# Truth and Metaphor

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## Introduction:

Mark Johnson and George Lakoff in *Metaphors We Live By* and Johnson in *The Body in the Mind*, argue for a complete paradigm shift in the way we view human understanding, meaning, and truth. Johnson and Lakoff reject the objectivist view that truth and meaning can be understood as a purely propositional matter without human beings and the subjectivist view that meaning and truth are a purely individual matter. Instead they advise us to accept the theory that meaning emerges from bodily experience, non-propositional structures, and the activity of the imagination, which allows us to create sense out of the world and our experience. They also embrace metaphor as an example that demonstrates that we understand truth in a different sort of way than the objectivist and subjectivist theories propose. They write:

We view issues having to do with meaning in natural language and with the way people understand both their language and their experiences as empirical issues rather than matters of a priori philosophical assumptions and argumentation. (Lakoff and Johnson 210)

Rather than attempting to find truth by looking for what is true without man interpreting it, Johnson and Lakoff intend to find truth by investigating what we mean when we, as humans, speak of truth.

Johnson argues that we ought to shift our paradigm to his new one because the old, essentially objectivist paradigm has too many problems and cannot account for the finding of new studies, whereas his paradigm of imaginative understanding and the bodily basis of truth can. While Johnson does provide sufficient evidence that we need a new paradigm, the paradigm he endorses has problems explaining the pervasiveness of metaphor and the origins of bodily bases. Ultimately I think we ought to follow Ludwig Wittgenstein and change the way we investigate the problem of metaphor and truth, turning from psychology to natural history.

## Problems with the Old Paradigms:

Johnson begins his investigation into truth by identifying problems that the objectivist theories have explaining or dealing with such things as categorization, framing of concepts, metaphor, polysemy, historical semantic change, non-western conceptual systems, and growth of knowledge (Johnson xi-xiii). Johnson describes the objectivist theory of meaning:

Meaning is an abstract relation between symbolic representations (either words or mental representations) and objective ( i.e., mind-independent) reality. These symbols get their meaning solely by virtue of their capacity to correspond to things, properties, and relations existing objectively "in the world." (Johnson xxii)

Meaning only concerns sentences or symbols and not how human beings understand the symbol because the meaning of each symbol is its correspondence to something or some state of affairs in mind-independent reality. The truth or falsity of a sentence, therefore,

can be determined by checking the state of affairs in mind-independent reality to see if it corresponds to state of affairs described by the sentence.

The problem with the objectivist account of categorization is that studies have shown that our categories do not really objectively correspond to the world but rather involve metaphor, metonymy and projection of structure onto things that do not objectively have it, and objective theories have difficulty explaining language that does not correspond to objective reality (xi). For example, the objectivist has trouble explaining how, "John is a bear this morning" can be literally false if John is a human being, but we know what it means for this statement to be considered true. Meaning, for the objectivist, corresponds directly to mind-independent reality, but metaphorical statements do not correspond directly to the objective world and thus the objective theory of meaning has difficulty explaining how metaphorical statements are true.

Studies have also shown that concepts are framed within a certain context and framework that is not objective and can vary from culture to culture (xii). Metaphor and polysemy involve the imagination's extension of uses of words or seeing one thing in terms of another, which has nothing to do with objective truth, yet these "literary devices" seem to be pervasive in language and human thought (xii). Studies have shown that historical semantic change is caused mainly by metaphor, which the objectivist cannot explain. Also, non-western conceptual systems are extremely different from western, for which the objectivist cannot account (xii-xiii) The objectivist theory of knowledge claims that science gets ever closer to the truth or to objectivity, but the growth of knowledge demonstrates that "knowledge is always a contextually dependent matter. . . and criteria of rationality are ineliminably evaluative and dependent on our purposes and interests" (xiii). Scientific knowledge is not objective and instead depends upon the context. These new studies illuminate the problems the old objectivist paradigm of truth has dealing with the new information we have about our language, understanding, and knowledge.

The objectivist theory of meaning, which states that truth and meaning are what they are apart from any human understanding, does however attempt to explain metaphor through the idea of indirect meaning. Indirect meaning is the idea that a metaphor has a literal meaning, M, which is literally false, or meaningless, but it also has an intended meaning, $M\tilde{O}$, which may be true. Thus, to find the truth of a metaphorical statement we only have to translate the M into $M\tilde{O}$. For illustration, the metaphorical statement, "John is a bear this morning," is literally false, but the intended meaning, "John is grouchy and short-tempered this morning," may be true. With this understanding of metaphors, all metaphors can be translated into literal sentences and thus their meaning understood (Lakoff and Johnson 208). Indirect meaning presupposes that meaning is based upon inherent properties that the concepts have disconnected from humans. If the meaning of a metaphor is not its literal meaning (M), but its intended meaning (M'), then we still need to know what M' is and it does not seem that any substitute for a metaphorical statement will capture exactly what is meant. Even if we suppose that there is an $M\tilde{O}$ that captures the intended meaning, there seems to be no explanation for the preference of using a metaphor instead of $M\tilde{O}$ nor for the widespread use of metaphor in daily life. The presupposition that meaning is based upon pre-existing, inherent similarities between the

concepts in a metaphor seems not only to miss the point of metaphor but also to be unable to explain the prevalent use of metaphor.

