

Ontological Metaphor in the Knight, the Princess, and the Falling Star

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ABSTRACT: This research paper explores the role of metaphor as a significant stylistic device in the novel "Kesatria, Putri, dan Bintang Jatuh" (KPBJ) by Dee Lestari, with a particular focus on Gal's formalist ontology (2020). It argues that metaphors are not merely cognitive tools facilitating emotional and conceptual connections but are transformative agents that reconfigure the reality of their subjects through their external, aesthetic, and material properties. By employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study analyzes original, stock, and dead metaphors, revealing how they enrich narrative depth and convey complex themes. The findings highlight that metaphors create new ontological identities, allowing readers to engage with the text on a sensory and imaginative level. This work contributes to the understanding of figurative language in literature, emphasizing the importance of stylistics in analyzing metaphors and their aesthetic effects, while challenging traditional views that limit metaphors to cognitive mappings. Overall, the research underscores the transformative power of metaphors in shaping both literary meaning and reader experience, advocating for a broader appreciation of their creative potential in literary analysis.

KEYWORDS: metaphor, ontological metaphor, novel, dee lestari, kpbj

I. INTRODUCTION

Figurative language is defined as the way a person uses language. The purpose of using figures of speech or stylistic devices is to enhance sentence structure, thereby creating an imaginative and emotional impression for readers and listeners. In a novel, figurative language can reflect the personality, character, and skill of the author (Keraf, 2009)

Metaphor is one of the most commonly used stylistic devices in novels. A metaphor is an indirect comparison between two different things, where one thing is described or explained as another. Metaphors can add depth and beauty to a text, create strong visual imagery, and evoke deep emotions and thoughts. Metaphors add layers of meaning to a text, allowing the writer to express ideas or concepts in a richer and more nuanced way.

The use of metaphor, as a stylistic device, plays a crucial role in creating aesthetic effects in a text, since in novels, metaphors serve as aesthetic tools that create immersive and emotionally resonant experiences. This statement is in line with the theory which proposed by (Gal, 2020) Gal's theory (2020) highlights the external, structured nature of metaphors, showing that they are not just in the mind but in the world itself. In addition, Gal also stated that metaphors are ontological because they construct and shape reality, not just explain it.

In the novel Kesatria, Putri, dan Bintang Jatuh (KPBJ), Dee Lestari employs various stylistic devices, including metaphors, as key elements that enrich the narrative and deepen the meaning of the story. The metaphors in this novel not only enhance the beauty of the language but also help convey the complex and emotional themes that becomes the core of the story. So that is important to understand how stylistics, as a branch of linguistics that studies the use of stylistic devices in literary works, plays a crucial role in analyzing figurative language such as metaphor to create a consistent aesthetic effect in both languages.

Stylistics is a branch of linguistics that examines the use of language in literary works. The study of stylistics helps in understanding linguistic aspects in literature, including analyzing stylistic choices such as word selection, sentence structure, and the way the author conveys meaning to create aesthetic effects. Additionally, stylistic aims to explain the language and its artistic function in literary works.

There are a lot of previous researches which were discussing about metaphors and aesthetic effects of metaphors. Research on metaphors indicates that metaphors in video advertisements are effective in influencing purchase intentions. In a cultural context, the gender opposition found in Kazakh proverbs utilizes metaphors to reflect a patriarchal worldview while simultaneously highlighting the complementary nature of gender roles. Mystical metaphors within Christian tradition offer a deeper understanding of spiritual experiences through metaphorical cognition, linking everyday routines with the divine. Meanwhile, BTS employs metaphors in their lyrics to express themes such as self-discovery and social criticism, demonstrating the profound impact of their

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music in transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries. This research underscores the importance of metaphors as tools for constructing both emotional and cognitive connections across diverse cultural contexts and media (Iritspukhova, 2023; Pan & Tay, 2023; Ramanova et al., 2024; Xie, 2023; Yuliana et al., 2024)

