

The Conceptual Metaphors Of Happiness In “Here Comes The Sun” By George Harrison

Vuong Huu Vinh

Dong A University, Da Nang, Vietnam

DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.14.04.2024.p14819
[10.29322/IJSRP.14.04.2023.p14819](https://doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.14.04.2023.p14819)

Paper Received Date: 08th March 2024
Paper Acceptance Date: 09th April 2024
Paper Publication Date: 19th April 2024

Abstract- This article delves into the conceptual metaphors of “Happiness” in George Harrison's song “Here Comes the Sun.” Utilizing a focused analysis of the song's lyrical content, it seeks to decode the layers of meaning encapsulated within its verses. Through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory, the research elucidates the various source domains used to map onto the target domain of “Happiness.” The investigation reveals how such metaphors not only deepen the emotional resonance of the song but also reflect broader cultural perceptions of happiness in music.

Index Terms- Conceptual metaphors, happiness, the sun, lyrics, happiness

I. INTRODUCTION

TI.1. Background to the study

This research delves into the conceptual metaphors embedded within George Harrison's iconic song, “Here Comes the Sun,” with a specific focus on the theme of happiness. The song, renowned for its uplifting melody and optimistic lyrics, serves as a fertile ground for exploring how linguistic expressions translate complex emotional experiences into understandable and relatable narratives. By applying the theoretical framework developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their seminal work, “Metaphors We Live By,” this study aims to dissect the layers of metaphorical meaning that contribute to the song's enduring appeal and its ability to evoke a sense of “happiness”.

“Here Comes the Sun” is more than just a musical composition; it is a rich tapestry of conceptual metaphors that paint happiness not just as an emotion, but as a transformative experience. Through a meticulous analysis of the song's lyrics, this research seeks to uncover how Harrison utilizes the natural phenomenon of the sun rising as a powerful metaphorical construct to signify the emergence from darkness into light, symbolizing hope, rebirth, and the rejuvenation of the human spirit. This investigation will explore the systematic mapping between the source domain (the sun and its attributes) and the target domain (the concept of happiness), revealing the cognitive processes that enable listeners to conceptualize happiness in a nuanced and multidimensional manner.

Furthermore, this study will examine the broader cultural and psychological implications of these metaphors, considering how they reflect and shape our perceptions of happiness. By

situating “Here Comes the Sun” within the context of Harrison's personal struggles and the socio-political climate of its time, this research will also shed light on the universality and specificity of happiness as conceptualized through metaphor.

In doing so, this research contributes to the expanding field of cognitive linguistics by illustrating the pivotal role of metaphor in emotional expression and communication. It offers insights into the ways in which metaphorical language facilitates a deeper connection between individual experiences and collective understandings of complex concepts like happiness. Through the lens of “Here Comes the Sun,” this study underscores the profound impact of conceptual metaphors in not only shaping artistic expression but also in enriching our emotional landscapes.

I.1.1. Author biography

George Harrison (1943-2001) was an English musician, singer, and songwriter, renowned as a member of the legendary band The Beatles. Born in Liverpool, Harrison joined The Beatles in 1958 and made significant contributions to the band through songwriting and guitar playing. He created a series of hits such as “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” and “Here Comes the Sun”.

Beyond his career with The Beatles, Harrison also had a successful solo career, with albums like “All Things Must Pass” (1970), highly acclaimed both musically and artistically. He also engaged in charitable projects and music production.

Harrison was known for his adherence to Hinduism and interest in spirituality. He passed away in 2001 after a battle with cancer. George Harrison's musical legacy and influence continue to thrive through generations, contributing to the richness and diversity of global music culture.

I.1.2. Song lyrics

Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo, here comes the sun
And I say it's all right
Little darling, it's been a long cold lonely winter
Little darling, it feels like years since it's been here
Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo, here comes the sun
And I say it's all right
Little darling, the smiles returning to the faces
Little darling, it seems like years since it's been here
Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo, here comes the sun
And I say it's all right
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes

Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Little darling, I feel that ice is slowly melting
Little darling, it seems like years since it's been clear
Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo, here comes the sun
And I say it's all right
Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo, here comes the sun
It's all right
It's all right

