**Women, magic, and dangerous things: metaphors in “Chocolat” by Joanne Harris**

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In literature, metaphor plays an important role in creating a system of images and the emotional and expressive overtones of a text. It can also be an indispensable tool of character presentation, allowing the reader to see the author’s attitude to the book’s protagonist or antagonist, as well as minor characters.

The writing style of Joanne Harris, whose novel is analysed in the present paper, is manifested, among other things, in the conceptual metaphors she expertly uses to convey the subtle features of the characters' appearances and personalities.

Joanne Harris is a contemporary writer of mixed French-English origin. Her novels are set mainly in rural France, and the central elements are often food and magic. This is the case with the novel “Chocolat” (1999).

 In the novel, the two main characters Vianne Rocher (chocolatier) and Francis Reynaud (the village priest) are consistently contrasted. Vianne opens a chocolate shop during Lent, which causes Reynaud to protest, but in time her shop becomes the centre of life in the village. Vianne has magical powers, but uses them only to lift her customers’ spirits through food. Reynaud regards the joy of life that Vianne radiates as sinful and her influence as corrupting. The narratives of both characters allow us to learn their views on life and mindset. They perceive each other as enemies and engage in a war seeking to overpower the opponent, but in the end Vianne seems to get the upper hand.

The character oppositions that structure the novel are largely conveyed through the various metaphorical mappings that dominate their narratives.

Vianne Rocher has been on the road since her childhood, first with her mother, then with her daughter. The wind, which is personified in the novel, controls her journey and choice of places and stands for change. The metaphor of LIFE IS A JOURNEY plays out both literally and figuratively in Vianne’s case.

Food and cooking, making chocolate in particular, plays a major role in Vianne's narrative. She perceives cookery as a form of magic and alchemy that allows her to understand people (the conceptual metaphor of FOOD AS MAGIC is introduced). Vianne does not use her magical abilities to influence others, but instead uses her instincts to offer customers treats that reflect their character and bring out the best in people. Food also serves as markers of Vianne's journey as she associates recipes with her past.

Francis Reynaud, on the other hand, sees food as sinful and tempting, in contrast to Vianne Rocher, who celebrates it. Reynaud regards himself as morally superior for fasting during Lent, while Vianne uses cooking to build relationships and bring comfort to others.

Reynaud loathes people, animals, and plants, while Vianne loves and sympathizes with everyone. Reynaud is annoyed by the invasive nature of plants and wants to get rid of them, while Vianne appreciates their vitality and spontaneity. These ideas are conveyed with the help of the following metaphors: PEOPLE ARE PLANTS/WEEDS that need to be uprooted, weeded out, THE WORLD IS A GARDEN that needs care, IDEAS ARE SEEDS that can grow in people’s minds and spread around, PEOPLE ARE PLANTS WITH ROOTS that develop a connection to a place and people around.

Rocher and Reynaud see each other as enemies, but in different ways. Reynaud views Rocher as a competitor who can undermine his authority, while Vianne sees Reynaud as the Black Man, a personification of death and loss. Vianne's perception of Reynaud as the Black Man evolves, as she realizes that for her he represents fear of the unknown, and she eventually acknowledges that everyone has their own Black Man. Vianne may also be Reynaud's Black Man, as she embodies his own fears and "reaches" into his mind. Towards the end, Vianne understands that her fears are gone, and the Black Man is just a "carnival mask". [Harris 1999: 369]

Joanne Harris uses the metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS to characterize Reynaud as "feline" [Ibid: 14], a "black bird" [51], an "oyster/razor" [52-53], a "polite frog" [154], a "dog tormented by wasps" [156], and a "cunning pig" [357]. Vianne is seen by Reynaud as a "snake/insect" [73], her chocolaterie as a "wasps' nest", a "parasite" that invades his "garden" [353].

Reynaud perceives his interactions with Vianne as a battle and a crusade, using war metaphors (RELATIONSHIPS ARE WARS). He views the growth of Vianne's authority as a "disease" [186] and sees her chocolaterie as a temptation causing indisposition (TEMPTATION IS DISEASE). Reynaud experiences an inner battle to subdue his primitive desires, while Vianne can reveal his weaknesses. Ultimately, Vianne wins as Reynaud leaves town and she celebrates the Chocolate Festival.

To sum up, the key source domains of metaphors used for characterization in “Chocolate” are FOOD, MAGIC, ANIMALS, PLANTS, WAR and HEALTH. The same source domains are drawn upon to portray Vianne Rocher and Francis Reynaud, but to different effect, which enables the author to contrast the two main characters.

Joanne Harris. Chocolat. 1999