Title: Metaphor and Mind Style in Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*

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Title

Metaphor and Mind Style in Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*

[(essay date spring 1996) *In the following essay, Semino and Swindlehurst focus on the metaphors that inform Chief Bromden's worldview in* One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest, *asserting that the character's idiosyncrasies lead to both his mental and physical liberation.*]

**1. Introduction**

Roger Fowler coined the term "mind style" in 1977 to describe the phenomenon in which the language of a text projects a characteristic world view, a particular way of perceiving and making sense of the world. In William Golding's *The Inheritors,* for example, the reader must contend with the peculiar mind style of Lok, the Neanderthal man whose point of view is privileged in the first and longest part of the novel. Lok appears to have little understanding of human agency and of cause-and-effect relationships, and he seems to believe that inanimate entities are capable of volition and deliberate actions. An analysis of the language of the novel reveals that such impressions can be traced to the text's unusual shortage of transitive constructions with animate subjects and to its frequency of inanimate nouns (such as "bushes" and "log") serving as subjects of verbs that normally require an animate agent (such as "twitch" and "go") (Halliday; Fowler, *Linguistics and the Novel* 104-06; Leech and Short 31-36 *et passim*).

Fowler's work and others' subsequent studies have isolated a range of linguistic phenomena that can contribute to the projection of mind style, including primarily choices of vocabulary, grammar, and transitivity (Fowler, *Linguistics and the Novel, Linguistics Criticism*; Leech and Short; Bockting *Character and Personality,* "Mind Style"). In this essay we highlight the way in which metaphorical patterns can also be instrumental in the creation of mind style (see also Black). Our discussion focuses particularly on the mind style of the narrator in Ken Kesey's ***One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*** and builds on the cognitive approaches to the study of metaphor developed by George Lakoff and others over the last two decades (Lakoff and Johnson; Johnson; Lakoff and Turner).

In the first part of the essay we outline the theoretical background to our claim that the notion of mind style and the cognitive theory of metaphor can be usefully combined. We then discuss the way in which Kesey exploits metaphor in ***One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*** to convey the narrator's idiosyncratic view of the world and his progress towards mental and physical liberation.

**2. Mind Style**

In a recent article, Ineke Bockting offers the following definition of mind style:

Mind style is concerned with the construction and expression in language of the conceptualisation of reality in a particular mind.("Mind Style" 159)

This definition rests on two central assumptions. The first is that what we call "reality" is the result of perceptual and cognitive processes that may vary in part from person to person; thus individuals may differ in their conceptualizations of the same experience: for example, in how they identify people and entities, in how they attribute agency, responsibility, and goals, in how they establish temporal and causal relationships, and so on. The second assumption is that language is a central part of the process by which we make sense of the world around us; thus the texts we produce reflect our particular way of conceptualizing reality.

The study of mind style therefore involves the identification of linguistic patterns that account for the perception of a distinct world view during the reading of a text. The notion of "patterns" is particularly important here. Mind style arises from the frequent and consistent occurrence of particular linguistic choices and structures within a text. As Fowler puts it:

Cumulatively, consistent structural options, agreeing in cutting the presented world to one pattern or another, give rise to an impression of a world-view, what I shall call a "mind style."(*Linguistics and the Novel* 76)

In some cases, such consistent choices may be so unconventional that the result is a puzzlingly opaque account of what turns out to be a fairly ordinary and familiar event. Such is often the case in the part of *The Inheritors* that reflects Lok's mind style as well as in the section of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* narrated by Benjy, a mentally retarded thirty-three-year-old. The linguistic devices used in these novels to produce two almost impenetrable world views have been analyzed in great detail (on *The Inheritors* see Halliday; Fowler, *Linguistics and the Novel, Linguistic Criticism*; Leech and Short; and Black; on *The Sound and the Fury* see Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism*; Leech and Short; and Bockting, *Character and Personality,* "Mind Style"). They include underlexicalization (for example, Lok's use of the term "stick" to refer to a bow), peculiar transitivity patterns (for example, a low frequency of transitive constructions with animate subjects), and the prevalence of simple grammatical structures (for example, the use of coordination rather than subordination). In her analysis of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury,* Bockting argues that peculiarities in the ways in which narrators report other people's words can also be exploited in the creation of mind style. She shows that the narratives of the three Compson brothers are characterized by different but consistent patterns in the representation of other characters' speech, and that these can be interpreted as symptoms of different types of mental disorder (*Character and Personality* 41-92; "Mind Style" 162-72).

Overall, however, the notion of mind style is not restricted to highly opaque texts or to narratives reflecting pathological disorders. Fowler discusses, for example, the peculiar mind style typical of the protagonists of Gothic novels, who constantly feel threatened by mysterious and potentially dangerous surroundings (*Linguistics and the Novel* 106-09). Here the narratives pose no problems of comprehension, but simply reflect a heightened awareness of the force and power of nature. Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short make explicit the point that all texts present their own particular mind styles, which may be attributed to characters, narrators, or authors, and that all mind styles could be ranked on a scale ranging from "natural and uncontrived" at one extreme to "unorthodox" at the other (188-89). Indeed, since no representation of reality is totally neutral or objective, it is undeniable that mind style is an inherent property of all texts. On the other hand, it is difficult to see the practical usefulness of the concept at the "normal" end of Leech and Short's scale, where (as Short himself recently noted) mind style cannot be easily distinguished from more general definitions of style (Short 2504). In other words, although in theory mind style applies to all texts, in practice its relevance is limited to cases where a text's view of reality is perceived by the reader to suggest a particularly striking, idiosyncratic, or deviant understanding of the world. In such cases, an analysis of mind style provides a useful way to understand the workings of the text and to explain its effects.

Further complicating the definition of mind style is its close relationship with the concept of point of view. Clearly, we can perceive a character's mind style only if we are presented with his or her point of view. The reverse, however, is not always true. The access to a character's point of view does not necessarily imply access to his or her mind style. For example, the openings of both Dickens's *Great Expectations* and Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* take the point of view of a child. Only the latter, however, projects a child-like mind style through its use of simple sentence structures and of lexical terms such as "moocow." *Great Expectations,* on the other hand, does not even attempt to recreate the cognitive habits and limitations of Pip as a young child. At a basic level, therefore, point of view and mind style are clearly distinct: point of view concerns the angle or perspective from which the fictional world is presented, and mind style the way in which the fictional world is perceived and conceptualized by the mind whose point of view is adopted.