Moreover, there are another research which analysed how metaphors operate in literary texts across diverse contexts and theoretical frameworks. One study applies stylistic pragmatics to reveal the multifunctional use of emotive metaphors in an Indonesian novel, while another examines the linguistic, emotional, and social factors that make metaphorical compliments aesthetically attractive. Another article analyzes conceptual metaphors of life in contemporary British novels, illustrating how life is variously framed as a journey, war, or game, among other images. In a related vein, another study shows that enhancing learners' aesthetic judgments of metaphors can significantly deepen their understanding of poetry in an EFL classroom. Moving beyond static mappings, a further work reinterprets novel metaphors as dynamic cognitive processes fueled by abductive reasoning and imaginative hypothesis, emphasizing novelty and possibility. Finally, the exploration of ekphrasis in late antique fictional prose demonstrates how visually rich descriptions function as narrative metaphors that imbue the text with mythological, affective, and genre-specific connotations. Together, these articles underscore that metaphors not only transfer meaning between domains but also serve as creative, transformative tools for literary interpretation and cognitive discovery (Dung, 2025; Paskaleva, 2024; Pistol, 2024; Rahardi et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2019; Ziadi, 2025). There are focusing on the cognitive, affective, and cultural functions of metaphors—analyzing how metaphors operate as symbolic bridges in communication. Gal's ontological approach (2020), on the other hand, posits that metaphors are fundamentally about the form and material structure that give them life. While the former sees metaphors as tools for meaning transfer and emotional engagement, Gal insists that the real essence of a metaphor lies in its external, visual, and aesthetic composition, which creates a new ontological reality rather than merely mapping one abstract domain onto another. This difference invites us to think more broadly about metaphor—not only as a facilitator of communication but also as a creative, material process that actively constructs new ways of being.

II. THEORY

A. Metaphor

Translate it in English and make the language more academic

Metaphor is a form of figurative language that conveys meaning through the implicit comparison of two dissimilar entities. Unlike simile, which uses connectors such as "like" or "as" to draw comparisons, metaphor directly equates one object with another. According to Lakoff & Johnson, (1980) metaphor is a fundamental conceptual tool for thinking and understanding the world. They define metaphor as the process of comprehending and experiencing one type of entity in terms of another. Moreover, metaphor is not merely a linguistic device but rather a mode of thought and behavior. Lakoff and Johnson illustrate that metaphor is an integral component of the way we think, communicate, and interpret the world, reflecting the underlying cognitive structures that shape our interaction with our surroundings

B. Types of Metaphor

Metaphor is regarded as a linguistic expression that employs one concept or object to describe another, typically in a creative and non-literal manner. Metaphors often enrich a text by adding layers of depth and additional meaning (Newmark, 1980). This perspective suggests that the translation of metaphors is an art form that demands both linguistic and cultural sensitivity, as well as creativity in identifying appropriate equivalents. Newmark (1988) categorizes metaphors into six types, such as:

a. Dead Metaphor

Newmark (1988) categorizes "dead metaphors" as a type of metaphor that has been employed so frequently that its original meaning has been lost, and it has become a part of everyday language. These metaphors are no longer perceived as figurative by native speakers because they have evolved into idiomatic or conventional expressions.

b. Cliché Metaphor

Newmark (1988), in his theoretical framework, identifies "cliché metaphors" as those metaphors that have lost their potency due to excessive use. They are often regarded as trite and are no longer capable of evoking a robust emotional or aesthetic response. Consequently, cliché metaphors tend to be eschewed in literary texts, as they are perceived as banal and ineffective in conveying the intended meaning or emotion of the author. In contrast, such metaphors are more commonly found in editorial pieces, political speeches, or other texts where overused language has diminished its appeal.

