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# Conceptual metaphors and transnational cultural reception in the film *My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday*

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**Abstract** *Contemporary Japanese films function not only as entertainment media but also as a means of disseminating cultural values that can be received by audiences across national borders. One element that facilitates such transnational cultural reception is conceptual metaphor, which enables cultural messages to acquire universal meanings. My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday (Boku wa Ashita, Kinō no Kimi to Date Suru), directed by Takahiro Miki, combines Japanese cultural identity with universal themes of love, time, life, memory, and loss. This study aims to analyze the conceptual metaphors in the film and explain their role in constructing universal themes and motifs, as well as examine audience reception of these themes and motifs as part of the process of meaning-making in a transnational cultural context. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method, drawing on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Wolfgang Iser's (1978) reception perspective. The data consist of dialogues, visual representations, and audience comments. The findings reveal the metaphorical mappings Love Is A Journey, Life is A Journey, Time is A Moving Object dan Memory is A Container which shape the narrative structure and reinforce the film's emotional meanings. The temporal structure, which creates uncertainty, also encourages audiences to actively construct meaning. These findings indicate that conceptual metaphors serve as a bridge between Japanese cultural experiences and universal themes, enabling the film to be received and interpreted within a transnational cultural context.*

***Keywords***: *Conceptual Metaphor, audience reception, transnational culture.*

## INTRODUCTION

The development of the film industry has made audiovisual works an important medium for the movement of culture across geographical boundaries. Films function not only as entertainment but also as cultural texts that convey the values, experiences, identities, and perspectives of particular societies to audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds. In a transnational context, films can retain characteristics of their culture of origin while simultaneously presenting themes and motifs that can be recognized by audiences across cultures. Themes such as love, time, life, memory, encounters, and loss are relatively universal because they are associated with human experiences that transcend cultural boundaries. Nevertheless, universal themes do not necessarily produce uniform interpretations. The meaning of a text is constructed through the relationship between the structure of the text and the interpretive activities of its readers or viewers (Iser, 1978). Therefore, it is important to examine not only how a film represents universal themes but also how these themes are constructed through language and narrative structure and received by audiences from different cultural backgrounds.

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The Japanese film *My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday* (*Boku wa Ashita, Kinō no Kimi to Date Suru*), directed by Takahiro Miki and produced in 2016, is relevant to examining this issue. The film is a Japanese romantic drama adapted from a novel by Takafumi Nanatsuki and released in Japan on December 17, 2016, by Toho (Japan Film Database, 2016). It portrays the romantic relationship between Takatoshi and Emi; however, their relationship is shaped by an unusual temporal condition. Emi comes from a world in which time flows in the opposite direction to Takatoshi's: while Takatoshi moves toward the future, Emi moves toward the past. Thus, an event that is part of Takatoshi's future has already become part of Emi's past. This temporal structure constructs experiences of time, love, life, memory, encounters, and loss that can be understood through conceptual metaphors.

The urgency of this research lies in the effort to understand how the universality of themes in transnational films is conceptually constructed through metaphor and how such universality is negotiated through the process of audience reception across cultures. This issue is important because metaphors may have relatively universal conceptual foundations, while their interpretations can vary according to cultural contexts. One mechanism that enables abstract concepts in films to be understood through concrete experiences is conceptual metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explain that metaphor is not merely a rhetorical device or a figure of speech but part of the human conceptual system that enables people to understand one concept through another concept that is more concrete and closely related to everyday experience.

Conceptual metaphor maps a source domain onto a target domain, allowing concrete experiences to be used to understand more abstract concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This concept is employed to analyze *My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday* because time, love, and memory can be conceptualized through concrete experiences involving movement, journeys, direction, space, and existence. The film's temporal structure allows time to be understood not merely as a chronological sequence but as an experience involving direction and particular relationships between the past and the future. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor framework, *Love Is A Journey, Life Is A Journey, Time is A Moving Object, dan Memory Is A Container* are employed as categories of metaphorical mappings. These categories are used to identify how abstract concepts such as time, love, life, and memory are understood through more concrete domains of experience, such as journeys, movement, direction, space, and containment. Furthermore, figures of speech such as metaphor, personification, and simile are frequently employed in Japanese literary works to create distinctive expressions through which cultural meanings and perspectives may be conveyed (Fairuz, 2023).

