 2012 [1994]:45)

Women don't want expiry dates on condoms, Leno tells us, they want the guys who come to their door with boxes of chocolates (=dates) to wear condoms when the occasion arises; though, I'm willing to bet, they actually want both.

Returning more generally to chiasmic structures, we know that—since almost any linguistic element can be realized in a chiasmic reversal—chiasmus is not a construction, but a form type, which a range of constructions might evoke. A OUT OF B construction implicates a specific variety of chiasmus, perhaps the most common, certainly the most curated, in which words realize the relevant As and Bs. While most figures are polyfunctional, Fahnestock has shown that one of the chief functions of chiasmic structure is to express reciprocity (1999:141-143). The reciprocity function of chiasmus is most apparent in an instance like (29), where humans and dogs are figured in a relationship of mutual, or reciprocal, communication. Communication flows from human to dog in (29), but also from dog to human. More specifically, it involves a reciprocal “flow of energy along an action chain” (Langacker 1999:293)—or rather, along two opposite action chains. The prototypical, if not archetypical, antimetabole in this regard is Isaac Newton's illustration of his third law of motion:

- (46) If a horse draws a stone tied to a rope, the horse (if I may so say) will be equally drawn back towards the stone: for the distended rope, by the same endeavour to relax or unbend itself, will draw the horse as much towards the stone as it does the stone towards the horse. [Si equus lapidem funi allegatum trahit, retrahetur etiam & equus aequaliter in lapidem: nam funis utrinq; distentus eodem relaxandi se conatu urgebit Equum versus lapidem, ac lapidem versus equum]. (Newton 1803 [1687]: 1.15; 1687: 13) (Newton 1803 [1687]:1.15; 1687: 13)

The horse expends energy on the rope which conveys that energy to the stone which expends, in exact proportion, its energy on the rope which conveys it to the horse; the Latin gets the reciprocal flow with special precision: *Equum versus lapidem, ac lapidem versus equum*. All of our chiasmic examples — (1), (2), (20) – (43), (46) — illustrate this reciprocal flow in various ways, though the 'energy' is not always as literal as it is for Newton. In (25), for instance, the notion of similarity defines Mary with respect to Bob and Bob with respect to Mary. Similarity 'flows' both ways, as does resemblance and positional-reference (26), and instance-construal in (27), and Taylor describes a feedback loop in (28). In (29), communication can flow between dogs and their people. The sequence of these clauses makes the flows seem temporal, first one way, then the other, but they are simultaneous. Examples like these evoke the image schema Mark Johnson (1987:85ff) calls *point balance* (Figure 5).



Figure 5. The Point-Balance Schema (adapted from Johnson 1987: 85-86).

Action chains also evoke the Source-Path-Goal schema (Langacker 1987:399, 2008:306); the energy originates somewhere (source) and goes along some route (path) to somewhere else (goal), though not all of these roles are always present. Newton is again our best touchstone. The

rope certainly seems like a conceptual route for the horse's energy to get to the stone, and the stone's energy to get to the horse, but Newton also configures the rope as a source and goal of energy in this passage; and, in fact provides no path at all, conceptually or syntactically. For reciprocity chiasmi, however, we need both source and goal, with the same entities serving both roles. Newton's horse is a source and a goal. Newton's stone is a source and a goal. The other examples work in the same basic way.

Also crucial in these energy flows are the terms that mediate the reciprocal A-B and B-A relations in many of these instances: *get* in (20), *played by* in (22), *having/has a just complaint against the* in (24), and so on—that is, by one of the rhetorical schemes that very frequently attends chiasmic forms and is highly important for A OUT OF B, mesodiplosis (medial lexical repetition). While we have these examples on the table, perhaps this would be a good time to point out why the term *unit* is better for the elements and groupings relevant to rhetorical figures than *constituents*: because groupings like *has a just complaint against the* (24) and *you can/can't take* (36-38) are the relevant strings for the figures (respectively, mesodiplosis and epanaphora), but they are not constituents in the standard grammatical sense.