Unfortunately, such a simple explanation does not account for all potential difficulties. Fowler introduced the notion of "mind style" as an alternative to "ideological point of view" or "point of view on the ideological plane," both of which he describes as excessively "cumbersome" terms (*Linguistic Criticism* 150). Since then, however, the two notions seem to have taken on separate definitions; studies tend to deal exclusively with one (on ideological point of view see, for example, Simpson) or the other (on mind style see Leech and Short; Black; Bockting, *Character and Personality,* "Mind Style"). Having carefully reviewed these discussions, we believe it is possible to make a distinction between ideological point of view and mind style that could find application not just in academic research but also in the teaching of language and literature. Ideological point of view refers specifically to the attitudes, beliefs, values, and judgments shared by people with similar social, cultural, and political backgrounds. For example, the attitude toward native Africans that Conrad attributes to Marlowe in some of his novels is best described as part of a particular ideological point of view. Mind style, on the other hand, refers to the way in which a particular reality is perceived and conceptualized in cognitive terms. It relates to the mental abilities and tendencies of an individual; such traits may be completely personal and idiosyncratic or they may be shared, for example by people with similar cognitive habits or disorders. In short, ideological point of view captures the evaluative and socially shared aspects of world views, while mind style captures their cognitive and more idiosyncratic aspects. Which concept should be applied will depend on which features are perceived to be foregrounded in the world view of a particular text.

**3. Metaphor, Cognition, and Mind Style**

The last twenty years have witnessed what Gerard Steen has called a "cognitive turn" in the study of metaphor (3). Traditionally, metaphor had been regarded as a deviant and striking use of language, typical of specialized genres such as poetry and political oratory. Since the late 1970s, however, linguists, psychologists, and philosophers, who have started to consider metaphor a cognitive as well as a linguistic phenomenon, have highlighted its pervasiveness in both language and thought. The work of George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Mark Turner, in particular, has led to a view of metaphor as a central cognitive tool that we use to structure abstract, unfamiliar, and less clearly delineated domains, such as love, life, and language (the tenors or target domains of the metaphors) in terms of concrete, familiar, and more clearly delineated domains, such as containers, journeys, and machines (the vehicles or source domains) (*Metaphors We Live By*; *The Body in the Mind*; *More than Cool Reason*).

The cognitive approach to metaphor focuses particularly on conventional metaphors and their implications for the world view of the members of a particular culture. Lakoff and Johnson, highlighting recurring metaphorical patterns in the English language, claim that these metaphors must reflect associations across domains that are part of the shared conceptual system of English speakers. The frequency of linguistic metaphors such as "I've had a *full* life" and "*get the most out of* life," for example, suggests that the conventional conceptual metaphor "Life is a Container" is central to the way in which English-speaking cultures conceive of the domain of life (51). Conventional metaphorical patterns, in other words, are seen as an integral part of the particular world view of a culture or linguistic community. Conversely, nonconventional uses of metaphor provide an opportunity to go beyond culturally shared modes of thought by offering new ways of looking at reality (Lakoff and Johnson 53; Lakoff and Turner 67ff.). In their work on poetic metaphors, Lakoff and Turner show how poets not only invent new metaphors but often make creative use of the conventional metaphorical resources that characterize everyday language. For example, they extend conventional metaphors to include new connections between domains, elaborate them in original ways, or join them together in new combinations. As a consequence, while poems are largely understood in the light of the conventional metaphorical system of a particular culture, they may also offer new views of reality precisely because poetry allows conventional metaphors to be used creatively and nonconventionally.

This essay builds on the cognitive approach to metaphor in a number of ways. First, whereas cognitive theorists have highlighted the relationship between conventional metaphors and the world view of a particular culture, we explore the way in which consistent and nonconventional metaphorical patterns within a particular text reflect the conceptual system of its creator (or, in the case of Kesey's novel, its first person narrator). We suggest that, at an individual level, the systematic use of a particular metaphor (or metaphors) reflects an idiosyncratic cognitive habit, a personal way of making sense of and talking about the world: in other words, a particular mind style. Second, we suggest that the concept of mind style is highly relevant to the cognitive theory of metaphor since it can capture the cumulative effect of consistent and idiosyncratic uses of metaphor throughout a text. In their study of poetry, Lakoff and Turner discuss the effects of nonconventional metaphors both individually and in combination and show how a detailed analysis of the metaphorical system of a particular poem accounts both for the way in which it is understood and for the view of reality it projects. In our study of ***One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest,*** we extend Lakoff and Turner's work by focusing on the creative use of metaphor throughout a novel and on its implications for the reader's perception of the narrator's view of reality. Our analysis provides further insight into some of the points that Lakoff and Turner make in relation to metaphor in poetry. According to Lakoff and Turner, while the conventional basis of many poetic metaphors makes it possible for poets to communicate effectively with their audiences, it is the creative way in which they employ conventional metaphors that enables them to convey fresh and original perspectives on reality. Similarly, Kesey creates the peculiar mind style of ***One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*** not through a set of completely new metaphorical connections, but by developing and combining a small number of conventional metaphors in English. Thus, on the one hand, the novel's mind style strikes readers as characteristic and deviant, and on the other hand the narrative remains accessible and comprehensible in spite of the peculiarities of the narrator's world view.

Metaphor's potential for creating mind style has received relatively little attention. Although most critics concerned with mind style comment on the effects of similes and metaphors, they tend to treat them as local phenomena or as relating to lexical patterns or transitivity. Fowler, for example, mentions metaphor among the "local devices" that "may suggest specific reinterpretations of experience at particular points in the text," but he apparently overlooks the possibility that texts may display patterns of figurative language (*Linguistic Criticism* 150). Most discussions of metaphor in relation to mind style have been largely limited to personification. Both Fowler and Leech and Short, for example, comment on the way in which personifying metaphors may be used to project a world view that attributes a potentially threatening animacy to nature (Fowler, *Linguistics and the Novel* 108-09; Leech and Short 198-99).