In addition, the transnational dimension of the film is examined through audience reception. Audiences do not passively receive the meaning of a film but actively connect information, interpret events, and fill in aspects that are not explicitly presented. Iser (1978) views reading as an interaction between the structure of the text and the reader's activity. The concept of the implied reader refers to the textual structure that provides certain conditions enabling readers to actualize meaning, while gaps, or textual blanks, encourage audiences to actively construct relationships between the temporal

and emotional experiences of the characters. The concept of indeterminacy indicates the presence of elements that allow for more than one possible interpretation (Iser, 1978).

Iser's framework is applied to this film because its temporal structure is nonlinear. Information concerning the relationship between Takatoshi and Emi is revealed gradually, requiring audiences to reconstruct the relationships among events and the experiences of the two characters. Such a structure creates gaps that require active interpretive engagement from viewers. Some viewers may focus more strongly on emotional aspects such as love and loss, whereas others may emphasize the complexity of the temporal structure and the causal relationships within the narrative. The concept of the implied reader is used to explain how the film's structure guides audiences to connect different pieces of information and construct an understanding of the narrative as a whole.

State of the art of this research lies at the intersection of conceptual metaphor studies, film studies, and reception theory. Metaphor studies have developed from an understanding of metaphor as a figure of speech into an understanding of metaphor as a conceptual mechanism that connects concrete experiences with abstract concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In film studies, conceptual metaphors can be used to reveal the construction of meaning through narrative and audiovisual elements, while Iser's reception theory emphasizes the role of audiences in constructing meaning through the concepts of the *implied reader*, *gaps*, and concretization (Iser, 1978).

The research gap lies in the limited number of studies that integrate metaphorical construction in film with audience reception within a transnational cultural context. The novelty of this research lies in combining conceptual metaphor analysis and reception theory to explain how universal themes in *My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday* are constructed and interpreted by audiences within a transnational cultural context.

This research focuses on two main issues: (1) how conceptual metaphors representing time, love, life, and memory construct universal themes and motifs in the film; and (2) how audience reception of these universal themes and motifs demonstrates the process of meaning-making in a transnational cultural context. This research is expected to contribute to cognitive linguistics, stylistics, Japanese film studies, and transnational cultural studies by demonstrating the relationship between metaphorical construction, the universality of themes, and audiences' interpretive activities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Previous Studies*

Research on metaphor and figurative language has been widely conducted in Japanese linguistics and literary studies. Fairuz's study of figurative expressions in Japanese novels demonstrates that metaphor, personification, and simile can construct meanings related to nature, time, and human experience (Fairuz, 2023). In addition, the study by Fairuz and Sari (2025) on Natsume Sōseki's novel *Kokoro* shows that figurative language in Sōseki's work can strengthen the representation of situations and emotional aspects.

Palandi (2011) explains that metaphors in Japanese are often used to convey emotional and philosophical meanings indirectly. However, relatively few studies have

focused specifically on *My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday* as their primary object of analysis. Furthermore, studies that explicitly examine the relationship between conceptual metaphors, universal themes and motifs, and audience reception in a transnational context remain limited.

### *Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson*

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphor is not merely understood as a figure of speech but as a conceptual mechanism that enables people to understand one experience in terms of another. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 5) state that "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another." Thus, abstract concepts such as time and love can be understood through more concrete experiences.

In this study, Love Is A Journey, Life Is A Journey, Time is A Moving Object, dan Memory Is A Container are employed as analytical categories based on the principles of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. These categories are used to identify how abstract experiences are represented and conceptualized through more concrete domains in the film. This approach is also consistent with developments in metaphor studies in film, which demonstrate that conceptual metaphors can be realized through verbal, visual, narrative, and audiovisual elements (Forceville, 2016; Coëgnarts, 2017). This perspective is further supported by Landau (2018), who argues that conceptual metaphor theory can explain how people understand the meaning of life, purpose, identity, and the connections between experiences over time. Metaphors help people make sense of abstract ideas by relating them to more concrete experiences (Landau, 2018).