#### **Construction** RECIPROCAL ANTIMETABOLE

##### **evokes**

Antimetabole **as** antim

Mesodiplosis **as** mes

Source Path Goal **as** spg

##### **constructional**

source: REFERRING-EXPRESSION

antim.a1, antim.b2 : source

goal : REFERRING-EXPRESSION

antim.b1, antim.a2 : goal

sr.direction : SPATIAL-RELATION

mes.a1, mes.a2 : sr.direction

##### **form**

source.a1<sub>f</sub> < sr.direction.a1<sub>f</sub>

sr.direction.a1<sub>f</sub> << goal.b1<sub>f</sub>

goal.b1<sub>f</sub> < source.b2<sub>f</sub>

source.b2<sub>f</sub> < sr.direction.a2<sub>f</sub>

sr.direction.a2<sub>f</sub> << goal.a2<sub>f</sub>

##### **meaning**

goal ↔ goal<sub>m</sub> ↔ landmark

source ↔ source<sub>m</sub> ↔ trajector

sr.direction ↔ sr.direction<sub>m</sub>

Figure 6. The RECIPROCAL ANTIMETABOLE Construction. For trajector-landmark (whose roles are inherited in ECG by way of SPATIAL RELATION), see Langacker (2008:70-73). For Source Path Goal, see Johnson (1987:113-14). For both in ECG, see Bergen & Chang (2005:151, Figure 3).

Figure 6 is a provisional representation of the RECIPROCAL ANTIMETABOLE construction. Its generality as a representation will need to be tested as more data comes in, but it effectively models our prototype for the phenomenon, but antimetabole in (46); namely, this sequence:

(47) ... the horse as much towards the stone as it does the stone towards the horse

Modelling all of (46) would be far more complicated, of course. We would need to include the Force-Application schema for instance, as *the horse* shows up initially as the agent that exerts the stone-drawing force, and then *the distended rope* is an agent, applying force to both the horse and the stone. But (46) incorporates many constructions, and we are only interested in one of them, the RECIPROCAL ANTIMETABOLE. What we see immediately is that it is a kind of compound of Antimetabole, its friend, Mesodiplosis, and the Source Path Goal schema; and that the chiasmic structure ensures that the relevant semantic roles are realized by the same constituents, in reverse; that the A constituent is first an source (realized as a1), while B is the goal (b1), but then B becomes a source (b2), while A becomes the goal (a2); that these elements are in two spatial relations to each other; that both relations are the same, governed by the Mesodiplosis, but in different configurations, with each of them playing the part of trajector and landmark in turn; that, in concert, the meaning is a reciprocal, directional relationship—for instance, that a horse is drawn towards a stone exactly as that stone is drawn towards that horse.

The formalism is not universally familiar, I know, and even for ECG aficionados there are a number of innovations; and significantly implicated schemata (Antimetabole and Mesodiplosis) are only waved at here, left for another day. Nor will the representation accommodate all our instances without some calibrations here and there. But Figure 6 does substantial enough work to serve as a starting point. All the important action takes place in the **form** and **meaning** blocks. The form is inherited from the Antimetabole and Mesodiplosis schemata, mapped against the constituents in the **constructional** block, and the meaning emerges from the balancing of the source-to-landmark flows, A to B and B to A. Moreover, the missing schemata do not present much of a challenge. For Antimetabole, a subtype of Chiasmus (Figure 3), one need only stipulate constraints such that the A and B instantiations are words, and that their chiasmic realizations are the *same* words (i.e.,  $a1_m = a2_m$  and  $b1_m = b2_m$ ). Mesodiplosis, for its part, is just another positional lexical repetition.

The calibrations, too, are quite manageable. If we take (29), for instance, in which *you* and *your pet dog* are in a relationship of reciprocal communication, there is no trajector. Nor is there a lexicalized SPATIAL RELATION. Both REFERRING EXPRESSIONS are sources, and both are goals, inversely, but no direction is lexicalized and no thing that might be moving between source and goal. In this case, perhaps in many cases, the verb is doing all of that work, and we could identify a zero trajector in such constructions. *Communicate*, like *blame*, *hit*, *stroke*, perhaps like most transitive verbs, implicates an action chain of some kind, and the passage of something along that chain. With *communicate*, we can see this quite clearly in what Michael Reddy (1979) identified as the Conduit Frame (see also Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 10-11, et passim). Something similar may be going on with other sorts of relations. In (25), the notion of 'similarity' relates Bob to Mary, 'flowing' from Bob to Mary, but also relates Mary to Bob. Resemblance (26),

relative positionality (27), and instance-construal (28) have the precisely the same kind of reciprocal 'flow;' something is flowing. And John Taylor gives us a feedback loop in (28); that is, ongoing reciprocity.

