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Text-Worlds, Blending, and Allegory in ‘Flamingos in Dudley Zoo’ by Emma Purshouse

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Abstract

This paper will develop a cognitive stylistic framework drawn from Conceptual Integration (Blending) Theory (Fauconnier and Turner 2002), and Text World Theory (Werth 1999; Gavins 2007), which uses the idea of elaboration sites (Langacker 2009) as potential structural enablers in mapping across blend spaces. The framework will be used to investigate the operation of allegory and metaphor in Emma Purshouse’s poem ‘Flamingos in Dudley Zoo’. Previous work by Crisp (2008) on blending and allegory is taken as a departure point for the exploration of the relationship between text-worlds and blends in allegory in order to investigate how a hybrid approach may produce a richer understanding of how the poem achieves its effects. The paper will examine the conceptual blends created by metaphors suggested by the allegory in terms of their input (source and target) spaces, and examine how these may create and enrich metaphoric text-worlds in the poem. The paper develops a text-world mechanism, the peri-text-world, that allows the source, target and blended worlds to be integrated into one complex that can allow the necessary mappings to proceed from the source world-system of the allegory, through the allegorical blend, to structure a target world. It will also consider how this mapping process creates the potential for a number of candidate targets and how that uncertainty helps the poem make its point.

Key Words: Cognitive Stylistics, Blending, Elaboration Sites, Text-Worlds, Poetry, Black Country dialect.

1. Introduction

In the essay that follows I use a combination of Text World Theory (Werth 1999; Gavins 2007) and Conceptual Integration (Blending) Theory (Fauconnier and Turner 2002) to analyse a poem which takes the form of an allegory. The poem is interesting in that it presents a deceptively simple scenario of two flamingos, a grandmother and grandson, and their interaction in Dudley Zoo, narrated by the grandmother flamingo. The poem is a fable as well as an allegory. It functions as a fable because it anthropomorphises animal characters and makes them behave as humans while narrating a simple state of affairs, but has an underlying message or moral. It is allegorical because the state of affairs presented explores issues of dialect use, including the prejudices that are often deeply ingrained with regard to the status of dialect speech, even among those who use it, and this must be metaphorically extrapolated from the fable rather than the fable being used as a straightforward exemplification of the message. The poem appears in *Spake: Dialect and Voices from the West Midlands* (Clark and Davidson, 2019), a collection that showcases writing from the West Midlands and which sets out to challenge attitudes and prejudices towards non-standard English. The collection forms part of Clark's extensive work on language and identity in the region. The poem resonated with me as a speaker of dialect (South-Ulster Hiberno-English), because I recognised the attitudes and prejudices it describes. It also resonated with me as a poet, I enjoyed the simple premise, the flow, the sound, but most of all I enjoyed how the last line made me revisit and re-read the whole poem. As a writer I am interested in just how the poet did that, and how this allegory did its work so well. Given that allegory and fable are both based in the creation of a world that in some way mirrors our own, Text World Theory suggests itself as a means of analysing the relationships between the fictional world and its allegorical target, while Blending theory offers a means of understanding how the two representations are conceptualised and blended in order to be understood. A combination of both Text World Theory and Blending theory offers the

potential of analysing how the worlds projected are drawn into metaphoric relation, and how the allegorical target might emerge. This paper will explore how text-worlds work in allegories, particularly allegories told by a character within them, and how a combination of Blending theory and Text World Theory may increase our understanding of how the search for an unspecified allegorical target may be structured and constrained.

2. Analytical Framework

In Gavins' version of Text World Theory, text-worlds are classified according to their deictic signatures, or their modality. World-switches separate worlds with different temporal, spatial or perceptive co-ordinates, drawing distinctions between past, present and future versions of text-worlds, and the filtering consciousnesses through which they are described (Gavins 2007: 47). Modal-worlds are seen as projections from the main text-world which are separated into three main types. Boulomaic modal-worlds relate to wishes or desires that exist in the main text-world, but are not currently realised. Likewise, deontic modal-worlds project obligations, duties or permissions that have not been currently fulfilled, and epistemic modal-worlds contain beliefs, hypothetical situations, and perceptions which are unverified in the main text-world (Gavins 2007: 94-110). In her discussion of metaphor, Gavins (2007: 148-153) suggests that separate worlds created to represent the source and target of the metaphor can be either 'toggled' in attention or in some cases become fully integrated into a metaphoric world which creates emergent structure from the source and target combination. This allows us to see the world differently. Such blended worlds have been conceptualised as arising from repeated cross mappings between source and target worlds in metaphor (Gavins, 2007; Browse 2013; Whiteley 2016) and while metaphoric worlds are often seen as fleeting (Whiteley 2016), within allegory they would have to be much more stable conceptual structures, as they are maintained and incrementally built as the text progresses.