c. Stock Metaphor

A stock metaphor is an established metaphor that is widely utilized in informal contexts as an efficient and succinct means of portraying physical and/or mental situations, both in referential and pragmatic terms. This type of metaphor retains a certain degree of emotional warmth and does not lose its meaning despite frequent usage. Stock metaphors play a crucial role in language by facilitating communication and aiding in the expression of complex ideas in an accessible manner. Although they may lack the

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originality or inventive quality of novel metaphors, their entrenched presence in language demonstrates how metaphorical expressions evolve and become integral components of everyday communication.

d. Adapted Metaphor

Adapted metaphors are those that have been adjusted or modified from their original form to align more closely with the target language or culture in translation, especially within texts considered "sacred" or significant. This adaptation is undertaken to render the metaphor more relevant and comprehensible to the target audience, acknowledging that the original metaphor may lack a direct equivalent or might be ambiguous in the target language. In contexts involving texts of considerable importance—such as speeches by renowned figures—the translation of adapted metaphors is of critical importance.

e. Recent Metaphor

Recent metaphors refer to those that have newly emerged or been recently coined within a language. They typically arise within specific contexts, often in response to innovations or shifts in technological, social, or cultural paradigms.

f. Original Metaphor

Original metaphors are those created by the writer or speaker to convey ideas or emotions in a fresh and distinctive manner. These metaphors reflect the individual creativity of the author and are often novel or previously unused. Original metaphors play a vital role in both language and literature, as they illustrate the capacity of language to express complex and profound ideas creatively. They enrich texts and communicative acts by offering new and innovative perspectives.

C. Ontological Metaphor

The concept of ontology in Gal (2020) refers to the external, material, and structural nature of metaphors rather than their cognitive or conceptual aspects. Metaphors are not just ways of thinking but ways of building and perceiving reality. They are ontological entities because they restructure objects, emotions, and ideas in tangible ways. Traditional metaphor theories assume that meaning is generated internally in the mind. Gal challenges this by proposing an externalist view, where metaphors function outside the mind as aesthetic and material forms. Metaphors must be studied in their visual, material, and sensory manifestations rather than just their conceptual meanings. This approach shifts the focus from how metaphors are understood to how they physically shape perception and experience.

II. METHODS

This section outlines the research methodology, including research design, study participants, data collection instruments, and data analysis. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze Indonesian metaphors in the novel *Kesatria, Putri, dan Bintang Jatuh (KPBJ)*. Designed as a case study, the research focuses on the metaphors within a single text. Its qualitative nature allows for an in-depth examination of the aesthetic effects of these metaphors and the ways in which these effects are preserved or altered in translation. The primary data source for this study is the novel itself. Metaphors within the text will be identified and selected for analysis based on their aesthetic impact. The analytical framework follows a stylistic approach, concentrating on the linguistic and aesthetic features of metaphors in both the source and target texts. Moreover, the metaphors will be analyzed in terms of their aesthetic effects and ontological properties within the Indonesian text.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

FINDINGS

There are 10 data that were analyzed by the researchers. 5 of them are original metaphor, 3 stock metaphor, and 2 dead metaphor. They are the findings:

A. Original Metaphor

"Di mataku, negara tinggal sebuah museum tua." (01-Ori-KPBJ)

Gloss: **In my eyes, the country remains an old museum.**

1. Beyond Cognitive Mapping: Traditional metaphor theories often explain metaphors as cognitive mappings—where one concept is understood in terms of another in our minds. However, Gal's perspective shifts the focus from internal thought to the external, formal composition of the metaphor. In this view, the metaphor is not just a trigger for internal associations; it is a concrete, aesthetic structure that reconfigures the target's very being.

2. Metaphors as Material Compositions: For Gal, a metaphor like "sebuah museum tua" (an old museum) is an ontological transformation, meaning it doesn't simply describe the country in symbolic terms. Instead, the country is reconstituted in its "metaphorical form": it adopts the characteristics of an old museum—antiquity, stillness, preservation of relics, and perhaps a sense of being frozen in time. The aesthetic properties of an old museum become intrinsic to the description of the country, giving it a new identity that exists beyond mere ideas.