### *Wolfgang Iser's Reception Theory*

This research also employs Wolfgang Iser's (1978) reception theory, particularly the concepts of the implied reader, gaps, and indeterminacy. Iser views meaning as the result of an interaction between the structure of a text and the reader's activity in filling in elements that are not completely determined by the text. In the context of film, these concepts can be applied to narrative structures involving incomplete information, shifts in perspective, and temporal relationships that require audiences to engage in interpretation. Iser's concepts are used to examine how audiences actualize the meaning of a film based on their experiences, knowledge, and cultural backgrounds. Thus, themes such as time and love can be regarded as universal themes, while their meanings may be negotiated differently by audiences within a transnational cultural context.

## METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a narrative analysis orientation to describe and interpret conceptual metaphors and audience reception of the film *My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday*. A qualitative approach is used because the study focuses on meaning-making and interpretation of the film text and audience responses (Creswell, 2014). The research was conducted in 2026 and is library-based and digitally mediated. The primary data source is Takahiro Miki's *My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday* (*Boku wa Ashita, Kinō no Kimi to Date Suru*) (2016), while supporting data consist of

books, journal articles, conference proceedings, previous studies, and audience comments available on film platforms and online media.

Audience reception data were selected based on three criteria: (1) audience responses that directly address the film; (2) interpretations or responses concerning themes and experiences relevant to the research focus; and (3) the language or cultural origin of the reviewer being identifiable when required for comparative analysis.

Data were collected using the observation and note-taking technique. The film was viewed repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the plot, characters, relationships among the characters, temporal structure, dialogues, and the context of each scene. Relevant dialogues, narratives, scenes, and visual representations were then recorded and classified according to the metaphorical patterns identified.

The data were analyzed in several stages. First, metaphors were identified based on mappings between source and target domains. Second, the metaphorical patterns were interpreted to explain the construction of universal themes and motifs, particularly time, love, life, and memory. Third, audience reception data were analyzed using Iser's (1978) theory, particularly the concepts of the *implied reader*, *gaps*, and *indeterminacy*, to explain how audiences fill in elements that are not fully determined by the text and construct meaning through their interpretive activities. Finally, Japanese and international audience responses were analyzed to identify similarities and differences in interpretation within a transnational cultural context. The findings were subsequently organized and presented based on the results of the analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Result*

The analysis shows that conceptual metaphors play an important role in constructing abstract experiences of time, love, and memory through more concrete experiences. Based on the mappings between the *source domain* and the *target domain*, four metaphorical categories were identified: Love Is A Journey, Life Is A Journey, Time Is A Moving Object, And Memory Is A Container. These categories contribute to the construction of universal themes and motifs, particularly *love, time,* and *memory*.

The metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY is represented through expressions associated with movement, distance, separation, and connection, particularly 「戻っていって」(*modotte itte/*keep going back), 「すれ違っていく」(*surechigatte iku/*keep passing each other ), 「橋と橋を結んだ」(*hashi to hashi o musunda/*connected one bridge to another), 「繋がってる」(*tsunagatteru/* are connected), and 同じ距離」(*onaji kyori/* the same distance), 「ぐるぐる回って」(*guruguru mawatte/*keep going around in circles), and 「近づけない」(*chikazukenai/*cannot get closer)

The metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY appears through the expression 「辿ってきた (*tadotte kita/*have followed the path) and 辿っていく (*tadotte iku/*the path we have followed), which indicates movement through experiences across different temporal points.

The metaphor TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT is identified through 逆向きに進んだ時間」(*gyaku-muki ni susunda jikan/*time that moved in opposite directions) and 「時間の端と端」(*jikan no hashi to hashi/* the two ends of time), which represent time as moving in particular directions and having spatial boundaries.

Meanwhile, MEMORY IS A CONTAINER is represented through the expression 忘れない (wasurenai/dont forget). which indicates the preservation of a person or experience in memory.

The findings indicate that the four mappings organize the film's representations of love, life, time, and memory through concrete experiential domains.

Together, the metaphors form an interconnected meaning system that links the narrative structure with universal themes and motifs of love, time, life, memory, togetherness, and loss.