Surprisingly, in spite of the work of Lakoff and others over the last fifteen years, discussions of mind style since the "cognitive turn" have continued to ignore the role of metaphor. One may speculate that the implications of a theory focusing on conventional uses of metaphor may be slow to filter through to an area such as that of mind style, where the emphasis is on deviant and idiosyncratic uses of language. As we have suggested, however, the insights of cognitive theorists that connect conventional metaphors and culture also hold important implications for connecting idiosyncratic uses of metaphor and individual world view. Indeed, metaphor's relevance to mind style can be seen in Elizabeth Black's "Metaphor, Simile and Cognition in Golding's *The Inheritors,*" the only study to date in which the cognitive theory of metaphor is applied in examining the world view of a particular novel. Black argues that Lok's alien view of reality derives from Golding's systematic and creative use of conventional metaphors to give life to inanimate objects. She also points out that many expressions that a reader would normally understand as metaphors appear to be literal representations of Lok's perceptions or, indeed, instances of underlexicalization. In this way, she argues, *The Inheritors* juxtaposes two incompatible mind sets. Black also shows how a crucial transition in Lok's intellectual development is marked by a shift from metaphor to simile. After the moment when, in the words of Golding's narrator, "Lok discovered 'Like,'" he acquires the capacity to distinguish between similarity and identity and to engage in analytical thought. Black does not, however, explicitly discuss the theoretical advantages of combining the notion of mind style with the cognitive theory of metaphor.

In our analysis of ***One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest,*** we will go further than Black's study does in investigating the significance of the contrast between simile and metaphor and in exploring the way in which an author may elaborate on and combine conventional metaphors to project a distinctive mind style. In addition, we will show how Kesey varies metaphorical patterns as the story unfolds to chart the development of the narrator's mind style.

**3.1. Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest***

Critical acclaim and popular opinion have elevated Kesey's first novel, ***One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest,*** published in 1962, to something of a modern classic, much read and written about as well as adapted for film. The novel is narrated in the first person by the half-Indian "Chief" Bromden, one of the patients in the mental institution where almost all of the action occurs. Bromden is a long-term patient (most describe him as a paranoid schizophrenic), and the novel traces the stages of his liberation beginning with the arrival on the ward of a new admission, McMurphy, and ending with .... This gradual process of liberation is triggered by McMurphy's rebellion against Miss Ratched, the "Big Nurse" who runs the psychiatric ward by means of a dehumanizing and repressive regime of terror.

The novel is in a sense a product of its time, the anti-authoritarian and iconoclastic sixties, celebrating the rebellion of an individual against the system. In particular, it reflects contemporary dissatisfaction with established psychiatric practices and institutions--lobotomy and electroconvulsive therapy, institutionalization and overreliance on drugs--and it points the finger at society. Suggesting that the novel can be seen as more than this, however, critical commentary has ranged from the psychological and the mythical or religious--which describes McMurphy variously as the Grail Knight and a Christ figure, a kind of disruptive redeemer who loses his life in the process of saving others--to those that challenge what some view as the novel's racism and sexism, in which the Big Nurse and her black assistants embody the evil forces of a repressive hospital and a repressive society (for a broad overview of different approaches, see Searles).

Although some critical attention has been given to Kesey's use of metaphor (see, for example, Adams, Kunz), no study to date has focused systematically on figurative language in ***One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*** or on the way in which Bromden's narrative projects a distinctive and idiosyncratic mind style. Our analysis will focus on Bromden's consistent use of similes and metaphors involving underlying conceptual metaphors in which almost everything (society, the hospital, the therapists, the inmates, and Bromden himself) is a machine. The patterning of these similes and metaphors charts the variations of Bromden's mood and his progress towards a different view of the world.

**4. Bromden's Mechanistic World View**

From the very beginning of the novel, Bromden's language, non-standard in a way that convincingly creates the sense of his interior monologue, produces the impression of a mind that works oddly, that tends to perceive things in an unusual way: the impression, in other words, of a distinct and identifiable mind style. Consider, for example, the novel's opening (sentence numbers have been supplied for easy reference):

They're out there (1).Black boys in white suits up before me to commit sex acts in the hall and get it mopped up before I can catch them (2).They're mopping when I come out of the dorm, all three of them hating everything, the time of day, the place they're at here, the people they got to work around (3). When they hate like this, better if they don't see me (4). I creep along the wall quiet as dust in my canvas shoes, but they got special sensitive equipment detects my fear and they all look up, all three at once, eyes glittering out of the black faces like the hard glitter of radio tubes out of the back of an old radio (5)."Here's the Chief (6). The *soo*-pah Chief, fellas (7). Ol' Chief Broom (8). Here you go, Chief Broom ... (9)."Stick a mop in my hand and motion me to the spot they aim for me to clean today, and I go (10). One swats the back of my hands with a broom handle to hurry me past (11)."Haw, you look at 'im shag it (12)? Big enough to eat apples off my head an' he mine me like a baby (13)."They laugh and then I hear them mumbling behind me, heads close together (14). Hum of black machinery, humming hate and death and other hospital secrets (15). They don't bother not talking out loud about their hate secrets when I'm nearby because they think I'm deaf and dumb (16). Everybody think so (17). I'm cagey enough to fool them that much (18). If my being half Indian ever helped me in any way in this dirty life, it helped me being cagey, helped me all these years (19).I'm mopping near the ward door when a key hits it from the other side and I know it's the Big Nurse by the way the lockworks cleave to the key, soft and swift and familiar she been around locks so long (20). She slides through the door with a gust of cold and locks the door behind her and I see her fingers trail across the polished steel--tip of each finger the same colour of her lips (21). Funny orange (22). Like the tip of a soldering iron (23). Colour so hot or so cold if she touches you with it you can't tell which (24).

In these sentences, as striking as the odd perceptions is Bromden's tendency to present as "facts" events that the reader is more likely to attribute to his altered state of mind, for example, his claim that the orderlies "commit sex acts in the hall and get it mopped up before I can catch them." The nature of the "truth" of the tale is problematic: Bromden is, in spite of himself, a partly unreliable narrator, and as a result readers must decide for themselves which parts of his narrative *really* happen in the world of the story and which only take place in his imagination (see Ryan 113). In addition, Bromden's language exhibits some of the linguistic deviations frequently discussed in studies of mind style. In sentence 4, for example, when he uses the normally transitive verb "hate" without an object ("When they hate like this"), he seems to suggest that, in his world view, hating is not necessarily a transitive activity, but a psychological condition that does not always require a target.