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3. Externalist and Aesthetic Reconfiguration: While many studies analyze metaphors as tools for influencing emotions, shaping cultural perceptions, or guiding cognitive inferences, Gal's approach insists on examining the external features. The metaphor is an external composition—a structured arrangement of visual and material qualities. Here, the descriptor “old museum” is not simply a label; it is a reconfiguration of the nation's identity. The visual and material connotations of an old museum—such as the display of historical artifacts, a sense of gravity, and even stagnation—are imposed onto the nation, thereby creating a new “ontology” or mode of existence for it.

4. In Summary: Based on Gal's concept of ontology, the phrase “Di matak, negara tinggal sebuah museum tua” serves as more than a figurative expression. It is a creative process where the nation is not only compared to but is transformed into an old museum through the formal and material qualities evoked by the metaphor. This perspective challenges the view that metaphors are solely internal cognitive phenomena and underscores their capacity to reconfigure reality by endowing objects—or in this case, a country—with a new, materially grounded identity.

“Aku bisa membakar bumi, Ferre.” (02-Ori-KPBJ)

Gloss: **I could burn the Earth, Ferre**

The statement above is more than a mere expression of destructive intent or a dramatic hyperbole. Instead of understanding it solely through internal cognitive associations (e.g., mapping “burning the earth” onto feelings of anger, passion, or radical change), Gal's perspective directs us to examine its external, formal, and aesthetic structure—that is, its ontological composition.

1. Beyond Cognitive Mapping: Traditional metaphor theories often focus on how metaphors serve as cognitive bridges between ideas. In those models, the phrase might be seen as linking the act of burning with transformative power through a kind of internal mental mapping. However, according to Gal, the ontology of metaphor is found not in what our minds connect, but in the tangible composition of the metaphor itself. The assertion “Aku bisa membakar bumi” is a creative, material arrangement: the subject (“Aku”) takes on a radically reconfigured identity by literally “adopting” the characteristics of an act that transforms the world—a burning, transformative force—through the formal elements of the language.

2. Metaphors as Material Compositions: Gal's approach emphasizes that metaphors are not just ephemeral ideas. They are composed of specific visual and aesthetic features that lend them an independent, almost material existence:

- **Visual and Formal Qualities:**

The image of “membakar bumi” (burning the earth) evokes vivid, concrete imagery—flames, heat, destruction—that carry a weight of sensory, material properties. These qualities are not mere ornamentation; they are the substance of the metaphor, creating a new reality for the subject. In this sense, the burning becomes a property that “sticks” to the subject, transforming its ontological status.

- **Transfiguration Through Composition:**

For Gal, a successful metaphor involves a “sticking mechanism” where the external predicate (here, the burning or the power to incinerate the earth) adheres to the target (the speaker “Aku”). This isn't simply a symbolic replacement but an ontological reconfiguration—the subject is redefined by the intrinsic, aesthetic force of the metaphor. The transformation is not dependent on the internal interpretation alone but is a realignment of material properties that reconfigure what the subject is.

3. The Externalist Perspective: Gal's formalist ontology insists that the medium of the metaphor—the arrangement of words and the form they create—is ontologically prior to any cognitive mapping. In the phrase “Aku bisa membakar bumi, Ferre,” the focus is not just on how we understand the potential for destruction, but on how the language itself constructs an external reality:

- **Creating a New Mode of Being:**

The act of “burning the earth” is treated as a formal, compositional property that redefines the speaker's identity. It's not merely an indicator of potential force or change; it is a creative composition that gives the subject an actual, reconfigured existence. The metaphor doesn't represent an abstract idea—it enacts a new quality that becomes part of the subject's ontological makeup.