Fauconnier and Turner (2002) describe the operation of blends as requiring input spaces, which are composed of the representations of the two entities to be blended, and ‘cross-space mapping’ which links the corresponding elements in each input space, both in terms of their abstract correspondences in the generic space, and their combination in the blend space (2002: 40-42). Allegorical representation is unusual because the message or moral is not stated, but must be recovered from the state of affairs presented. Therefore, while the source input space is structurally developed, the target input space is not explicitly specified, other than it refers to the analogue of the source in another context. In such cases the source space provides the structure for the blend, and the reader must therefore fill in the gap using the constraint of the structure to map back from the blend to specify the target.

In his discussion of allegory in relation to Blake’s ‘A Poison Tree’, Crisp (2008) differentiates between the nature of the metaphoric extensions in allegory and extended metaphor. The fictional situation described in allegory serves as the metaphorical source (Crisp 2008: 293). The target is never referred to directly, but an ‘underlying mapping proceeds’ from the source (Crisp 2008: 294). The blend coactivated with both source and target spaces in an integration network results in the apprehension of the allegory. This results in a ‘seeming fusion of source and target’ (Crisp 2008: 304). In his diagram of the mapping between source and target in the allegory in ‘The Poison Tree’, Crisp maps the acts of the ‘foe’ who steals into the garden where the tree grows, and who is found, presumably having eaten the poisoned fruit, the following morning onto ‘unspecified acts’ that result in the destruction of the foe in the target space (Crisp 2008: 305). It seems to me that the target space is structured using an abstracted version of the narrative structure of the source, and this leaves unfilled slots which are the target space equivalent of the acts of the foe in the source space. These slots may be thought of as

elaboration sites (Langacker 2009) in the structure. In the example above the schematic representation of the foe's actions and ultimate demise may be abstracted as FOE ENGAGES IN UNDERHAND ACTION – FOE SUFFERS CONSEQUENCES OF UNDERHAND ACTION – FOE IS DESTROYED. Each of these parts of the structure offers a site where actions, the type of consequences, and the mode of destruction can be elaborated or specified in the target space, so that they align with the fate of the foe in the source space. In recent work (McLoughlin 2021), I have described similar processes of attaching candidate structures, or states of affairs that can fill the elaboration sites in the schematic structure to provide potential missing targets in the input spaces of blends in the poem 'The Deaf Woman in the Glen' by Francis Harvey.

Crisp also discusses the relationship between blended spaces and possible situations, which are defined as 'fragments of possible worlds' and 'identical with text worlds' (Crisp 2008: 292). Here he asserts that '[p]ossible, and so fictional, situations are not and cannot be blended spaces' because they are 'a means, not an object of reference' (Crisp 2008: 293). This does not discount the possibility that fictional situations, and text-worlds, themselves contain blends. Nor does it discount the possibility that the entities that the blends refer to can be world-building elements in a text-world. For example, the poison tree itself is a blend, as is the poison fruit it begets, yet both are world-building elements in the text-world of Blake's poem. Text-worlds are spaces, but they are also objects of reference, perceived as unified wholes that contain situations, made up of world-building elements and sequences of events, which can be attended to. As I have shown in previous work that combines Text World Theory with Stockwell's (2009) model of attentional resonance, text-worlds can behave as objects in attention, and be occluded, replaced in attention, and returned to (McLoughlin 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018). In this way a source space in a blend can contain a text-world and the blend space can be thought of as containing a text-world made of the blended elements from source and

target text-worlds (McLoughlin 2017). So the spaces in blending operate as means, and the text-worlds as objects of reference. For this reason, I hope to show that Text World Theory can add a new perspective on how allegory operates that complements and enriches the account from Blending Theory.

3. Analysis

In the analysis that follows I use Gavins' version (2007) of Text World Theory to tease out the detail of the worlds that are created in the poem. I also examine in more detail three of the major blends of the poem, in terms of the conceptual spaces and mappings between them, and finally I suggest a mechanism in terms of Text World Theory by which the allegory operates, that accounts for the various text-worlds and their relationship to each other, and the overall conceptualisation of the allegory. The poem is reproduced in its entirety below in order that the reader can follow the analysis more easily.

Flamingos in Dudley Zoo

Special ay we? He starts again,
always mithering with questions.
Great being a flamingo ay it?
Always bletherin' on he is. 5
I like havin' feathers, doh yow?
No different when he was an egg.
Tap, tap, tappety tap. No peace
to be had. He stands on one leg,
What was it like in the owd days, nan?
Doh half remind me of his dad. 10
Ay got the heart to tell him
as how it's always been like this,
the pond by the gates, the faces,
the chair-lift soaring overhead,
us watching, pale with envy. 15
When I'm growed up I'll fly the nest
to Chile or the South of France.
His enthusiasm's killing me.