By far the most striking feature of Bromden's narrative is his systematic reference to images related to machines: the orderlies possess "special sensitive equipment" by which to perceive Bromden's fear, their eyes are like radio tubes, and their whispered talk is the "hum of black machinery"; and the color of the Big Nurse's fingers and lips is like "the tip of a soldering iron." Over the course of the narrative we discover that Bromden spent a year studying electronics at college and then joined the Army as an electrician's assistant during World War II. Thus, while he has great familiarity with electronic and mechanical objects, he is also afraid of machines because he associates them with the war and in particular the air raid in Germany that precipitated his current mental disturbances.

Bromden uses the familiar but threatening domain of machinery to talk about a wide range of subjects from the world in which he lives, particularly those he finds frightening or confusing, such as the hospital or others' emotional outbursts. Bromden's language thus contains a great variety of linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors drawing on the source domain of electrical and mechanical objects. These metaphors creatively extend some common conventional metaphors in English, such as "Minds/People Are Machines" (for example, "I'm not functioning properly today" and "I'm running out of steam"), and "Institutions/Activities Are Machines" (for example "a well-oiled mechanism" and "putting a spanner in the works") (see also Lakoff and Johnson 27; Lakoff and Turner 132). In other words, the central characteristic of Bromden's mind style can be traced to a very limited subset of conventional metaphors that have been systematically extended and that serve as the core of his conceptual system. This explains the imbalance in Bromden's linguistic and mental abilities: due to his background knowledge, he is overlexicalized in the semantic area of machinery, but he is relatively underlexicalized when it comes to the inner workings of people and, to some extent, society. He therefore draws on one area to make up for some of his limitations in the other. As we will also show, however, machinery images represent more than just a cognitive habit, or Bromden's favorite way of making sense of and describing the world; on many occasions, the language of the novel suggests that the distinction in Bromden's mind between source and target domains tends to break down so that he seems to believe that people, for example, really *are* machines. As a consequence, Bromden's use of machinery images also becomes a symptom of his mental disorder.

**4.1. Similes, Metaphors, and "Literal" Metaphors**

As is evident from the opening of the novel, Bromden's mechanical images can take the form of similes such as "eyes glittering out ... like the hard glitter of radio tubes" and "[l]ike the tip of a soldering iron" or of metaphors such as "hum of black machinery." In other cases we are faced with expressions that the reader could interpret as metaphors but that appear to be, for Bromden, literally true, as in the reference to the "special sensitive equipment" the orderlies use to detect Bromden's fear, which may be not a mechanical metaphor for their perceptual abilities but a literal representation of what Bromden believes to be the case. This alternation between similes, metaphors, and what we may oxymoronically describe as "literal" metaphors turns out to be a consistent feature of Bromden's narrative. Consider the following examples, all relating to the Big Nurse:

(a) [s]itting there is silence ... quiet as an electric alarm about to go off.(44)

(b) Her nostrils flare open, and every breath she draws she gets bigger. ... She works the hinges in her elbows and fingers. I hear a small squeak. She starts moving, and I get back against the wall, and when she rumbles past she's already big as a truck, trailing that wicker bag behind in her exhaust like a semi behind a Jimmy Diesel. Her lips are parted, and her smile's going out before her like a radiator grill. I can smell the hot oil and magneto spark when she goes past, and every step hits the floor she blows up a size bigger, blowing and puffing, roll down anything in her path!(79)

(c) [H]er skill, her fantastic mechanical power flooded back into her, analysing the situation and reporting to her that all she had to do was keep quiet.(248)

The three quotations contain different linguistic realizations of one of Bromden's favorite conceptual metaphors: "The Big Nurse is a Machine." In (a) this underlying association is realized by means of a simile, "quiet as an electric alarm about to go off." As explicit comparisons, similes highlight some form of similarity between domains perceived as clearly distinct. Thus, (a) suggests that for Bromden the Big Nurse and electric alarms are different types of entities, and he likens them simply to render his perception of the tenseness of the situation. In (b), on the other hand, Bromden combines similes ("big as a truck," "like a semi behind a Jimmy Diesel," "like a radiator grill") with expressions that lack *explicit* markers of comparison in describing the Big Nurse's anger in terms of machinery ("she works the hinges in her elbows and fingers"; "I can smell the hot oil and magneto spark when she goes past"). Because they are interspersed with similes, the latter expressions can be interpreted as straightforward metaphors whereby the projection of the source onto the target domain does not threaten the distinction between the two. And yet, the reference to such details as hinges and the smell of oil may also suggest some confusion in Bromden's mind as to the literal or figurative status of his description of the woman's anger. In (c) we find no similes: the claim concerning the Big Nurse's "mechanical power" can be seen either as a metaphor for her ability to evaluate the situation or as a literal account of Bromden's understanding of her reaction.

As we mentioned earlier, Black has pointed out similar ambiguities in *The Inheritors,* arguing that they result in the perception of a conflict between the reader's and the character's world views. Indeed, it is often claimed that a literal interpretation of metaphors results in the construction of an impossible world, one that clashes with what we regard as the "real" world (Levin; Eco 68). In Kesey's novel, a literal reading of the machinery imagery results in a world in which people are made up of mechanical parts. What is interesting about Bromden is that he seems to oscillate between a figurative and a literal use of machinery images and that this oscillation reflects his paranoid tendencies: when he is relatively calm and happy, the references to machinery tend to be more clearly figurative (and also tend to decrease in frequency, as we will show below); when he is frightened and under stress, they reflect his distorted perceptions, his belief that he inhabits a terrifying world in which the machinery in everything breaks through its thin layer of skin at every available opportunity. In other words, his knowledge of machines serves both as a useful means of thinking and talking about the world and as a source of delusion and obsession.

**4.2. The Target Domains of the Machinery Metaphors**

The source domain of machinery is what Bromden uses to grapple with almost every aspect of his life, and he draws on a wide range of mechanical objects: radios, robots, electrical tools, trucks, radiators, engines, electric saws, drills, and clocks. In order to fully appreciate Bromden's world view, we now turn to those aspects of his world that serve as target domains of the machinery metaphors.