A very common activity of RECIPROCAL-ANTIMETABOLES is actually to deny one of the flows, to present the AB and BA relation as alternatives, with the existence of one precluding the existence of the other. The example from Jerry Katz is a case in point (24). There is some flow of argumentation that moral or logical concerns block. There is some notion of a "just complaint" that can only flow one way. The taxonomic linguist does not have grounds to originate such complaints at level them at the mentalists. The mentalists, though, do have just grounds to launch complaints at the taxonomists.

In figurative-constructionist terms, what this means is that the most common additional figural layer with RECIPROCAL ANTIMETABOLES is the presence of the trope, antithesis, in which one flow is denied or forbidden in preference to another. The famous Kennedy-Sorensen aphorism, for instance, expresses a reciprocal obligation flowing from citizen to nation, nation to citizen, but by hortatively negating the A-to-B flow, it proscribes the A-to-B obligation, and prescribes the B-to-A obligation. The most basic A OUT OF B construction, exemplified in (2) and (36) – (38) follow this template—the flow out of B (the country, the trailer park, the woods, etc.) is fine; the flow out of A is precluded (the boy, the girl, the man, etc.)—and they do so by incorporating antithesis. But the data show variations. Instance (39), for example, expresses doubt about the B-out-of-A flow, but does not prohibit it altogether, and the EASIER-TO-TAKE sub-type exemplified in (40) – (43), relaxes the preclusion into some kind of hinderance by embedding the A OUT OF B construction into a COMPARATIVE construction.

We now have the machinery in place to represent our A OUT OF B construction to a satisfactory level of approximation (Figure 7). Once again, time and tide require me to leave several component figures and form schemata unspecified, and once again there is variation in the data, but whatever the specifics, we know that CxG has the expressive capabilities to handle these figures, on analogy from Figures 3 and 4. Further, we know that A OUT OF B *requires* all of these additional figures, as charted out in i – viii (and, in fact, that some instances utilize other figures as well, as illustrated by ix and x). Figure 7 tells us, thoroughly integrating the theory of rhetorical figures into CxG, that A OUT OF B is a construction in which two words repeat in reverse order but with different senses, to express the incorrigibility of beliefs associated with B for the entity associated with A.

**Construction** A Out Of B But Not B Out Of A  
**evokes** SPATIAL RELATION **as** sr  
**evokes** Epanaphora **as** ep  
**evokes** Antanametabole **as** antan  
**evokes** Antithesis **as** antith  
**evokes** Analogic Frame **as** ana  
**evokes** Correlational Frame **as** cor  
**constructional**  
 theme : REFERRING-EXPRESSION  
 antan.a1, antan.b2 : theme  
 source : REFERRING-EXPRESSION  
 antan.b1, antan.a2 : source  
 theme.case  $\leftarrow$  object  
 source.case  $\leftarrow$  complement  
 ep.unit  $\leftarrow$  *you can take*  
 agent : REFERRING-EXPRESSION  $\leftarrow$  *you*  
 agent.case  $\leftarrow$  subject  
 modality : VERB  $\leftarrow$  *can*  
 action : VERB  $\leftarrow$  *take*  
 mes.unit  $\leftarrow$  *out of*  
 sr.direction : SPATIAL RELATION  
 sr.direction  $\leftarrow$  *out of*  
**form**  
*you can take A out of B but you can't take B out of A*  
**meaning**  
**constraints**  
 antan.a1<sub>m</sub>  $\leftrightarrow$  Human  
 antan.b1<sub>m</sub>  $\leftrightarrow$  Physical location  
 antan.b2<sub>m</sub>  $\leftrightarrow$  cor.target(ethos)  
 antan.a2<sub>m</sub>  $\leftrightarrow$  ana.target(container)  
 theme  $\leftrightarrow$  theme<sub>m</sub>  $\leftrightarrow$  spg.trajector  
 source  $\leftrightarrow$  source<sub>m</sub>  $\leftrightarrow$  spg.landmark  
 modality  $\leftrightarrow$  antith.positive.modality<sub>m</sub>  $\leftrightarrow$  possibility  
 modality  $\leftrightarrow$  antith.negative.modality<sub>m</sub>  $\leftrightarrow$  impossibility  
 means  $\leftrightarrow$  action<sub>m</sub>

Figure 7. The A OUT OF B BUT NOT B OUT OF A construction

## 5. CONCLUSION

I meant what I said and I said what I meant  
 —Dr. Seuss (1940:passim)

In this article, (i) I have argued that at least some rhetorical figures are constructions in the form/function “pairing” sense of CxG; (ii) I have advocated the importance of those rhetorical

figures for linguistics; (iii) I have charted out several figures in CxG terms, prominently featuring some chiasmic figures; and (iv) I have illustrated these convergences with an analysis of the A OUT OF B, BUT NOT B OUT OF A construction, a construction that thoroughly amalgamates multiple rhetorical figures with established components of Cognitive Linguistics (trajector-landmark relations, image schemata, analogic frames, and correlational frames).