Yow best talk proper, chick, I say
or yow wo get nowhere in this world 20
like me. He squawks. So pink he is,
so pink. My wicked tongue holds back.
I shut my beak. I keep it zipped.
He doh know our wings am clipped.

Emma Purshouse

3.1 Text-Worlds

The title of the poem opens a text-world in which the location is specified and which contains flamingos. The arrangement evokes a containment schema which is nested. The world contains Dudley Zoo and the zoo contains flamingos. We assume at this point that such a world refers to a representation of discourse-world entities that can be verified; that there is actually a zoo in Dudley, and that there are flamingos in it.

The opening line of the poem is spoken by an as yet unnamed entity, that the narrator signals as male. This opening speech creates a world-switch to a world which has a different deictic signature to the matrix text-world established by the title, because it is projected from the viewpoint of a character in the poem. This world-switch contains a question couched in the negative: ‘ay we?’. In Black Country dialect the negative is signalled on common verbs by ablaut rather than a clitic or particle (Clark and Asprey 2013: 97-104). This is unusual, and a reader without this contextual knowledge may read it as meaning ‘are we?’ rather than ‘aren’t we?’. The negative proposition creates a world, marked as negative, in which both the speaker’s and addressee’s status as special is questioned. This signals a belief on the part of the speaker, for which he seeks confirmation from the addressee. It therefore also projects an epistemic modal-world in which the speaker and addressee are special, as well as a negative

version of that world. Because there is no direct response to the question, both of these worlds remain active in attention.

The narrator's comment at the end of line one informs the reader that either this is a continuation of a conversation or that similar ones have occurred in the past which is being rehearsed 'again'. This creates a fleeting world-switch to past versions of the matrix text-world, and line two makes this multiple or durational through the use of 'always' in relation to the bothersome questioning behaviour of the speaker. The reader might infer that it is a small child, because in our world, small children often ask many questions, and often repeat them.

Line three causes us to 'refresh' the version of the matrix text-world that we have originally built. The question in line three implies that the speaker is a flamingo, since it seeks confirmation that it is 'great' to be one. The matrix text-world must therefore be a fictional or fantasy world. Because this world is allegorical, the reader can infer that it entails the author's belief about the similarity of the situation presented to a real world equivalent, and therefore has an epistemic shading. However, the narrator of the poem is also the addressee, and therefore included in the 'we' of the first line, and the entity being asked to confirm the virtue of being a flamingo, so we must assume that what is taking place is a conversation between two flamingos in Dudley Zoo, and that these events are being narrated to us by the second, likely older flamingo. The main text-world of the poem is filtered through the consciousness of one of the characters within it. This has the effect of doubling the matrix text-world, to produce two versions containing the same world-building elements, but the world building elements in each have different ontological status. One version is projected by the narrative voice from within the world it describes, the other is the reader's representation of an authorial device that is manifested in the creation of the world in which a flamingo can speak and describe to us its

version of that world. These are not identical however: the authorially projected version is marked as a device, a fable-world, and an allegory, where the ontological position of the flamingos is as characters in this fable-world. In contrast, in the world projected by the flamingo-speaker, the flamingos are unaware they are operating in a fable-world, to them it is a world where they are ontologically real. This can be true of all fiction narrated by an internal narrator. However, the reader may not necessarily construct a world where this fictionality is represented. The reader will only construct such a world where they realise or assume that the state of affairs narrated by the character has an allegorical or metaphoric target beyond the state of affairs being narrated. So one representation of the world is 'the real world' for the character, the other version of the world is representation of the fictional world as a device for metaphoric or allegorical purposes.

The question in line three uses the same form as the question in line one, it creates a change of speaker, and therefore a world-switch. It also uses the same negative verb form, thereby creating a negative world in which being a flamingo is great is questioned, implying a belief, and therefore an epistemic modal-world, which is cast into doubt by the negation, and an expectation of confirmation of that belief. There is no response in the poem to the question. Rather the narrator reinforces the earlier past text-world of earlier questions, by calling it to mind again: 'Always bletherin' on'. This has a similar effect to the first unanswered question in that it leaves both the epistemic modal-world where it is great to be a flamingo, and the negated version of that world unresolved and therefore active in attention. The fact that this effect is repeated creates a resonance (Stockwell 2009) which itself can be marked in attention as a feature of the poem. Meanwhile, the representation of the world as allegory is backgrounded in attention.