At the most general level, Bromden sometimes adopts a conceptual metaphor that can be stated as "The World is a Machine Room." For example, a memory of an early encounter with the government developers who negotiated the expropriation of his tribe's land has the sun "turned up brighter than before" (165), and the swing on which one of the strangers is sitting "nailed out at a slant by the sun" (166). More specifically, it is the organization of society that Bromden systematically describes in terms of machinery. The world outside the hospital is run by what he calls the Combine, which unites the industrial giant with the combine harvester: huge, multipurposeful, unwieldy, efficient, lethal. The term is deliberately vague, but Bromden makes clear from the start that the Combine is "a huge organization that aims to adjust the Outside as well as she [the Big Nurse] has the Inside" (27). The word "adjust" clearly suggests a mechanical component that can be altered slightly to work more efficiently.

Bromden's overlexicalization in machine terminology is evident in his description of the Combine's method of "networking the land with copper wire and crystal" (210) and in his perception of the Combine's power: after leaving the hospital for the fishing trip organized by McMurphy, he is able to "feel the pressures of different beams and frequencies coming from all directions, working to push and bend you one way of another, feel the Combine at work" (186). The Combine is the massive mechanism that reduced his father to a shriveled drunkard ("It worked on him for years") and that Bromden blames for the awful conformity and compliance he "sees" (unlike McMurphy and the others) when they are heading for the ocean: the "string of full-grown men in mirrored suits and machined hats," "the five thousand houses munched out identical by a machine," and the "five thousand kids in green corduroy pants and white shirts" (186-87).

The mental hospital in which Bromden has lived for the past twenty years plays a crucial role in the Combine's control over the world. He describes the ward as

a factory for the Combine. It's for fixing up mistakes made in the neighborhoods and in the schools and in the churches, the hospital is. When a completed product goes back into society, all fixed up and good as new, *better* than new sometimes, it brings joy to the Big Nurse's heart; something that came in all twisted different is now a functioning, adjusted component, a credit to the whole outfit and a marvel to behold.(36)

More specifically, the metaphorical system that forms the backbone of Bromden's world view includes the following conceptual metaphors: "The Hospital is a Machine Room," "The Staff are Robots," "The Patients are Broken Machines," and "Treatment is the Repair or Installation of Mechanical Parts." Miss Ratched is "a high-ranking official" for the Combine (148) and, as we have seen, often the target domain of machinery metaphors. Indeed, her surname is a near homophone of "ratchet," "a mechanism that engages the teeth of a wheel permitting motion in one direction only" (McMahan 146). Bromden conceives of the Big Nurse's power, in particular, in terms of an electrical current that "extends in all directions on hairlike wires too small for anybody's eye but mine: I see her sit in the centre of this web of wires like a watchful robot" (27). The apparent ease with which the Big Nurse communicates her orders to the orderlies is also explained in terms of electric waves that they can transmit and receive, thanks to their "special equipment":

Years of training, and all three black boys tune in closer and closer with the Big Nurse's frequency. One by one they are able to disconnect the direct wires and operate on beams. ... They are in contact on a high-voltage wave length of hate, and the black boys are out there performing her bidding before she even thinks it.(29)

The machine model also accounts for Bromden's sense that he lacks control over his actions and thoughts, his feeling that he is being controlled by intangible forces. The source domain of machinery makes these intangibles concrete, makes them "real," and provides a physical justification for his disorientation:

Everything the guys think and say and do is all worked out months in advance, based on the little notes the nurse makes during the day. This is typed and fed into the machine I hear humming behind the steel door in the rear of the Nurses' Station. A number of Order Daily Cards are returned, punched with a pattern of little square holes. At the beginning of each day the properly dated OD card is inserted in a slot in the steel door and the walls hum up.(29)

Even the passing of time in the ward is subject to mechanical control: the Big Nurse opens the throttle to create an "awful scramble of shaves and breakfasts and appointments and lunches and medications" or reverses the dial to "dead stop" (64).

The condition of different categories of inmates in the ward is explained in terms of different types of mechanical faults. While the so-called Acutes are "still sick enough to be fixed" (17), long-term patients such as Bromden himself are beyond repair:

What the Chronics are--or most of us--are machines with flaws inside that can't be repaired, flaws born in, or flaws beat in over so many years of the guy running head-on into solid things that by the time the hospital found him he was bleeding rust in some vacant lot.(17)

Although such descriptions seem to suggest that Bromden passively accepts the system and its methods, his accounts of the treatment implicitly convey Kesey's own critique of mental institutions. The cure administered by the hospital is described as the insertion into the patient's brain of "head installations" (18) or "controls" (45) that produce a dull machine-generated conformity. Once discharged, a fully adjusted patient turns into a model worker and citizen

as the Delayed Reaction Elements the technicians installed lend nimble skills to his fingers. ... When he finally runs down after a pre-set number of years, the town loves him dearly and the paper prints his picture.(36)

Bromden openly dismisses what, for the hospital, is an adjustment "success" as "just another robot for the Combine" (19).

The source domain of machinery is also employed by Bromden to account for his own experiences and reactions. In his description of the unrestrainable panic triggered by the orderlies' attempt to shave him, he says, "it's not a will-power thing any more when they get to my temples. It's a ... button, pushed, says Air Raid Air Raid, turns me on so loud it's like no sound" (12). As we discussed earlier, the machine model enables Bromden to explain his impression that time moves slowly or quickly, and also to account for the background noise in his head: the walls "whir and hum" (31) with the workings beneath the surface or produce a "dull, padded rumbling somewhere deep in the guts of the building" (71).