Continuing the rhetorical (re)turn of Cognitive Linguistics, these arguments (with Turner 1998 and Fahnestock 2005), advocate the revivification of a pre-enlightenment view of language, which views grammar and rhetoric as mutually informing fields of study. The compatibility of the CxG and rhetorical schemes is particularly compelling. There are perhaps two defining points of separation between linguistics and rhetoric in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: the methodological rigour of linguistics, in contrast to the opportunistic looseness of rhetoric; and the allegiance to a rich scholarly tradition by rhetoricians, in contrast to a perennial rejection of the past by linguists, especially of the immediate past. Bringing CxG and rhetoric together has the promise to replace looseness with rigour in the study of figures, and to replace wilful disregard of long-studied constructions with attention to a deep pool of linguistic data and relevant theory linking recurrent, cognitively resonant patterns of language use with specific functional alignments.

As encapsulated in the antanametabole “[c]reando infunditur, infundendo creatur” (Browne 1682:83), this approach says that creating grammatical constructions is a ‘pouring in’ of communicative functions into cognitive forms; pouring communicative functions into cognitive forms creates grammatical constructions. This crossroad is precisely the meeting point of rhetoric and linguistics. They each have much to pour into the other.

## References Cited

- 22 *Minutes*. 2019. "Conservatives Have Been Caught Lying Online... Again." (16 October). [youtube.com/watch?v=wkPhaUD1Nx4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkPhaUD1Nx4)
- APPEL, RICHARD (writer), & DAVID SILVERMAN (director). 1995. "Mother Simpson." In James L. Brooks (producer), *The Simpsons*, episode 136. Los Angeles, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Television.
- BERGEN, BENJAMIN K., & NANCY CHANG. 2005. Embodied Construction Grammar in Simulation-based Language Understanding. In *Construction Grammars: Cognitive Grounding and Theoretical Extensions*, 147–190. Edited by Jan-Ola Östman & Mirjam Fried. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- BERGEN, BENJAMIN K., & NANCY CHANG. 2013. Embodied Construction Grammar. In *The Oxford Handbook of Construction Grammar*, 168-190. Edited by Thomas Hoffmann & Graeme Trousdale. New York: Oxford University Press.
- BERWICK, ROBERT C., & NOAM CHOMSKY. 2016. *Why Only Us: Language and Evolution*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- BICKERTON, DEREK. 2014. *More Than Nature Needs*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- BORNSTEIN, DIANE. 1977. *An Introduction to Transformational Grammar*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.