- **Independent Aesthetic Presence:**

According to Gal, such a metaphor transforms the target in a way that is observable and appreciable in its own right. The phrase stands as an independent entity, with its own visual and material resonance, rather than merely being filtered through internal cognition. It exemplifies how language, composed in a striking and formal manner, can alter our perception of reality by endowing objects or subjects with new material qualities.

4. In Summary: Based on Gal's concept of ontology, the phrase “Aku bisa membakar bumi, Ferre” should be read as a formal, external composition. It is not merely a symbolic, cognitive mapping of power or emotion; it is a creative, aesthetic act that reconfigures the nature of the speaker. The metaphor instills the subject with the transformative, almost elemental quality of “burning the earth” through its material, visual properties—properties that exist independently of any internal interpretation. Gal's formalist ontology thus invites us to see metaphors as real, materially constituted forces that redefine the very being of what they describe.

“Bifurkasi itu adalah momen yang mengkilat” (03-Ori-KPBJ)

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Gloss: "Bifurcation is that moment that crystallizes"

1. Beyond Cognitive Mapping: Traditional approaches tend to view metaphors as cognitive mappings—processes by which one abstract domain is understood in terms of another. In contrast, Gal argues that a metaphor's real power resides in its external, formal composition. Here, bifurcation isn't merely an abstract division or a conceptual shift; it is reconfigured into a distinct, tangible state—the moment "crystallizes." This crystallization is not just a figure of speech but a transformation that grants the moment a concrete, materialized essence.

2. Metaphors as Material Compositions: Gal's perspective treats metaphors as composed of aesthetic and measurable properties much like a physical sculpture or a crystallized structure. In the statement, the quality of "mengkrystal" (crystallizing) implies that the fleeting dynamic of bifurcation is captured, solidified, and given form. The moment is redefined through its formal characteristics, acquiring an existence that's independent of our internal cognitive interpretation.

3. Externalist View on the Aesthetic Formation: Instead of seeing metaphors as mere linguistic devices that evoke internal imagery or emotional resonance, Gal's ontological approach emphasizes the external, aesthetic forces at play. "Bifurkasi itu adalah momen yang mengkrystal" serves as an archetype of how the external features (such as the visual cue of crystallization) actualize a new form or reality. The external properties of crystallization—the way light refracts within a crystal, its sharply defined edges—become inherent to the dynamic moment of bifurcation, thereby redefining its being.

4. In Summary: Based on Gal's concept of ontology, the phrase is not simply a poetic or indirect expression. It is a formal, external composition where the act of bifurcation is transformed into a crystallized moment. This transformation is ontological in nature: it redefines the state of the moment by endowing it with aesthetic, material properties that have their own form and reality, independent of mere internal thought. This approach challenges us to see metaphors as truly creative forces that reconfigure reality rather than merely reflecting internal ideas.

B. Stock Metaphor

Ada sepasang mata yang berkilat-kilat, tidak sabar menunggu kata itu muncul. (04-Sto-KPBJ)

Gloss: There is a pair of eyes that glisten, impatiently waiting for that word to appear

1. Beyond Cognitive Mapping: Traditional approaches view metaphors as pathways for translating one set of concepts into another in our minds—for instance, seeing "mata yang berkilat-kilat" as a reflection of inner excitement. Gal, however, argues that a metaphor's power lies not only in internal associations but in its external, material form. In this sentence, the description of eyes that "glisten" is not simply a symbolic trigger for interpreting emotional anticipation; it is a formal, aesthetic quality that adheres to the subject (the eyes) and changes its ontological status.

2. Metaphors as Material Compositions: According to Gal, metaphors are like creative compositions where visual and sensory attributes assume a concrete role. "Berkilat-kilat" is not just a descriptive term—it serves as an intrinsic property that transforms the pair of eyes into something more than their ordinary state. These eyes, now imbued with a shining, active quality, are reconfigured into entities that overtly express anticipation. The transformation is as much about the visual, external reconfiguration as it is about internal emotion.