Bromden is underlexicalized in relation to emotions and to the workings of his own mind. As a result, he conceives of even his bouts of dislocation and anxiety in terms of mechanical metaphors. A key feature of Bromden's consciousness is the fog machine: he believes that his intermittent sense of disorientation must come from some outside mechanism, and he therefore conceives of his confusion as concrete rather than abstract and as caused by the robots who control him:

Right now, she's got the fog machine switched on, and it's rolling in so fast I can't see a thing but her face, rolling in thicker and thicker. ... And the more I think about how nothing can be helped, the faster the fog rolls in.(92)

Once again the use of the machine metaphor has its roots in Bromden's past experience: the military fogging of overseas airfields, the purpose of which was to mask secret activity or to obscure a target. This experience has given him the mechanical model of "an ordinary compressor," the sound of which he now associates with an impending sense of dislocation: "I heard the compressor start pumping in the grill a few minutes back ... and already the mist is oozing across the floor so thick my pants legs are wet" (105). Bromden's mind is beset by sounds, both real and imaginary, and the panic attacks announced by the fog machine are often accompanied, as above, by incontinence, for which he must find an external cause. The fog provides safety from potentially threatening contact with the environment ("you can slip back in it and be safe" [102]) and also explains some of Bromden's difficulties in relating to others: an almost obsessive observer, he has withdrawn from human communication, both verbal and physical, and the fog accounts for the way people suddenly loom up in his consciousness, much too close for comfort, or drift into his frame of vision, off-center and unreachable. He feels himself to be at the mercy of unpredictable human movement, always unable to reach out, or threatened with sudden unexpected contact:

then some guy wandering as lost as you would all of a sudden be right there before your eyes ... so clear both of you had to look away.(103)

There's old Pete, face like a searchlight. He's fifty yards off to my left, but I can see him plain as though there wasn't any fog at all. Or maybe he's up right close and real small, I can't be sure.(107)

Thus, the target domains of Bromden's machine metaphors include phenomena that he has difficulty understanding (for example, communication between the Big Nurse and the orderlies and his own psychological states); situations that he finds upsetting (for example, the Big Nurse getting angry); and experiences that make him feel vulnerable and frightened (for example, contact with the staff in the ward, the routine in the hospital, the world outside). The source domain of machinery enables him to use what he knows best to make sense of what he finds difficult. The machine images, moreover, express his constant fear and sense of helplessness in the face of a system that seems unbeatable and, when used in what appears to be their literal sense, reflect his view of reality distorted by paranoia. The reader also knows, however, that even at their most literal Bromden's machine images say something "true" about the world they help to portray. They expose the mechanization of contemporary society, the dehumanization of psychiatric patients in Kesey's America, and the effects of electro-shock therapy. Bromden's account of himself as a casualty of a mechanical world is in this sense perfectly accurate. Harding, one of the Acutes, says, "I've heard that Chief, years ago, received more than two hundred shock treatments. ... Look at him: ... a six-foot-eight sweeping machine, scared of its own shadow" (59). In this sense it is possible to apply to Bromden's references to machinery the gloss with which he prefaces the telling of his story: "it's the truth, even if it didn't happen."

**5. Powerful Is Big**

A second recurring conceptual metaphor, which Bromden often combines with machinery metaphors, is "Powerful is Big," where power and strength are related to size. In quote (b) above, for example, the Big Nurse's anger is described not simply as a mechanical metamorphosis, but also as a progressive swelling of the body: "every breath she draws she gets bigger. ... [S]he's already big as a truck ... [A]nd every step hits the floor she blows up a size bigger" (79). Indeed, the repeated use of the adjective "big" in reference to Miss Ratched reflects Bromden's fearful perception of her power rather than her actual size. Conversely, loss of power and strength is described as a decrease in size. Bromden himself is six feet eight inches ("the biggest Indian I ever saw," according to McMurphy), but he feels that his experience has physically shrunk him. He says to McMurphy, "[y]ou are bigger and tougher than I am. ... I used to be big, but not no more. You're twice the size of me" (17). Bromden sees his father's experience, too--his marriage to a "town woman" and the government's systematic dismantling of his tribal heritage--as a process of shrinking:

Everybody worked on him because he was big, and wouldn't give in, and did like he pleased. ... He fought it a long time till my mother made him too little to fight any more and he gave up. ... he was too little anymore.(171)

In contrast, as we have already seen, anger and distress make people swell physically in Bromden's eyes. Ruckly, provoked by one of the aids, "turns red and his veins clog up at one end. This puffs him up" (19). His memory of Pete Bancini's loud outburst has his arm "pumping bigger and bigger" and eventually "swell[ing] and clench[ing] shut" (46). Physical size is combined in Bromden's world view with mechanical (and inhuman) power; the Big Nurse's "puffing up" in rage renders her "big as a truck" and then "a size bigger" (79) or "red and swelling like she's gonna blow apart any second" (113).

In the descriptions of McMurphy, on the other hand, size correlates from the start with positive human qualities: "He sounds big ... he's as broad as Papa was tall. ... I see how big and beat up his hands are" (15). He is "the big redheaded brawling Irishman, the cowboy out of the TV set walking down the middle of the street to meet a dare" (155), and a "giant come out of the sky" (210). When McMurphy challenges the system, in Bromden's view "he gets bigger and bigger" (112). Immediately before he smashes the window of the Nurses' Station he is "big as a house!" (155). McMurphy's ability to induce warmth, confidence, and strength in Bromden is also conveyed in terms of physical effects on the size of the narrator's own body. When Bromden shakes hands with him.

my hand commenced to feel peculiar and went to swelling up out there on my stick of an arm, like he was transmitting his own blood into it. It rang with blood and power. It blowed up near as big as his.(25)

Bromden needs McMurphy's promise to restore his size through his "special body-buildin' course" in order to believe himself capable of lifting the control panel that he eventually uses to break out of the hospital. Triggered by McMurphy, the gradual revival of Bromden's own humanity and self-esteem is consistently described in terms of physical growth: "I looked down and saw how my foot was bigger than I'd ever remembered it, like McMurphy's just saying it had blowed it twice its size" (210). The almost magical as well as physical effect of McMurphy's presence among the ward's patients is expressed in a particularly powerful metaphor when Bromden describes the laughter on the fishing trip: "It started slow and pumped itself full, swelling the men bigger and bigger" (195).