- BOWEN, GAIL. 2016. *What's Left Behind*. New York: McClelland & Stewart
- BROWNE, THOMAS. 1682. *Religio Medici*. Eighth edition. London: R. Scot, T. Basset, J. Wright, R. Chiswell.
- CHIEN, LYNNE, & RANDY ALLEN HARRIS. 2010. Scheme Trope Chroma Chengyu: Figuration in Four-Character Chinese Idioms. *Cognitive Semiotics* 6 (Spring): 155-178.
- CHOMSKY, A. NOAM. 1965. *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- CHOMSKY, A. NOAM. 2003. *Chomsky on Democracy and Education*, edited by Carlos P. Otero. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- CHOMSKY, A. NOAM. 2013. Beyond Fascism [Noam Chomsky interviewed by John Holder & Doug Morris]. *ZNet* (20 June). [zcommunications.org/noam-chomsky-beyond-fascism-by-noam-chomsky.html](http://zcommunications.org/noam-chomsky-beyond-fascism-by-noam-chomsky.html)
- CICERO, MARCUS TULLIUS. 1833 [c55 BCE]. *The Orations*. Three Volumes. Translated by William Duncan. New York: J & J Harper.
- CICERO, [Pseudo-]. See [Pseudo-]Cicero.
- CECCARELLI, LEAH. 1998. Polysemy: Multiple Meanings in Rhetorical Criticism. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 3 no. 1, 395-415, DOI: 10.1080/00335639809384229
- DRYDEN, JOHN. 1760. *The Miscellaneous Works, Containing All His Original Poems, Tales and Translations*. London: J. & R. Tonson.
- DUBOIS, JACQUES, *et al.* 1981. *A General Rhetoric*. Translated by Paul B. Burrell & Edgar M. Slotkin. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- FAHNESTOCK, JEANNE. 1999. *Rhetorical Figures in Science*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- FAHNESTOCK, JEANNE. 2005. Rhetoric in the Age of Cognitive Science. In *The Viability of Rhetoric*, edited by Richard Graff. New York: State University of New York Press, 159-179.
- FILLMORE, CHARLES J. 1985. Syntactic Intrusion and the Notion of Grammatical Construction. *Proceedings of the 11th Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*: 73-86.
- FILLMORE, CHARLES J. 1988. The Mechanisms of 'Construction Grammar.' *Proceedings of the 14th Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*: 35-55.
- FILLMORE, CHARLES J. 1989. Grammatical Construction Theory and the Familiar Dichotomies. In *Language Processing in Social Context*, edited by Rainer Dietrich & Carl F. Graumann, 17-38. Amsterdam: North-Holland / Elsevier.
- FILLMORE, CHARLES J., & PAUL KAY. 1987. The Goals of Construction Grammar. *Berkeley Cognitive Science Program Technical Report* no. 50. University of California at Berkeley.
- FRIED, MIRJAM, & JAN-OLA ÖSTMAN, eds. 2004a. Construction Grammar in a Cross-Language Perspective. *Constructional Approaches to Language* 2. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- FRIED, MIRJAM, & JAN-OLA ÖSTMAN. 2004b. Construction Grammar: a thumbnail sketch. In Mirjam Fried & Jan-Ola Östman (eds.), *Construction Grammar in a cross-language perspective*, 11-86. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- FULLER, STEVE. 2001. *Thomas Kuhn: A Philosophical History for Our Times*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- GOLDBERG, ADELE. 1992. The Inherent Semantics of Argument Structure: The Case of the English Ditransitive Construction. *Cognitive Linguistics* 3 no. 1: 37-74.

- GOLDBERG, ADELE. 1995. *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- GOLDBERG, ADELE. 1997. Construction Grammar. In *Concise Encyclopedia of Syntactic Theories*, edited by E. Keith Brown & Jim E. Miller, 68–70. New York: Elsevier Science Limited.
- HALLORAN, S. MICHAEL. 1982. Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or If Not His Somebody Else's. *Rhetoric Review* 1, no. 1: 58-63.
- HALLORAN, S. MICHAEL. 1984. The Birth of Molecular Biology: An Essay in the Rhetorical Criticism of Scientific Discourse. *Rhetoric Review* 3, no. 1: 70-83.
- HARRIS, RANDY ALLEN. 2013. Figural Logic in Gregor Mendel's *Experiments on Plant Hybrids*. *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 46, no.4: 570-601.
- HARRIS, RANDY ALLEN. 2020. Ploke. *Metaphor & Symbol* 35, no. 01, 1–20.
- HARRIS, RANDY ALLEN, CHRYSANNE DI MARCO, SEBASTIAN RUAN, & CLIFF O'REILLY. 2018. An Annotation Scheme for Rhetorical Figures. *Argument & Computation* 9, no.2: 155-75.
- HAUPTMAN, DON. 2012 [1994]. Word-order Spoonerisms: A reply. *Word Ways* 27, no. 1: 44-45. Article 12. [Accessed through *The Digital Commons*. [digitalcommons.butler.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3841&context=wordways](http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3841&context=wordways)]
- HILDERBRAND, ELIN. 2011. *Silver Girl: A Novel*. ebook New York: Little, Brown.
- HOFFMANN, THOMAS, & GRAEME TROUSDALE, eds. 2013. *The Oxford Handbook of Construction Grammar*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- JOHNSON, MARK. 1999. *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- KATZ, JERROLD J. 1964. Mentalism in Linguistics. *Language* 40, no. 2: 124-137
- Kennedy, John F. [and Theodore Sorensen]. [1961.] "Inaugural Address" (20 January). Presidential speeches, *Miller Center*. [millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/january-20-1961-inaugural-address](http://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/january-20-1961-inaugural-address).
- LAKOFF, GEORGE, & MARK JOHNSON. 1980. *Metaphors We Live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- LANGACKER, RONALD W. 1987. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar: Descriptive Application*. Volume 2. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- LANGACKER, RONALD W. 2008. *Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- LANHAM, RICHARD. 1991. *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, Second edition. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- LISSNER, PATRICIA ANN. 2007. Chi-Thinking: Chiasmus and Cognition. PhD Dissertation, Department of English, University of Maryland. [hdl.handle.net/1903/7687](http://hdl.handle.net/1903/7687).
- MAXWELL, ROBIN. 2012. *Jane: The Woman Who Loved Tarzan*. New York: Macmillan.
- MEHLENBACHER, ASHLEY ROSE, & RANDY ALLEN HARRIS. 2017. A Figurative Mind: Gertrude Buck's *The Metaphor* as a Nexus in Cognitive Metaphor Theory. *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 35, no. 1: 75–109.
- MICHAELS, LORNE, & PENELOPE SPHEERIS. 1992. *Wayne's World*. USA: Paramount Studios.
- MORGAN, T. P. 1919. The Old Slow Town. *The Country Gentleman* 84, no. 18 (3 May): 12, 38. (Accessed via *The Hathi Trust Digital Library*, [www.hathitrust.org](http://www.hathitrust.org).)