## DISCUSSION

### *Conceptual Metaphor as a Construct of Universal Themes and Motifs*

The findings demonstrate that conceptual metaphor functions as an important mechanism for organizing the film's abstract themes through concrete human experiences. In accordance with Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the mappings do not merely decorate the film's language but provide conceptual structures through which audiences can understand abstract experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY conceptualizes love as an experience involving movement, direction, separation, and connection. The source domain Journey provides an experiential structure for understanding the target domain Love, particularly the relationship between Emi and Takatoshi. Katz and Taylor (2008) explain that the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY represents life as a journey along a path, with events organized sequentially across the life course. They also identify LOVE IS A JOURNEY as a more specific metaphor related to this broader conceptualization of life. Similarly, Knepper (2019) explains that the basic structure of a journey includes a starting point, a destination, a path, obstacles, experiences along the way, and fellow travelers. In the film, these journey-related elements can be applied to the relationship between the two characters, whose love develops through movement toward and away from each other. This conceptualization can be seen in the following dialogue:

**Dialogue 1 [94.46-95.32]**




Emi : 私、これから少しずつ、あなたの過去に戻っていって、あなたと恋人じゃなくなっていくんだね。すれ違っていくんだね。

*Watashi, kore kara sukoshi zutsu, anata no kako ni modotte itte, anata to koibito janaku natte ikun da ne. Surechigatte ikun da ne.*

"From now on, little by little, I will return to your past, and we will no longer be lovers, right? We will gradually drift apart, right?"

Takatoshi : すれ違ってなんかない。僕たちはすれ違ってない。橋と橋を結んだ輪になって、一つに繋がってるんだ。」

*Surechigatte nanka nai. Bokutachi wa surechigattenai. Hashi to hashi o musunda wa ni natte, hitotsu ni tsunagatterun da*.

"We are not drifting apart at all. We are not separating. We have become a circle that connects one bridge to another, joining us as one."

The expressions 「戻っていって」(*modotte itte/*keep going back), 「すれ違っていく」(*surechigatte iku/* keep passing each other), 「橋と橋を結んだ」(*hashi to hashi o musunda/*connected one bridge to another), and 「繋がってる」(*tsunagatteru/*are connected) foreground the experiential concepts of movement, direction, separation, and connection. These expressions do not describe love directly; rather, they conceptualize the relationship through physical experiences of moving backward, passing apart, connecting, and remaining connected. Emi's statement frames their relationship as a movement in which she gradually returns to Takatoshi's past and consequently moves away from their status as lovers. Takatoshi, however, reconceptualizes this separation as a form of connection by describing their relationship as 「橋と橋を結んだ輪」(*hashi to hashi o musunda/*a circle connecting one bridge to another).

The metaphorical mapping can therefore be represented as Journey → movement, direction, separation, and connection, while Love → romantic relationship. The dialogue demonstrates that the changing relationship between the two characters is conceptualized through experiences of movement and spatial relations. Their love is consequently represented not as a static emotional state but as a dynamic process shaped by temporal direction, distance, separation, and continued connection.

**Dialogue 2 [62.08-62.15]**

The following statement is made by Shoichi to Takatoshi in a conversation that uses the relationship between the Earth and the Moon as a metaphor for romantic relationships.




Shoichi:「同じ距離をひたすらぐるぐる回って永遠に近づけない。これが恋人同士だったらマジつれえよな。」

*Onaji kyori o hitasura guruguru mawatte eien ni chikazukenai. Kore ga koibito doushi dattara maji tsuree yo na*.

"Going around and around at the same distance, never being able to get closer to each other. If that were the case for a couple in love, it would be truly painful."

The expressions 「同じ距離」(*onaji kyori/* the same distance), 「ぐるぐる回って」 (*guruguru mawatte/*keep going around in circles), and 「近づけない」 (*chikazukenai/* cannot get closer) foreground the physical concepts of distance, circular movement, and inability to approach. These concrete spatial experiences are mapped onto the relationship between two people who remain connected yet cannot achieve physical or emotional closeness. The metaphorical mapping can therefore be represented as Journey/Movement → Love/Relationship.

The circular movement of the Earth and Moon provides a concrete experiential structure for understanding love as a journey shaped by distance, movement, and limited possibilities of closeness. This mapping reinforces the film's representation of love as a relationship constrained by temporal and spatial conditions.