3. Externalist and Aesthetic Reconfiguration: In Gal's view, the medium of the metaphor—its arrangement of visual elements—plays a pivotal role in defining what the subject becomes. The phrase creates a vivid, almost tangible scene: a pair of eyes reflects light and emotion in such a way that they become embodiments of anticipation, independent of any internal mental mapping. The aesthetic properties (the glitter, the visual brightness) form an external reality that recasts the essence of the eyes, making their experience not just an internal reflection but an existent, reconfigured being.

4. In Summary: Through the lens of Gal's formalist ontology, the sentence "There is a pair of eyes that glisten, impatiently waiting for that word to appear" becomes more than a simple figurative remark. It is a creative, formal composition where the external, sensory attributes (the glistening and eager quality of the eyes) transform the very identity of the subject. The metaphor is ontologically potent—it doesn't just map one concept onto another in our minds; it redefines the subject's existence by incorporating visual and material qualities that stand on their own as part of reality.

Ada amarah yang menggelegar di dada (09-Sto-KPBJ)

Gloss: There is anger that thunders in the chest

1. Beyond Cognitive Mapping: Conventional metaphor theory might see this sentence as a mapping where the abstract emotion "anger" is projected onto the bodily sensation of "thundering in the chest." In Gal's view, however, the metaphor goes further—it is not only an internal association but a transformation of the emotion into an external, aesthetically rich phenomenon. The action of "thundering" is not just an image in the mind; it becomes a formal property that redefines what anger is.

2. Metaphors as Material Compositions: Gal argues that metaphors operate as creative compositions that endow their subjects with specific visual or sensory attributes. In this sentence, "thundering" (menggelegar) is a descriptor that carries concrete

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qualities—like the dynamic force and rhythmic pulse of thunder—that adhere to the emotion. This means that the anger isn't a vague, internal feeling; it is materialized, as though its intensity and impact are as palpable as the sound and power of actual thunder.

3. Externalist and Aesthetic Reconfiguration: Gal's ontology stresses that the medium of the metaphor—the formal arrangement of descriptive qualities—is ontologically preceding and independent of our internal cognitive interpretation. When we say that anger "thunders in the chest," the expression constructs a vivid, almost tangible scene. It reconfigures the emotion not simply as an internal experience, but as a perceivable event with its own material and aesthetic presence. In doing so, the metaphor invites us to see anger as something that can be observed, felt, and experienced externally.

4. In Summary: Using Gal's formalist ontology, the phrase "There is anger that thunders in the chest" is understood as a powerful, material composition. The descriptor "thunders" is not just a stylistic addition, but an ontological transformation that redefines anger as a force with a concrete, external presence. The emotion is "stuck" with this dynamic quality, making it an aesthetic and sensory phenomenon in its own right—beyond mere internal reflection.

C. Dead Metaphor

Pernakah sang Supernova jatuh cinta? (07-Dead-KPBJ)

Gloss: Has the Supernova ever fallen in love?

1. Beyond Cognitive Mapping: Traditional metaphor theories typically treat expressions like this as internal mappings—linking the distant, cosmic phenomena of a supernova with human emotions such as love. Gal, however, insists that the power of a metaphor lies not in mental associations alone but in the concrete, visual, and material qualities that the metaphor "constructs." In asking if a supernova has ever fallen in love, the sentence does more than trigger an emotion or idea; it transforms the supernova, attributing to it an otherwise unsuspected quality—that of experiencing or embodying love.