- NEWTON, ISAAC. 1687. *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*. London: Jussu Societatis Regiæ.
- NEWTON, ISAAC. 1803 [1687]. *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. Three volumes. Translated by Andrew Motte. London: H.D. Symonds.
- NUNBERG, GEOFF. 1998. A Soupçon of Catachresis. *Fresh Air* Commentary (23 January). [people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~nunberg/inaugural.html](http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~nunberg/inaugural.html)
- OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION. 1995. *Outdoor Oklahoma*, 51–52.
- ÖSTMAN, JAN-OLA, & MIRJAM FRIED (eds.). 2005. *Construction Grammars: Cognitive grounding and theoretical extensions* [CAL 3]. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- PAULSEN, GARY. 2012. *Brian's Return*. New York: Penguin Random House.
- POOLE, STEVEN. 2006. Going Clive. *The Guardian* (11 November). [guardian.co.uk/books/2006/nov/11/featuresreviews.guardianreview7/print](http://guardian.co.uk/books/2006/nov/11/featuresreviews.guardianreview7/print)
- [Pseudo-]Cicero, M. 1954 [c95 BE]. *Ad C. Herennium De ratione dicendi* [*Rhetorica ad Herennium*']. Translated by Harry Caplan. Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library.
- PULLUM, GEOFFREY K. (January 16, 2004). Snowclones: lexicographical dating to the second. *Language Log*. [itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/language-log/archives/000350.html](http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/language-log/archives/000350.html)
- PUTTENHAM, GEORGE. 2007 [1589]. *The Art of English Poesy: A Critical Edition*. Edited by Frank Whigham & Wayne A. Rebhorn. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- REDDY, MICHAEL J. 1979. The Conduit Metaphor: A Case of Frame Conflict in Our Language about Language. In *Metaphor and Thought*, edited by Andrew Ortony, 284–310. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SEUSS, DR. [Theodore S. Geissel.] 1940. *Horton Hatches an Egg*. New York: Random House.
- SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM. [c 1594-1616.] *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. [shakespeare.mit.edu/](http://shakespeare.mit.edu/)
- TAYLOR, JOHN R. 2012. *The Mental Corpus: How Language is Represented in the Mind*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- TU, KATHERINE. 2019. Collocation in Rhetorical Figures: A Case Study in Parison, Epanaphora and Homoiopiton. Major Research Project, English Language and Literature, University of Waterloo. [uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/14778](http://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/14778)
- TURNER, MARK. 1998. Figure. In *Figurative Language and Thought*, edited by Albert N. Katz, Cristina Cacciari, Raymond W. Gibbs, & Mark Turner, 44–87. New York: Oxford University Press.
- TURRAN, KENNETH. 1992. *Wayne's World: Awesome . . . Not!* *The Los Angeles Times* (14 February). [www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-02-14-ca-2021-story.html](http://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-02-14-ca-2021-story.html)
- WALDMAN, MICHAEL. 2003. *My Fellow Americans: The Most Important Speeches of America's Presidents, from George Washington to George W. Bush*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.
- WALKER, DANIEL. 2011. *God in a Brothel: An Undercover Journey Into Sex Trafficking and Rescue*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- WALLER, WILLARD W. 1940. *War and the Family*. Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press.