The mapping Life Is A Journey conceptualizes life as a journey in which Journey/Path functions as the *source domain* and Life as the *target domain*. According to Knepper (2019), the journey schema involves an origin, destination, path, obstacles, and fellow travelers, providing a concrete structure for understanding human life experiences.

**Dialogue 3**

Emi : 「これは私たちが辿ってきた、辿っていく、大切な運命だから」
*Kore wa watashitachi ga tadotte kita, tadotte iku, taisetsu na unmei dakara.*
"Because this is the important destiny that we have gone through and will continue to go through."

The expressions 辿ってきた (*tadotte kita/* have followed the path) and 辿っていく (*tadotte iku/*continue along the path) indicate movement through past and future. They conceptualize the characters' lives and relationship as a continuous journey. Thus, the mapping can be represented as Journey/Path → Life.

The mapping Time Is A Moving Object conceptualizes time through movement and direction. This is evident in the following dialogue:

**Dialogue 4 [53.13 – 53.37]**




Takatoshi :「つまり、僕は君に命を救われた。」
*Tsumari, boku wa kimi ni inochi o sukuwareta*.
"In other words, you saved my life.."

Emi　　:「私はあなたに命を救われた。私たちは逆向きに進んだ時間の端と端で
命を救い合ったから、こうして出会えたんだよ。」
*Watashi wa anata ni inochi o sukuwareta. Watashitachi wa gyaku-muki ni susunda jikan no hashi to hashi de inochi o sukuiatta kara, kou shite deaetan da yo*.
"I was saved by you as well. Because we saved each other at the two ends of time moving in opposite directions, we were able to meet like this."

The expressions 「逆向きに進んだ時間」(*gyaku-muki ni susunda jikan/* Time that moved in the opposite direction) and 「時間の端と端」(*jikan no hashi to hashi/* the two ends of time) represent time as something that moves, has direction, and possesses spatial boundaries. The mapping Movement → Time makes the abstract concept of time comprehensible through physical movement.

The opposing temporal directions mean that an event experienced as the future by Takatoshi is the past for Emi. This structure enables their meeting while simultaneously bringing them toward separation. Therefore, *Time Is A Moving Object* reinforces the universal themes of love, time, and loss, showing how the same temporal movement can bring two people together while also leading to their eventual separation.

The mapping Memory Is A Container shows that memory is conceptualized through the experience of storing and preserving something. The *source domain* CONTAINER provides a framework for storage, while the *target domain* MEMORY refers to experiences and memories that are retained. This concept is evident in:

**Dialogue 5 [89.58]:**




*「これを読めば、私のことを忘れない。」*
*Kore o yomeba, watashi no koto o wasurenai.*
*"*If you read this, you will never forget me*."*

The statement indicates that Emi's diary serves as a symbolic medium for preserving her presence and the memories associated with her. Memory is thus conceptualized as a space for retaining experiences when the characters are no longer together. In this way, the metaphor connects the experience of loss with the effort to preserve their emotional relationship.

Memory Is A Container complements Time Is A Moving Object: time carries experiences into the past, while memory preserves those experiences. Together, these metaphors reinforce the universal themes of love, loss, and remembrance, which can be interpreted across cultural contexts.

***Audience Reception from Wolfgang Iser's Perspective***

The relationship between the film's textual structure and audience reception can be explained through Wolfgang Iser's (1978) reception theory. Iser views meaning as emerging from the interaction between the structure of a text and the reader's interpretive activity. The concepts of the *implied reader*, *gaps*, and *indeterminacy* explain how textual structures provide conditions for interpretation while leaving certain relationships open for audiences to construct.

This framework is particularly relevant to *My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday* because information about Emi's temporal condition is not presented completely at the beginning of the film. Audiences initially follow Takatoshi's experience and gradually receive information that requires earlier events to be reconsidered. The film therefore creates gaps that encourage viewers to establish connections among events, perspectives, and the temporal positions of the two characters.

The opposing temporal directions also produce indeterminacy. Once Emi's temporal position becomes clear, events that have already been seen acquire a different significance. The same encounter can be understood differently from Takatoshi's and Emi's perspectives. The film consequently provides the conditions for concretization, as audiences connect separate pieces of information to construct an understanding of the narrative as a whole.