1.2. Theoretical background

1.2.1. Theoretical background of conceptual metaphor

The exploration of conceptual metaphor (CM) originated in linguistics, cognitive science, and philosophy, achieving significance with George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's publication of "Metaphors We Live By" in 1980 (Lakoff, 1980). This era marked the rise of cognitive linguistics, a paradigm that highlights the significance of cognitive processes and mental structures in understanding language. Central to the development of this paradigm were Lakoff and Johnson, who posited that metaphors transcend mere linguistic ornamentation, serving as essential tools for grasping abstract concepts through the mechanism of "conceptual metaphor." This concept bridges tangible experiences with abstract ideas. Their pioneering work laid the groundwork for further research into how metaphors differ across languages and cultures and their impact on cognition, communication, and societal norms. The investigation into conceptual metaphors has broadened, influencing various disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, literature, and communication studies, and has been applied to analyze phenomena from political rhetoric to marketing strategies. CM is formed based on human experiences with the world, wherein one domain (usually the concrete) is utilized to comprehend another domain (typically more abstract); the former is referred to as the source domain, while the latter is called the target domain. This encompasses Lakoff's foundational concepts on cognitive models and modeling, concepts and conceptualization, embodiment, image schemas, mapping and mixing metaphors (Raymond W. Gibbs, 2016), and the process for identifying CM of Pragglejaz (2007) (Pragglejaz, 2007).

Despite its widespread acceptance, the field has undergone critical examination and refinement, addressing the diversity of metaphors among cultures, the physical basis of metaphorical thinking, and how cultural contexts shape metaphorical interpretation. The contributions to the study of conceptual metaphors have significantly enhanced our comprehension of the interplay between language and thought, shedding light on metaphorical thinking's cognitive underpinnings and emphasizing metaphors' integral role in human understanding, communication, and cultural expression.

1.2.2. Perspectives of "Happiness"

"Happiness," a crucial aspect of human experience, often reflects satisfaction, affection, and transcendence in life. The concept of "Happiness" varies from an individual perspective, based on values, beliefs, and personal goals. Societally and culturally, this notion is often influenced by communal values and perspectives, including standards of success, family, and

relationships. In some cultures, "Happiness" is associated with material success, while for others, it signifies spiritual peace. According to the philosopher Aristoteles, "Happiness must be something ultimate and fulfilling, the goal of all actions that are done and can be done. He also believed that "Happiness" is what humans seek and choose for its own sake, not for any other purpose, and that "Happiness" alone makes life desirable and devoid of wanting anything else (Aristoteles, 1996).

According to Thomson in "Collins Cobuild Advanced Dictionary of American English" (2007) (Thomson, 2007), happiness is someone who is happy as having feelings of pleasure, typically because something nice has happened or because they are satisfied with their life. Moreover, the "Oxford Learner's Dictionary" (2003) (Hornby, 2003) outlines several meanings of happiness, including:

- a. feeling or expressing pleasure, contentment,
- b. giving or causing pleasure,
- c. feeling satisfied that something is good, right, etc.,
- d. full of joy,
- e. pleased or very willing to do something,
- f. fortunate, lucky,
- g. well suited to the situation pleasing (words, ideas, behavior)

Based on these perspectives, this article considers "Happiness" in its various emotional manifestations such as warmth, safety, fairness, sharing, peace, closeness, satisfaction, perfection, enthusiasm, optimism, luck, sweetness, enjoyment, comfort, freedom, and fulfillment.

1.3. Purposes of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore and elucidate source domains of conceptual metaphors to express "happiness" as embedded in George Harrison's song, "Here Comes the Sun." The second purpose is to identify the frequency of conceptual metaphors and the third purpose is to interpret cultural significance as to explore the broader cultural and psychological implications of the song's metaphors for happiness or provide a comprehensive understanding of how conceptual metaphors serve as a bridge between language and emotion, particularly in the context of music, and how they play a critical role in shaping our experience and interpretation of happiness.

1.4. Research questions

With the above mentioned purposes, the study addresses the following research questions:

- 1.4.1. *What are the conceptual metaphors of "happiness" found in the song "Here comes the sun"?*
- 1.4.2. *How do these metaphors contribute to the overall meaning and emotional impact of the song?*

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The exploration of conceptual metaphors in literature and music has garnered significant scholarly attention, providing deep insights into how abstract concepts, such as happiness, are represented and understood through metaphorical language. This literature review contextualizes the study of George Harrison's "Here Comes the Sun" within the broader academic discourse on

conceptual metaphors, particularly focusing on happiness as a thematic element in musical compositions.

Metaphors in Music

Music, with its rich emotive and expressive capacity, provides a fertile ground for metaphorical exploration. Scholars like Zbikowski (2002) (Zbikowski, 2002) have extended the application of CMT into the realm of music, suggesting that metaphorical thinking is instrumental in how listeners interpret and find meaning in musical compositions. This intersection between music and metaphor has been further explored in studies focusing on how specific emotions are conveyed through musical metaphors, with research by Gibbs (1999) (Raymond W. Gibbs, 1999) and Koelsch (2015) (Koelsch, 2015) highlighting the cognitive processes involved in musical emotion perception.