As in the case of the machinery metaphor, Bromden's equation of power and physical size corresponds to a conventional metaphor in English: "Powerful/Strong/Important is Big." This metaphor is reflected in such idiomatic expressions as "here comes the big boss" and "today is the big day," where "big" does not suggest actual physical size but rather status and importance. Indeed, the history of adjectives such as "great," for example, shows a shift from a concrete meaning relating to size to a more abstract meaning having to do with importance, success, and power (as in "a great achievement" and "a great leader"). What is peculiar about Bromden's mind style is his systematic and partly creative use of the metaphor as well as the impression that what is metaphorical for the reader is in fact literally true for him. The usefulness of such metaphors, both in the everyday world of the reader and in Bromden's world view, lies in their capacity to describe abstract and elusive phenomena in physical, concrete terms. As Lakoff and Johnson put it:

[O]ur experiences with physical objects (especially our own bodies) provide the basis for an extraordinarily wide variety of ontological metaphors, that is, ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances. ...Once we can identify our experiences as entities or substances, we can refer to them, categorize them, group them, and quantify them--and, by this means, reason about them.(25)

This observation explains Bromden's difficulty in dealing with abstract concepts such as mood and character: the "Powerful is Big" metaphor allows him to make sense of the mysterious processes of personality development in the more familiar terms of changes in bodily mass.

**6. The Development of Bromden's Mind Style**

In the previous section we began to show how Kesey uses the "Powerful is Big" metaphor in the novel to convey changes in Bromden's conception of himself. The restoration of his ability to perceive the actual size of his body corresponds to a new awareness of his individual personality, his freedom, and his right to a place in the world outside the hospital. These changes can also be charted according to the patterning and use of the mechanical metaphors we discussed earlier. Our analysis in section 4.2 highlighted the elements of Bromden's world that constitute the target domains of machinery metaphors. We will now focus on the two major aspects of Bromden's experience that are *not* described by Bromden in mechanical terms, namely his positive memories and McMurphy.

Bromden's narrative includes occasional nostalgic flashbacks on his childhood, a happy time predating the building of the hydroelectric dam that deprived his tribe of their territory and their livelihood. These flashbacks are dominated by Bromden's relationship with his father and revolve around their joint hunting and fishing expeditions:

Papa tells me to keep still, tells me that the dog senses a bird somewheres right close. We borrowed a pointer dog from a man in the Dalles.(12)

It called to mind how I noticed the exact same thing when I was off on a hunt with Papa and the uncles and I lay rolled in blankets Grandma had woven, lying off a piece from where the men hunkered around the fire as they passed a quart jar of cactus liquor in a silent circle. I watched that big Oregon prairie moon above me put all the stars around me to shame.(128)

I used to be real brave around water when I was a kid on the Columbia; I'd walk the scaffolding around the falls with all the other men, scrambling around with water roaring green and white all around me and the mist making rainbows, without even any hobnails like the men wore.(132)

This is the period of Bromden's life that precedes the traumas, humiliations, and loss of confidence that gave rise to his mechanistic view of the world. The contrast between his representations of the past and of the present could not be more striking: on one side there are nature and strong personal ties, on the other technology and alienation. The recovery of his ability to remember a life not dominated by his mechanistic world view is a central part of Bromden's development over the course of the novel. He explicitly expresses surprise and pleasure upon discovering that he is newly able to linger on his childhood:

I was kind of amazed that I remembered that. It was the first time in what seemed to me centuries that I'd been able to remember much about my childhood. It fascinated me to discover that I could still do it. I lay in bed awake, remembering other happenings.(167)

Toward the end of the novel, the resurgence of the past in Bromden's mind becomes the manifestation of his victory over the system. The representation of his thought processes during his final electro-shock treatment begins with a brief reference to "AIR RAID" (223) but then develops into more than three pages of memories involving his father, uncles, and grandmother. When he comes around, he realizes that for the first time he has deliberately avoided the long daze that normally followed shock treatment, and he triumphantly declares "[I] knew this time I had them beat" (226).

McMurphy, who triggers Bromden's development, is also the only major character in the story who, up until the last pages of the novel, Bromden does not describe in mechanistic terms. In contrast, as we showed earlier, the rest of the ward's patients and its staff are frequent target domains of the machinery metaphors. McMurphy embodies the free and natural humanity lacking or repressed in the inmates of the hospital. The sound of his laughter as he enters the ward for the first time makes Bromden "realize all of a sudden it's the first laugh I've heard in years" (15), and his physical presence makes Bromden aware that the ward has accumulated over the years a whole range of smells, but "never before now, before he came in, the man smell of dust and dirt from the open fields, and sweat, and work" (83).

The contrast between Bromden's perception of McMurphy and that of everyone else in the hospital is particularly evident in the description of McMurphy's failed attempt to lift the control panel. As we have shown, Bromden tends to represent any increase in emotional or physical tension by combining the two metaphors "People are Machines" and "Powerful is Big." Such metaphoric representations apply not only to the Big Nurse (see, for example, (b) above), but also to the patients themselves. When Pete Bancini prepares to punch one of the aids who has been annoying him, Bromden sees

the hand on the end of that arm pumping bigger and bigger as he clenched and unclenched it. ... I saw it swell and clench shut, flow in front of my eyes, become smooth--hard. A big rusty iron ball at the end of a chain.(46)

With McMurphy, however, the mechanical transformation does not occur:

His arms commence to swell, and the veins squeeze up to the surface. He clinches his eyes, and his lips draw away from his teeth. His head leans back, and tendon stand out like coiled ropes running from his heaving neck down both arms to his hands.(100-01)

Throughout its domination by the machine model, Bromden's mind struggles to find a different mode of thought. An alternative source domain is provided by McMurphy, whose speech is dominated by the metaphor "People are Animals." Immediately after being admitted to the ward, McMurphy tries to find out which of the patients is the "bull goose loony" (20). After taking part in the first group meeting, he describes the patients as a "flock of dirty chickens" (50) and their behavior as a "pecking party" (49). He then initiates a debate over whether the men are chickens or rabbits (55) and describes the Big Nurse as a "bitch" and a "buzzard" (52) (see Kunz). This alternative metaphor for people has a gradual but noticeable effect on Bromden's mind style. As the novel progresses, animals begin to loom larger in Bromden's memories of the past, in his rare glimpses of the world outside the hospital, and in his descriptions of other people (see also Robinson). Harding's perpetually moving hands, for example, are "free as two white birds" (21) or "creep out from between his knees like white spiders from between two moss-covered tree limbs" (51). In the final sequence of the novel, after the drunken party, Billy and Candy are described as "two owls from a nest" and "fat cats full of milk" (246), while McMurphy's plight in the face of the Big Nurse's revenge is compared to that of a cornered animal, beaten but still part of the natural rather than the mechanical world (250). Most striking of all, Bromden's own sense of liberation is metaphorically expressed towards the end of the fishing trip: he feels that the laughter has lifted him above the motor boat and the "diving birds," and he is "skating the wind with those black birds" (195), flying free.