There follows another question from the younger flamingo. In this one he indicates that he likes having feathers, and the question is again negative in form, but anticipating an agreement: ‘doh you?’ This again creates a negative version of the world, where the addressee doesn’t like having feathers, in opposition to the speaker’s assertion that he does. This creates both an epistemic modal-world that contains the speakers liking for his feathers and a negative world that contains the possibility that the addressee does not. This implies an expectation or belief on behalf of the speaker, that the addressee shares a similar epistemic world in which they do like having feathers, and is seeking confirmation of his belief. This series of questions gives the impression of someone seeking agreement, approval, or confirmation that what he believes about the world is true. This creates a sense of inexperience of the world, and hence an inability to accurately judge, which the reader, through their experience of these types of questions, attaches to extreme youth, and therefore projects that quality onto the questioner.

Line six uses negation and a fleeting window into a past world before the young flamingo hatched, to draw a comparison between the current ‘mithering’ and his tapping at the egg. The negation is repeated in line seven, to the effect that the absence of peace has been constant, and although there is a difference in the type of the annoyance, there is no difference in effect. The narrator again appears to ignore the preceding question, and describes the young bird as engaging in prototypical flamingo behaviour as he begins yet another question. In the question that follows, the younger bird specifies the relationship between the older and younger flamingo as being grandmother and grandson. This time the question is more open, asking to be told about ‘the owd days’. Again, the question is ignored, and the reader is told that the young flamingo reminds the grandmother of his father. This creates a fleeting world-switch in which we create a past version of the world where an enactor of the father replaces the grandson. This has the effect of creating a world that does not change over time except for the

versions of the enactors present. The assertion is couched in the negative 'doh half' but the effect is positive in the sense that he doesn't half remind her, because the resemblance is full not partial. So any negative world created is very fleeting and has the effect of being a negative accommodation (Werth 1999: 253-4), it is only raised as a possibility in order to be negated.

Another negation 'ay got the heart to tell him' (line 10) has a different effect. A negative world is created where the narrator has got the heart to tell her grandson that it has 'always been like this'. This offers a resonant reactivation of the version of the past world from the previous world-switch that replaced the grandmother and grandson with enactors of the father and younger grandmother (as mother). The negation applies only to her possession of the will to tell him, it does not negate how things have always been. This reinforces the notion that though generations come and go, the world remains constant. What follows is a description of her world as she sees it, both in physical terms, 'the pond, the gate, the faces' and also in terms of the envy she, and in her view the other flamingos, feel towards the humans 'soaring overhead'. The birds are described as 'pale with envy' as though this envy has leached the colour from their feathers over time. This has the potential to create a past version of the text-world before the envy arose, when the birds were pinker.

When the young flamingo speaks again, it is to assert that in the future he will fly away to 'Chile or the South of France'. In text-world terms there is a world-switch because of the change of speaker, and then a further world-switch into the future world in which he flies away. This also indicates a desire he currently feels in this text-world, which is projected into a boulomaic modal-world, that can only be fulfilled through the realisation of that future world. The narrator at this point projects a metaphoric world in which the child-flamingo's enthusiasm is capable of a physical act of murder, which as readers we must project back into the effect on

the grandmother flamingo whereby she knows disappointment will eventually come to the young flamingo. The fact that she knows she is powerless to prevent it causes her pain, but she is also incapable of taking his enthusiasm from him.

Instead, she cautions him against using dialect, as this will be disadvantageous to his future. While there is no world-switch signalled by the direct speech in this instance because the speaker has not changed, the italics are being used to signal the change from the speaker acting as narrator, and the fact that this utterance is addressed directly to the younger flamingo. The ‘you’ of the address still has the potential to act in a doubly deictic manner (Herman 1994), if a dialect speaker projects themselves into inclusion in that ‘you’. The direct speech also projects an initial epistemic world that signals the older flamingo’s belief in the main text-world, while the content of the belief is further distanced into two further text-world projections: a future epistemic modal-world in which the situation is better for him as he speaks standard English and an alternative negative epistemic modal-world in which he ‘wo get nowhere’ because he has continues to use dialect. Again the negation is signalled in spite of the absence of the clitic on the verb ‘wo’ (standard English won’t).