“Happiness” in Music

The representation of happiness in music has been a subject of interest across various studies, examining how happiness is not only expressed through lyrics but also through musical elements such as melody, harmony, and rhythm. Juslin & Laukka (2003) (Laukka, 2003) discuss the psychological mechanisms by which music induces emotional responses, including happiness, emphasizing the role of musical structure and performance in eliciting specific feelings. Moreover, studies by Sloboda and Juslin (2001) (Juslin, 2001) delve into the specifics of how musical phrases and structures evoke happiness, suggesting a complex interaction between expectation, cultural conditioning, and individual experience.

Metaphorical Representations of Happiness

Within the specific context of metaphorical representations of happiness, research has often focused on linguistic expressions, with less attention given to how these metaphors are manifested in music. The work of Kövecses (1991) (Kövecses, 1991) on emotion metaphors provides a comprehensive overview of how happiness is conceptualized across different cultures, offering insights into the universal and culturally specific aspects of happiness metaphors. This sets the stage for examining “Here Comes the Sun” as a case study in the musical expression of happiness, bridging the gap between linguistic metaphor theory and musical analysis.

“Here Comes the Sun” and Conceptual Metaphors

While direct analyses of “Here Comes the Sun” in the context of CMT are sparse, the song's enduring popularity and its optimistic portrayal of happiness through the metaphor of the sun suggest a rich area for exploration. This research seeks to contribute to the existing literature by specifically examining how Harrison uses conceptual metaphors to weave a narrative of “happiness”, aligning with broader cultural and psychological perceptions of these concepts.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1. The predominant source domains expressing “happiness” found in the song “Here comes the sun”?

In “Here comes the sun,” a timeless anthem by The Beatles, George Harrison encapsulates a profound narrative of hope,

renewal, and the triumphant return of happiness. This song, with its soothing melody and uplifting lyrics, serves as a beacon of optimism, guiding listeners through the metaphorical darkness into the light. Through an intricate tapestry of metaphors, Harrison weaves together natural phenomena and human emotions, creating a universal message that resonates deeply with anyone who has faced adversity. The song masterfully employs the imagery of light, seasonal change, awakening, melting ice, and smiling faces to illustrate the journey from despair to happiness. Each metaphor, rich in both literal and symbolic meaning, reveals the nuanced layers of human experience - highlighting the transformative power of positivity and the resilience of the human spirit. As we delve into these metaphors, we uncover the essence of happiness as portrayed in “Here Comes the Sun,” exploring how each metaphor serves as a conceptual link between our lived experiences and the natural world's cycles. This exploration not only enriches our understanding of the song's lyrics but also illuminates the broader human condition, showcasing how art can mirror, articulate, and influence our perceptions of happiness as Happiness as Light/Sunshine; Happiness as Spring/Summer; Happiness as Awakening; Happiness as Melting Ice and Happiness as a Smile:

3.1.1. Happiness as Light/Sunshine

Within the melodic lines of “Here Comes the Sun,” a poignant anthem by The Beatles, lies a profound exploration of the theme “Happiness as Light/Sunshine.” The song, with its gentle refrain:

(1). “*Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo, here comes the sun, And I say it's all right,*” serves not merely as an ode to the dawn of a new day but as a metaphorical canvas portraying the resurgence of joy and optimism after times of adversity. This passage is emblematic of a deeper, universal truth: the transformative power of light and its intrinsic association with happiness and renewal.

The song's metaphorical use of sunlight as a symbol of hope and constancy illustrates a fundamental truth: light, universally seen as essential for life and growth, can dispel the figurative darkness of challenging times, guiding us towards a state of renewal. “Here Comes the Sun” thus serves as a powerful reminder of the human capacity for resilience and the possibility of joy returning after periods of sorrow. It celebrates the idea that happiness has the ability to illuminate our lives, warming us from within and lighting the way forward. As a result, the song stands as an enduring anthem of hope, highlighting the transformative power of light and its role in leading us back to happiness and renewal.

3.1.2. Happiness as Spring/Summer

(2). “*Little darling, it's been a long cold lonely winter*” metaphorically captures the essence of overcoming adversity, symbolizing the transition from the desolation of winter to the warmth and renewal of spring and summer. This lyric not only reflects the physical change from cold to warm weather but also represents a deeper metaphorical journey from hardship to happiness. The end of winter, with its imagery of melting snow and budding flowers, signals a period of awakening and new possibilities, paralleling the human experience of moving from challenging times to a state of joy and rejuvenation. The contrast

between the cold, solitary winter and the communal warmth of spring and summer serves as a powerful symbol of personal and collective renewal. It suggests that just as the natural world undergoes a transformation, individuals too can experience a rebirth, emerging from the metaphorical winters of their lives into periods of growth and vitality. This metaphor extends to highlight the resilience of the human spirit and the cyclical nature of life, where moments of difficulty give way to times of happiness. "Happiness as Spring/Summer" in the song is thus a profound reflection on the cycles of life, emphasizing the enduring hope and the potential for renewal after hardship. It reassures that after every winter, spring comes, promising growth, happiness, and a reconnection with the joy of life and community, reminding us of the inevitable return of brighter days.