Audience responses further indicate that this process of concretization can produce different interpretive emphases. AsianMovieWeb, for example, focuses on the relationship between the two lovers and the unusual temporal framework, noting that the narrative eventually allows viewers to understand events from Emi's perspective as well(Selzer, 2016). The *South China Morning Post* similarly presents the film as a romantic fantasy centered on two lovers caught between intersecting realities and emphasizes the reversal of their temporal experiences(Marsh, 2017).

Indonesian responses demonstrate related but somewhat different emphases. IDN Times highlights the opposing temporal trajectories and notes that the structure requires viewers to connect the different strands of the story, while also emphasizing the emotional dimensions of love, limited time, and separation(Pratiwi, 2019). Cultura describes the film as a romantic fantasy in which the opposing timelines and the realization that Takatoshi's first experiences are Emi's final experiences become central to the viewing experience. The review also emphasizes the film's temporal paradoxes as an important element of its appeal.

These responses indicate that transnational reception does not necessarily produce a uniform interpretation. Audiences may attend to the same textual structure while foregrounding different aspects of it, including temporal complexity, romantic love, sacrifice, loss, or memory. From Iser's perspective, such differences can be understood as forms of concretization shaped by the interaction between textual structures and the knowledge and experiences brought by audiences. The *implied reader* does not eliminate interpretive variation; rather, the structure of the text provides conditions within which different possibilities of meaning can be actualized.

**Transnational Cultural Reception**

The film is a Japanese cultural product with a distinctive temporal structure and narrative framework, yet its central themes—love, time, life, memory, encounter, and loss—are grounded in experiences that can be recognized beyond Japan. This combination of cultural specificity and broadly recognizable human experience enables the film to function as a transnational cultural text.

The reception data suggest that the transnational circulation of the film does not depend on removing its Japanese cultural specificity. Instead, audiences engage with that specificity through conceptual and emotional structures that are more widely accessible. The unusual temporal system remains a distinctive feature of the film, while the experiences of loving, meeting, losing, remembering, and accepting limited time provide points of connection for audiences from different cultural backgrounds.

This relationship between metaphor and reception can be understood by bringing Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Iser (1978) together. Conceptual metaphor explains how abstract experiences are conceptually structured, whereas reception theory explains how those structures are actualized through audience interpretation. Metaphor provides a conceptual framework for understanding time, love, life, and memory, while the narrative structure creates gaps and indeterminacies that invite audiences to connect these experiences with their own interpretive frameworks.

Therefore, the universality of themes in a transnational film should not be understood as the existence of identical meanings across cultures. Rather, universality emerges from the capacity of a culturally specific text to provide points of connection with experiences that audiences can recognize and interpret within their own contexts. *My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday* demonstrates how Japanese cultural specificity can coexist with cross-cultural interpretations of love, time, life, memory, encounter, and loss.

**CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that conceptual metaphors in *My Tomorrow, Your Yesterday* provide a conceptual structure for representing abstract experiences of time, love, life, and memory. The mappings Love Is A Journey, Life Is A Journey, Time Is A Moving Object, And Memory Is A Container connect concrete experiences of movement, journey, direction, and containment with the characters' experiences of encounter, togetherness, separation, loss, and remembrance.

The study also demonstrates that the meaning of these themes is not determined solely by the metaphorical structure of the film. Its nonlinear temporal organization, shifting perspectives, and gradual disclosure of information create gaps and indeterminacies that invite audiences to construct relationships among events and perspectives. Audience responses from Japanese, Indonesian, and international contexts indicate different interpretive emphases while remaining connected to the textual structures provided by the film.

These findings suggest that transnational cultural reception is not simply the transfer of a Japanese cultural product to audiences outside Japan. Rather, meaning emerges through an interaction between culturally specific textual structures and audiences' interpretive activities. Conceptual metaphor provides a bridge between

abstract experiences represented in the film and more concrete human experiences, while reception enables those experiences to be concretized differently across cultural contexts. The film therefore illustrates how culturally specific narratives can communicate universal themes without requiring uniformity of interpretation.

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