In the main text-world we are told that the younger flamingo ‘squawks’ perhaps signalling indignation or disagreement. We are then told that he is ‘so pink’. Here ‘pink’, while the literal colour of flamingos, is being used metaphorically in the way that, in our world we would use ‘green’, to signal inexperience or naivety. The intensifier ‘so’ in conjunction with the adjective metaphorically increases the level of inexperience, while also intensifying the colour. In the metaphoric world the source domain creates an intensified pink colouration on the bird, while in the target domain the intensification of colour can be seen as a sign of the intensification of inexperience, in the same way that human blushing works as a physiological signal of shame

or embarrassment. The repetition on the following line intensifies this effect, while the 'he is' positioned between them, at the end of the line, draws attention to his state through its function as a linguistic and poetic fulcrum in the stressed position at the line end. The line end is particularly sensitive because the eye must make a reverse sweep saccade to the start of the next line offering a processing gap where 'so pink he is' is processed before the repetition of 'so pink' which then takes on an added resonance because of the repetition, and therefore only intensifies the original idea.

In the remainder of line 22 the narrator informs us that '[m]y wicked tongue holds back.' This has the effect of creating a metaphoric world in which the tongue is itself a living entity, capable of wickedness, and of intentional restraint. The line that follows which specifies an action on behalf of the flamingo of shutting her beak, implies that this is taken in case the metaphorically sentient tongue that she possesses fails in its restraint. The second half of the same line repeats the idea but more metaphorically, 'keep it zipped' implies a mechanical closing mechanism, which provides another safeguard in that it locks the beak shut, preventing her unintentional opening of it. The 'it' is ambiguous: it may refer to the beak being zipped shut, or the metaphorically sentient tongue being zipped in. These alternative metaphoric worlds must all be projected from the narrator's utterances and are held active in attention, allowing the reader to toggle between alternative versions, and to create a blended world where the beak is zipped shut because the sentient tongue attempts escape.

The final line of the poem enacts a failure of the older flamingo to 'keep it zipped'. She admits the truth she has been trying to keep from her grandson: 'our wings am clipped', but if we envisage a state of affairs where the narration is being spoken from within the world of the zoo, then the grandson, in proximity, can overhear this. There is no possibility of escape for the

young flamingo, and it is nothing to do with his dialect. In text-world terms it creates an initial epistemic modal-world projected by the elder flamingo signifying her belief about what the younger flamingo does not know, which signals a nested negative epistemic modal-world containing the real situation that he is unaware of. The content of that world is that in the matrix text-world their wings are clipped. The closing line also makes us revisit the reason why his earlier questions went unanswered: they are special, but not in the way he thinks. These flamingos are special in that they have been rendered incapable of flight. Perhaps it is not so great being a flamingo in a zoo. And while one might like having feathers, they are a constant reminder of your inability to fly if your wings have been clipped.

However, we know that the poem is the device of an authorial mind, being used for a purpose that may be metaphorical or allegorical, and therefore the world from which the character speaks must also be envisioned by the reader as a projection from an authorial mind designed to invite the reader to entertain such a world as possible, or as being potentially true. This is still a text driven effect, but it depends on the reader's realisation that they share a discourse-world with an author who has intentions in that discourse-world. The representation of those intentions is at the text-world level however, because readers recover or more accurately reconstruct the perceived intention of the author through the text. This authorial text-world relates to an epistemic or hypothetical state of affairs: if flamingos in Dudley Zoo were like us, and could talk, what might they be saying. The world of the poem's narrative answers this question through offering the reader access to the consciousness of the older flamingo, and their view of the world they inhabit.

The flamingo/narrator has no access to the world of the authorial fantasy: we usually assume, unless we are shown otherwise, that characters have no realisation that they inhabit a fictional

world. The world of the allegory is identical in terms of world-building elements to the narrating character's projection of the world she inhabits, but her projection is 'real' for her, the authorial projection is allegorical. The reader creates both as they build the 'world-system' of the poem, because they can understand the viewpoint of the flamingo, but also see it for the fiction that it is. In this sense the allegorical world operates like a skin around the main text-world, like the pericardium around the heart. It is not an empty text-world in Lahey's (2004) terms, since it is not the world the narrator inhabits, but it is not an independent text-world. It cannot exist without a text-world content, and the content is the world projected from the viewpoint of the character. The world-building elements in each version are the same (and in that sense the worlds are the double for each other), but their ontological status is differently marked. For example, the talking flamingos are treated as living breathing entities in the matrix world, but in the other version of the same world they exist only as fictional entities being used as a device. In this sense, it may be thought of as a peri-text-world, it envelops and contains the main text-world, and all of the other worlds that are projected from it, and changes how we view and understand the text-world system of the poem. Because we realise that the poem is an allegory, we can infer that the main text-world, and its projections, are the source 'world system' for a metaphor where the target is not expressly stated and must be supplied by the reader through contextual knowledge. The reader is an active participant in co-constructing the metaphors and by extension the blends by which the metaphors are built.