3.1.3. Happiness as Melting Ice

(3). *"Little darling, I feel that ice is slowly melting"* metaphorically captures the thawing of emotional coldness and the renewal of warmth and connection. Beyond its literal meaning of ice transforming from solid to liquid, it symbolizes the human spirit's resilience in overcoming hardship and emotional isolation. This metaphor reflects a universal journey from a rigid state of being, characterized by difficulties and emotional withdrawal, towards a state of warmth, fluidity, and open communication. It suggests that just as the warmth of the sun melts ice, so can positivity and understanding melt away the barriers of pain and misunderstanding, facilitating the flow of emotions and rejuvenating relationships. This transition signifies a move from isolation to happiness, highlighting the potential for growth, healing, and joy even in the coldest hearts. The melting ice serves as a powerful symbol of emotional and relational transformation, suggesting that warmth and light can break through isolation, promoting a season of renewal and connection. This imagery not only deepens the song's message but also provides a hopeful outlook on overcoming personal challenges and fostering positive change in our lives.

3.1.4. Happiness as a Smile

(4) *"Little darling, the smiles returning to the faces"* transcends the simple act of smiling to represent the revival of happiness and contentment. Smiling, a universal sign of joy, marks the reawakening of positive emotions after difficult times. This metaphor captures the journey from hardship to happiness, where smiles serve as powerful indicators of well-being and the ability to overcome challenges. Smiles have a transformative effect, capable of changing atmospheres and connecting people, embodying both personal recovery and collective joy. Their contagious nature fosters a shared experience of happiness, illustrating how individual triumphs over sadness contribute to a broader sense of unity and joy. The act of smiling symbolizes a significant shift from despair to happiness, acting as a beacon of hope and resilience. Thus, within the context of the song, the emergence of smiles signals more than just personal contentment; it heralds a collective resurgence of joy, emphasizing the profound impact of this simple gesture in uniting individuals and heralding a new beginning of shared happiness and warmth. It underscores that smiles, following life's challenges, can bring light and communal joy back into our lives.

3.2. The contribution of the conceptual metaphors of happiness to the overall meaning and emotional impact of the song

The conceptual metaphors of happiness weave a narrative that resonates with listeners on multiple levels. They contribute to the song's overall meaning by depicting happiness not just as an individual experience but as a collective journey toward light, warmth, and renewal. The emotional impact of the song is profound, as it not only offers solace and hope to those facing adversity but also celebrates the indomitable nature of the human spirit to find happiness in the wake of challenges. Through its poetic use of metaphors, "Here Comes the Sun" becomes an anthem of optimism, resilience, and the enduring power of joy.

IV. CONCLUSION

The research on "Here Comes the Sun" by The Beatles reveals how George Harrison's strategic use of conceptual metaphors of happiness significantly enriches the song's narrative, transforming it into a powerful anthem of hope, renewal, and joy. Through the metaphors of Light/Sunshine; Spring/Summer; Melting Ice; and Smiles, the song articulates a universal journey from adversity to happiness, resonating deeply with listeners facing challenges. These metaphors not only highlight the transformative power of nature and human resilience but also underscore the collective aspect of experiencing and overcoming hardship. The song's emotional impact is profound, offering both solace and celebration of the human spirit's capacity to find light after darkness. In conclusion, "Here Comes the Sun" stands as an enduring testament to optimism and the indomitable nature of joy, demonstrating how art can beautifully encapsulate and influence our perceptions of happiness.

REFERENCES

- [1] Aristotle. (1996). *The Nicomachean Ethics* (H. Rackham, Trans.): Wordsworth classics of world literature.
- [2] Hornby, A. S. (Ed.) (2003). Oxford University Press.
- [3] Juslin, S. a. (2001). *Psychological Perspectives On Music And Emotion*.
- [4] Koelsch, S. (2015). Music-evoked emotions: Principles, brain correlates, and implications for therapy. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1337(1).
- [5] Kövecses, Z. (1991). *The Conceptual Structure of Happiness*.
- [6] Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. . (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- [7] Laukka, J. (2003). *Communication of Emotions in Vocal Expression and Music Performance: Different Channels, Same Code?*
- [8] Pragglejazz. (2007). MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 22, 1–39.
- [9] Raymond W. Gibbs, J. (1999). *The Poetics of mind: Figurative thought, language, and understanding*. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, 1701-1704.
- [10] Raymond W. Gibbs, J. (2016). *Mixing Metaphor: University of California*.
- [11] Thomson. (Ed.) (2007). Harper Collins Publisher.
- [12] Zbikowski, L. M. (2002). *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis*.

AUTHORS

First Author – Vuong Huu Vinh – Dong A University, Da Nang, Vietn