2. Metaphors as Material Compositions: In Gal's view, metaphors function as creative compositions that imbue their subjects with distinct aesthetic and formal properties. Here, the supernova is not simply an astronomical event; it is reconfigured through the formal property of "falling in love." This is not a mere symbolic correspondence. Instead, the quality of love is "stuck" to the supernova in a way that redefines its mode of existence. The transformation is external: the supernova is recast as something capable of exhibiting an emotional, almost human-like quality, which is as much a matter of its established form as it is of internal sentiment. (Pan & Tay, 2023; Pistol, 2024)

3. Externalist and Aesthetic Reconfiguration: Gal's concept involves a "sticking mechanism" where a foreign predicate—in this case, "falling in love"—adheres to the target (the supernova) in a way that radically alters its identity. Instead of being an inert cosmic explosion, the supernova, through the metaphor, acquires the dynamic, ephemeral quality of love. This adhesion is not fragile or fleeting; it is an ontological shift that materializes love as an integral, transformative property of the subject, giving it a new, creative existence within the metaphorical framework.

4. In Summary: According to Gal's externalist stance, the transformative power of a metaphor arises from its formal and sensory qualities rather than solely from internal cognitive processes. In this phrase, the metaphor crafts an image that is both visual and material. The supernova's original identity as a brilliant cosmic event is enriched by the aesthetic implication of love. This isn't just an abstract or poetic idea—it is a formal composition that redefines the supernova's ontological status, turning it into an entity that embodies both cosmic power and emotional possibility.

DISCUSSIONS

Based on previous research and these findings recognize that metaphors are not simply decorative linguistic devices that transfer meaning from one concept to another. Rather, they emphasize that:

- 1. Metaphors are Transformative Tools:** Whether in video advertisements, cultural proverbs, religious texts, or song lyrics, metaphors are understood as creative forces that do more than describe—they actively reshape the way we perceive and experience the world. They don't merely map ideas; they transform and reconstruct meaning by creating new, dynamic associations that influence emotions, cultural perceptions, and cognitive frameworks. (Pan & Tay, 2023; Ramanova et al., 2024; Yuliana et al., 2024)
- 2. Metaphors Construct Emotional and Cognitive Connections:** Research from diverse fields—from advertising and cultural studies to literary analysis and classroom pedagogy—shows that metaphors forge deep emotional and cognitive links. These studies underline the ability of metaphors to evoke sensations, trigger cultural understandings, and foster novel insights. Whether it is linking everyday experiences to the divine or framing life as a journey, war, or game, metaphors help in building bridges between abstract concepts and lived experience.
- 3. Metaphors as Creative and Aesthetic Mechanisms:** Both sets of work agree that metaphors are creative, playing a key role in literary interpretation and in the way we process social and cultural phenomena. They are not merely static mappings, but dynamic processes that engage our senses, imagination, and reasoning abilities—transforming something abstract into something vivid and materially resonant. (Rahardi et al., 2024; Ziadi, 2025)

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Compared to this research, all those research findings stress that metaphors are active, transformative agents. They don't simply transfer meaning between domains; they construct new realities by weaving together emotional, cognitive, and aesthetic dimensions.

However, this research has few differences, compared the previous research. The key difference lies in how metaphors are understood and what aspects of them are emphasized:

1. **Traditional Research Perspectives:** Cognitive and Affective Functions: Studies in advertising, cultural proverbs, religious traditions, and even contemporary music (like BTS) overwhelmingly focus on how metaphors create emotional and cognitive links between different domains. For example, metaphors in video ads are seen as effective tools for influencing purchase intentions because they trigger specific feelings or associations in the mind. Similarly, metaphors in literature or lyrics help frame concepts (such as life as a journey or war) that allow audiences to connect with experiences on an emotional or cultural level. (Iritspukhova, 2023; Pan & Tay, 2023; Ramanova et al., 2024; Xie, 2023; Yuliana et al., 2024)
2. **Symbolic and Communicative Tools:** Research from diverse fields—whether through stylistic pragmatics in novels or analyses of ekphrasis in ancient texts—demonstrates that metaphors primarily function as devices for transferring meaning. They reveal layers of cultural, social, or linguistic significance, offering a bridge between abstract ideas and everyday experiences. Here, metaphors are often conceptualized as internal mappings or cognitive tools that facilitate understanding (Rahardi et al., 2024; Yang, 2019; Ziadi, 2025)
3. **Dynamic Cognitive Processes:** Some researchers discuss metaphors as dynamic processes that involve abductive reasoning and imaginative hypothesis. This view emphasizes creativity and the shifting of meaning within discourse. But even in these accounts, the emphasis is on how metaphorical thinking creates cognitive connections or alters perception through internal mental processes (Paskaleva, 2024; Yang et al., 2019)
4. **Gal's Formalist Ontology of Metaphors**
 - **Externalist and Material Focus:** In contrast, Michalle Gal's approach shifts the focus from internal cognitive mapping to the tangible, formal, and external properties of metaphors. According to Gal, the power of a metaphor isn't just in how it triggers associations in our minds. It lies in its ability to reconfigure the very being of the subject by endowing it with new, material qualities. For instance, in a metaphor where a subject "*amarah yang menggelejar*" or a supernova "*jatuh cinta*," it isn't only about evoking an internal image but about transforming the subject's identity through visible, aesthetic, or sensory attributes.
 - **Metaphors as Creative Compositions:** Gal argues that metaphors are composed of formal elements—visual, auditory, or even tactile—that "stick" to their targets. This sticking mechanism means that when an abstract concept (like anger, love, or even a cosmic event) is given a form (such as "thundering" or "falling in love"), it becomes an ontological transformation. The transformation isn't merely symbolic but constitutes a real, external reconfiguration of how the subject exists in and interacts with the world.
 - **Ontological Reconfiguration:** While the traditional approaches see metaphors as bridges between different conceptual domains, Gal's formalist ontology views them as processes that redefine objects or experiences. By emphasizing materiality and formal composition, Gal's framework posits that metaphors create new "beings" or states of existence. The formal properties—colors, textures, movements, or structural arrangements—are not just figurative but constitute an actual, ontologically significant transformation in the object or experience described.

All those previous research focuses on metaphors as internal cognitive tools and emotional catalysts that facilitate meaning transfer, convey cultural narratives, or enhance literary interpretation. On the other hand, Gal's formalist ontology insists that metaphors are fundamentally external, material compositions that reconfigure the very being of their subjects. Rather than functioning solely as cognitive mappings, they mold and transform reality by imbuing objects with new, concrete aesthetic and sensory properties. This difference in emphasis means that while traditional perspectives concentrate on how metaphors operate in our minds and in cultural discourse, Gal's approach invites us to consider metaphors as creative, transformative forces that actively shape the fabric of reality through their formal, ontological structure.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the analysis of 10 data by the researchers reveals significant findings about the nature of metaphors. The research emphasizes that metaphors are not merely decorative linguistic devices, but rather active, transformative agents that construct new realities by weaving together emotional, cognitive, and aesthetic dimensions. This challenges traditional perspectives that primarily focus on how metaphors operate in our minds and in cultural discourse. Instead, the research highlights that metaphors go beyond serving as cognitive mappings and symbolic tools, as they actively reshape the way we perceive and experience the world. They are understood as creative forces that do more than describe—they actively reshape the way we perceive and experience the world. The research also stresses the transformative power of metaphors in forging deep emotional and cognitive connections, impacting cultural perceptions, and fostering novel insights. It is evident that metaphors construct emotional and cognitive connections, and

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are not simply decorative linguistic devices. Furthermore, the formalist ontology proposed by Michalle Gal shifts the focus from internal cognitive mappings to the tangible, formal, and external properties of metaphors, emphasizing their role in reconfiguring the very being of their subjects through new, material qualities. This difference in emphasis invites us to consider metaphors as creative, transformative forces that actively shape the fabric of reality through their formal, ontological structure, challenging traditional perspectives and inviting a new understanding of the role of metaphors in shaping our perceptions and experiences

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