3.2 Text-worlds and blending

The first blend in the poem gives rise to the representation of the speaking flamingos which have a number of human qualities. Because flamingos are not endowed with speech in the real world, the reader must create a blend between that human behaviour and the flamingo, such that flamingos are human-like in their possession of the faculty of speech. This is a double

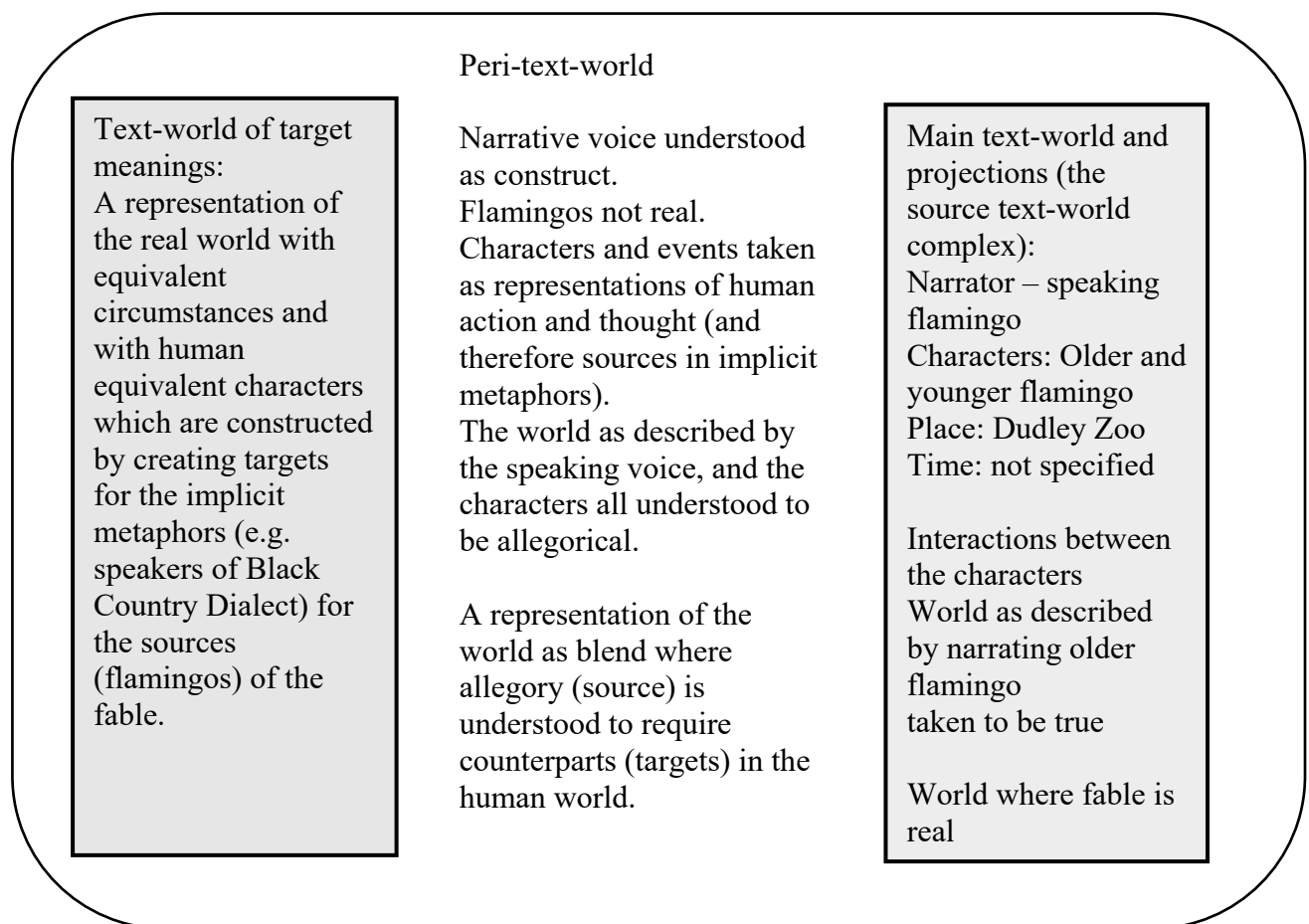
scope network (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 130-134) whereby in one input space the flamingo as bird with all its physical attributes are projected into the blend space, while from the other input space the particularly human quality of language must be projected into the blend. This creates a blend space where 'speaking flamingos' exist.

This blend of 'speaking flamingo' also contains a human kinship relation of 'grandmother-grandson' and the human behavioural qualities of 'children's bothersome questions'. These, as well as 'the grandmother's refusal to answer' and her refusal to 'tell the truth about the world' in order to preserve the innocence of the 'child' are also projected from the human input space. This creates a blend space in which the interaction is believable in human terms, but not believable in terms of what we know of 'real world' flamingos. These flamingos also speak in Black Country dialect, and therefore our 'human' input space is further specified in that regard. The metaphor 'FLAMINGOS IN DUDLEY ZOO ARE PEOPLE IN THE BLACK COUNTRY' is constructed, and a blend of flamingos who speak Black Country dialect and have human ambitions, emotions and behaviours emerges from the input spaces in that metaphor.