**6.1. Variations in the Use of the Machinery Metaphors**

In section 3.1 above, we suggested that the linguistic realization of the conceptual machinery metaphors in Bromden's narrative correlates with the variations in his mental state. We now turn more specifically to the way in which the frequency and use of machinery metaphors chart the development of Bromden's mind style throughout the story.

The episode in which McMurphy tries to get at least one of the Chronics to raise his hand in order to win the patients' right to watch the World Series on television represents a crucial turning point in the narrative. The episode is crucial because, after it has become clear that all the other Chronics are unreachable, it is Bromden's hand that is raised. This act marks the end of his noncommunication as well as his determinate and conscious movement out of the machine metaphor. He initially expresses the lifting of his hand as an involuntary gesture, controlled by an external mechanism:

I can't stop it. McMurphy's got hidden wires hooked to it, lifting it slow just to get me out of the fog and into the open where I'm fair game. He's doing it, wires.(112-13)

Immediately afterward, though, he corrects himself: "No. That's not the truth. I lifted it myself" (113). This passage highlights the way in which the machine metaphors provide a world view in which Bromden has no free agency and, consequently, no responsibility: by seeing himself always as a victim of some mechanical whim, he has no will to fight.

The episode of the raising of the hand, which occurs nearly halfway through the novel, does not, however, mark the end of Bromden's use of machinery metaphors: the move away from his mechanistic world view is very gradual and by no means complete when the novel ends. It is true, however, that the frequency of machinery images decreases after he admits that he deliberately supported McMurphy's motion with his vote. By our count, 82 machinery images may be found in the 112 pages that precede this episode and only 27 such images may be found in the remaining 143 pages. This count translates into an average of just over 7 instances of the machinery metaphor every 10 pages in the first part of the novel and just under 2 for every 10 pages in the second half. While such crude figures do not do justice to the more subtle variations in frequency that chart Bromden's changes in mood, they do provide a sense of his progressive rejection of the mechanistic view of the world.

One reason the machinery metaphors continue to appear through to the end of the novel is that Bromden repeatedly expresses his new sensations of freedom and happiness in terms of the breakdown of machines. McMurphy's changing fortunes in the struggle against the Big Nurse cause alterations in Bromden's emotional condition that he sometimes expresses by referring to the state of repair of the fog machine: during his moments of optimism he explains his clarity of vision by concluding that the fog machine must have broken down (127), while fear and pessimism are accompanied by the realization that the fog machine has been fixed and is functioning again (92). In the second half of the novel in particular, crucial moments in Bromden's liberation are metaphorically described as the breakdown of the machinery that has dominated his life. This is how he expresses the palpable effect caused by the arrival on the ward of the young woman whom McMurphy has persuaded to take them out on the fishing trip:

There was a blue smoke hung near the ceiling over her head; I think apparatus burned out all over the ward trying to adjust to her come bursting in like she did--took electronic readings on her and calculated they weren't built to handle something like this on the ward, and just burned out, like machines committing suicide.(180)

What is striking here is that the apparatus itself is personified in the final simile, where the machines are compared to people committing suicide. In other words, humanity is breaking into Bromden's mechanistic view of the world. Similarly, during the fishing expedition Bromden interprets his own relaxation and happiness as the destruction of the mechanical parts inside him: "I smelt the air and felt the four cans of beer I'd drunk shorting out dozens of control leads down inside me" (192).

In other words, the development of Bromden's world view is marked in part by a rejection of the machinery metaphor and in part by the expression, through metaphor, of his new belief that the machines can be beaten. Indeed, his escape from the hospital can only occur after the realization during the secret night party that "[m]aybe the Combine wasn't all-powerful" (239).

**7. Conclusion**

Our analysis has shown how consistent metaphorical patterns can be employed to project a characteristic and partly deviant mind style. We have shown how in ***One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*** the use of varying linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors drawn from the source domain of machinery results in the readers' perception that the narrator has a peculiar and at times distorted way of understanding and describing the world around him. We have also shown how variations in the use and frequency of metaphorical patterns convey changes in the mind of the narrator. The latter is particularly crucial in a novel like ***One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest,*** where the focus is both on the progress of the tale told and on the development of the teller's own perception of the events he is narrating (see Hunt).

Kesey's greatest achievement in the novel is his ability to create images that can be understood as literal for the narrator and as figurative for the reader: even the most obvious examples of Bromden's distorted perceptions (such as the fog machine and the Combine) can function as sharp and suggestive metaphors for the machine-dominated world that the novel aims to expose. A further example of Kesey's genius is his creation of a mind style that is both strikingly different and extremely accessible: while we immediately sense the oddity of Bromden's world view, we have no difficulties understanding what he is talking about even when his use of the machinery source domain is at its most dense. As we suggested earlier, Kesey forms his narrator's mind style by creatively extending metaphors that are conventional in English. The conventionality of such metaphors as "People are Machines" and "Powerful is Big" accounts for the accessibility of Bromden's mind style, while their creative and systematic use accounts for the strikingness of his view of the world.

Clearly, combining the notion of mind style with the cognitive approach to metaphor benefits both theories. On the one hand, the concept of mind style holds important implications for the theories developed by Lakoff, Johnson, and Turner: it highlights the connection between idiosyncratic uses of metaphor and personal world view, and it accounts for a possible effect of nonconventional metaphorical patterns in texts. Our analysis of ***One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*** has also shown how some of Lakoff and Turner's claims concerning the creative use of conventional metaphors in poetry can be applied to literary narratives. On the other hand, the theory of cognitive metaphor enables scholars to account for a crucial tool in the creation of mind style, which deserves much more attention than it has thus far received. We hope that the approach demonstrated in this essay will open up productive new avenues in the study of novelistic prose.

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