In text-world terms the representation of this blended world *as a blend* (the peri-text-world that the reader constructs to represent the authorial device) contains the representation of the blend as a world where these conditions are true (the text-world as constructed by the flamingo narrator). The representation of the world *as blend* is ontologically different from the world it contains because it is marked as allegorical and fictional, while the source-world it contains is projected by the narrator as though it were true. This blend becomes the conceptual anchor for the allegory, and offers a structure for the target-world of the allegory to develop. The target-world, which has not been considered thus far, is the text-world that contains the representation of the allegorical target. This target-world must also be contained in the peri-text world,

because part of the reader's construction of the author's intent in making the allegory must include the target of the allegory. It is a function of our being able to represent the source text-world of the talking flamingos as a fable which requires a world to be constructed that maps the allegory onto the world we inhabit, in effect creating a text-world to satisfy the missing target of the implicit metaphor. The target-world can only be constructed by replacing the source characters and events of the fable with equivalents in the world of human interaction. This world is constructed by the mapping process that maps the source text-world system onto the blend and reverse maps the blended entities onto their missing target equivalents. This can be represented diagrammatically as shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1: The relationship between peri-text-world, source text-world, and target text-world of the poem:



This offers a text-world arrangement that allows the integration network to be simultaneously activated in attention, by attending to the world *as blend*, the fable world and the world-building elements within it, and the state of affairs being described, are also activated, as is the target world representation, which is less specified than the source world, but which draws its structure from it. This provides a means for mapping to proceed from the fictional source to a ‘real world’ target, because the blend can be reverse mapped onto its input space (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 49). The source world is itself founded on the blend of human and flamingo characteristics that produce the speaking flamingo and structure its human-like behaviour, and this structure too is mapped into the blend. This structure that allows the reverse mapping to occur, whereby the target world is structured in relation to human experience rather than real flamingo experience, or the experience of the blended entity of the talking flamingo.

Within both of these spaces metaphors operate slightly differently. Take for example the metaphor PINKNESS IS NAIVETY. At the level of the language we infer this metaphor from the construction ‘So pink, he is / so pink’. In order to create this metaphor we have to know the human metaphor ‘GREENNESS IS INEXPERIENCE OR NAIVETY’, which can also be further elaborated by combining a version of the conceptual metaphor ‘MORE IS UP’ (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), so an increasing amount of greenness is more inexperience. We must then map the abstraction of this: INCREASE IN COLOUR IS INCREASE IN YOUTHFULNESS, INEXPERIENCE OR NAIVETY onto the flamingo. Since flamingos are pink, increase in that colour may also signal an increase in youth or inexperience, so more pinkness is more inexperience, youth or naivety. This is also primed by the fact that earlier in the poem the birds grow ‘pale with envy’ as they understand their true position in later life. So experience and world knowledge leads to reduced pinkness.

At the level of the peri-text-world we understand the metaphor as a mapping back onto the human quality of being green, but also experience the tension in the metaphor whereby at the human scale green-ness does not refer to a physical attribute but a further metaphoric blend where ‘green’, through its association with ‘spring’ and ‘new life’ is itself metaphorically mapped onto youth and extended to inexperience and naivety, which are qualities of youth. In the flamingo’s world, the metaphor is related to a physical attribute of the young bird that signals its youth, and is extended to inexperience and naivety.

The peri-text-world is still at the text-world level, because it is constructed through the interaction with the text, and it cannot exist independently of the world projected by the narrative voice of the text, but it uses structure from the blend, which act as elaboration sites (Langacker 2009: 12-17) to fill the implicit parts of the metaphor from the reader’s contextual knowledge in order to generate the world of the target of the fable. It is therefore both a site and vehicle for co-creation of meaning between the projection hazarded (Fish 1980: 173) by the author, and the receiving reader’s recovery and representation of that projection.

A third metaphor elaborated by the poem is ‘COMMUNICATION IN NON-STANDARD ENGLISH IS A BLOCK TO ADVANCEMENT, ESCAPE, OR FLIGHT’ which is underpinned by ‘LANGUAGE IS STATUS’ and ‘HIGH STATUS LANGUAGE IS POWER AND OPPORTUNITY’. The older bird expresses this metaphor by means of a negative version whereby refusal to ‘talk proper’ results in ‘going nowhere in this world’. The dialect is the natural form of communication among the flamingos in the zoo, but it is seen as unworthy for use outside of that environment. Dialect is fine in its place, but outside of that place it is ‘improper’. This sets up a two alternative blends:

Allegory Source	Blend	Allegory Target
BC dialect in bird	BC dialect	BC dialect in human

defeats ambition to fly away	in bird/human inhibits flight/progress	inhibits progress or limits opportunity
SE variety in bird aids ambition to fly away	SE dialect in bird/human aids flight/progress	SE dialect in human helps progress or increases opportunity

However, in the final line of the poem these blends are shown to be untrue. The flamingos wings are clipped, and that is what physically inhibits flight, and it is therefore not the language choice that holds the flamingos back from flight into the wider world but something imposed upon them by an external agent. Though this agency is backgrounded in a passive construction, we know that birds have their wings clipped in order to deliberately render them flightless. This removal of the faculty of flight therefore stems from an external and deliberate interference with the faculty and mechanism of flight, which is unconnected to the faculty of language. If these flamingos were real, language could never be the issue. When we reverse map from the blend onto the input space of the human world the input space is modified (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 49). Dialect choice might be accepted as a factor in human ability to progress in the world, but the dialect choice is discounted as the real problem by the last line. We are forced to map this new constraint back onto the input space to seek the implicit metaphoric target equivalent to the state of having our ‘wings clipped’ in the human sphere, and what might be responsible for doing the clipping.

Allegory Source	Blend	Allegory Target
Clipped wings in bird renders flight impossible	‘Clipped wings’ for bird/human makes progress impossible	Elaboration site for ‘clipped wings’ as block to human ambition

From our contextual knowledge we may fill in other possibilities: inhibiting socio-economic conditions, economic neglect of the region, lack of employment opportunities, prejudice against those from a particular area because of how they speak, any of these, or a combination of them can be used to fill the elaboration site, and then these can be mapped back to the blend, where 'flight' in the human sense is understood metaphorically as 'to rise up in the world' or 'achieve one's full potential' through being further structured by 'POWER IS UP' and 'SUCCESS IS FLIGHT' metaphors which can act as further inputs to facilitate the blend.

Through these means the poem draws attention to the prejudice that using non-standard English signifies ill-educatedness, which may limit opportunity for those that speak the dialect; and that in turn, leads to a perception, even among some dialect speakers, that the dialect itself is the problem. The poem proposes that the problem is not the Black Country dialect, but the lack of opportunity for those who speak it to succeed on terms other than those externally imposed upon them, through lack of investment, prevailing socio-economic conditions, or the removal of opportunities to succeed while retaining their own forms of expression. Because the target of the metaphor is never stated, it forces the reader to supply the metaphoric equivalent of 'having your wings clipped', and in doing so they may consider a range of possibilities. The very act of considering these possibilities affords the reader the opportunity to consider the range of disadvantage that may exist, and the prejudices that may cause them.

4. Conclusion

In the analysis I have shown that the poem has a complex text-world and blending structure underpinning a deceptively simple story. In order to understand the story as allegory, three versions of the text-world system must be created, and must be stable in attention, because they are simultaneously built and developed, though they have different ontological status. The

source system is initially foregrounded due to the presentation of that world system by the narrative, while the blend is backgrounded. However, as the reader realises that the poem is an allegory, the blend is foregrounded, while the target world emerges as the reader begins to attach candidate structures that fulfil elaboration sites in the blend complex. This brings the target world forward in attention. It is possible to attentionally toggle between source, target and blend world systems as the target world emerges, in order to conceptually focus on the connections being made. The main text-world is a deictic world projected by the narrator, who is also a character in the world they project, the world is 'real' for them. The reader however knows that the world they project is a fiction, that the narrator is a character being used to narrate the fiction, and that the world they narrate is the source world for an allegory, which must have a target world. Because the peri-text-world contains the representations of the source and target worlds, and their functions in the allegory, this world can be seen as surrounding and encapsulating both, but it also cannot exist without the allegory it is created to represent. It can function as a conceptual focus for attention, that allows both the target and source worlds of the allegory to be simultaneously attended and to be co-activated, because they are in effect world-building elements of the peri-text-world. This offers a text-world equivalent to the coactivation of the blending network, and a world-building mechanism that allows for the building of allegorical target worlds through the simultaneous structuring of the source world, and the world as blend that the peri-text-world represents. It also offers a means of analysis that can track the function of the levels of narration in creating an allegorical blend and how that blend can help to map back and constrain the search for the allegorical target. Neither narratological analysis that focuses solely on the levels of narration nor blending or text-world theory alone could capture these processes in their entirety.

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