Not only do Johnson and Lakoff reject the objectivist view that meaning is a relation between a symbol and the mind-independent world, they also reject its opposite, the subjectivist view that truth and meaning are only what each individual thinks that they are. Subjectivists, according to Johnson and Lakoff, believe that "Art and poetry transcend rationality and objectivity and put us in touch with the more important reality of our feelings and intuitions" (Lakoff and Johnson 188). Truth is what is true for an individual and what the majority may think, if there is a majority that agrees, is unimportant because the personal, unique experience determines truth. They further explain that the reason truth is personal is because the subjectivist view asserts that "experience has no natural structure, and that, therefore, there can be no natural external constrains upon meaning and truth" (Lakoff and Johnson 224). Johnson and Lakoff, however, contend that metaphors are organized in "experiential gestalts" that have structure and are coherent with one another, suggesting that there is some non-arbitrary way that experience is structured. If experience has no natural structure, then we cannot explain why food concepts tend to apply to ideas ("I am digesting his ideas") and building concepts tend to apply to arguments ("His argument has a weak foundation"); these entire systems of metaphors suggest that there is an entire system of experience that relates to food and to buildings, with which systems of experience we can understand something about ideas and arguments, suggesting that the structure of experience is not arbitrary and that subjectivism is not an adequate theory of truth (Johnson 111).

**Experientialist Paradigm:**

To remedy the situation, Johnson proposes an embodied understanding of meaning and truth. He writes:

Yet, in all of the empirical studies cited above, which have given rise to the crisis, the embodiment of human meaning and understanding manifests itself over and over, in ways intimately connected to forms of imaginative structuring of experience. The kind of imaginative structuring uncovered in these studies does not involve romantic flights of fancy unfettered by, and transcending, our bodies; rather, they are forms of imagination that grow out of bodily experience, as it contributes to our understanding and guides our reasoning. (Johnson xiv) [I]n order for us to have meaningful, connected experiences that we can comprehend and reason about, there must be pattern and order to our actions, perceptions, and conceptions. A schema is a recurrent pattern shape, and regularity in, or of, these ongoing ordering activities. These patterns emerge as meaningful structures for us chiefly at the level of our bodily movements through space, our manipulation of objects, and our perceptual interaction. (Johnson 29)

Johnson takes this list of problems to indicate that not only is objectivism flawed and insufficient to explain truth, but that these problems direct us towards an understanding of truth that is embodied. Human imagination has been ignored in the objectivist theory of truth, but imagination is connected to how we understand, and how we understand is connected to embodied truth. Imagination of this kind is not the sort of wild, unruly part of our mind of which we generally think, but that which arises out of our bodily experience of the world, enabling our understanding and drawing connections between things.

The main way in which we understand the world is through our schemata. Johnson defines schemata and their use:

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Schemata are patterns in shape, form, occurrence in time, et cetera; anything that we consider meaningful has a structure and this structure or pattern is its schema. These basic patterns are generally found at the level of our bodily interaction with the world, and they structure how we understand reality. An example of these structures is that we experience the world as bodies with fronts and backs. Another example is that buildings have foundations, upon which the rest of the building rests. An even more basic example is that we are enclosed entities and things can be either in or outside of us.

Johnson further explains schemata:

I am identifying the schema as a continuous structure of an organizing activity. Yet, even though schemata are definite structures, they are dynamic patterns rather than fixed and static images. . . .They are dynamic in two important respects. (1) Schemata are structures of an activity by which we organize our experience in ways that we can comprehend. They are a primary means by which we construct or constitute order and are not mere passive receptacles into which experience is poured. (2) Unlike templates, schemata are flexible in that they can take on any number of specific instantiations in varying contexts. It is somewhat misleading to say that an image schema gets "filled in" by concrete perceptual details; rather, it must be relatively malleable, so that it can be modified to fit many similar, but different, situations that manifest a recurring underlying structure. (Johnson 30)

Schemata are structures but are malleable, allowing them to give structure to many different situations. For example, we know that a rock does not have a front and a back in the same way in which human beings do, but we nevertheless say, ". . . in front of the rock." We can use the front/back schema in relation to the rock even though it is not exactly the same as when we use it in reference to humans. When we employ schemata to understand the world, we do not simply fit like things together, but must actively use our imagination to fit somewhat similar things together in novel ways in order to make sense out of our experience.

Through time our use of schemata has developed into systems of customary cultural metaphors that we can investigate to find their experiential bases. An example of a system of metaphorical understanding and its physical or experiential basis is:

HAPPINESS IS UP; SAD IS DOWN

I'm feeling up. That boosted my spirits. My spirits rose. You're in high spirits. Thinking about her always gives me a lift. I'm feeling down. I'm depressed. He's really low these days. I fell into a depression. My spirits sank. Physical basis: Drooping posture typically goes along with sadness and depression, erect posture with a positive emotional state. (Lakoff and Johnson 15)

We understand happiness in terms of up because when we are happy we hold our bodies upright and when we are sad our head and shoulders hang down.

Lakoff and Johnson explain experiential bases of metaphor as unique to each metaphor but difficult to ascertain:

We do not know very much about the experiential bases of metaphors. . . . For example, MORE IS UP has a very different kind of experiential basis than HAPPY IS UP or RATIONAL IS UP. Though the concept UP is the same in all these metaphors, the experiences on which the UP metaphors are based are very different. It is not that here are many different UPS; rather, verticality enters our experience in many different ways and so gives rise to many different metaphors. (Lakoff and Johnson 19)

We experience one thing, UP or verticality, in many different ways, allowing for a myriad of metaphors including the experiences of UP that draw upon different aspects of UP to structure ways of understanding and talking about different concepts. The basis of a metaphor, however, is complex in that it can stem not only from direct physical experience but also from our imagination and from metaphorical structures already in place in the culture. Thus the metaphor GOOD IS UP builds upon the other metaphors concerning UP, most of which we think of as desirable, to orient our understand of GOOD in terms of how we experience UP; we see GOOD as Up because we understand many good things as UP (Lakoff and Johnson 16).

We make sense out of our experience by way of these schemata, which have experiential bases and are changeable through the use of imagination. The schemata, however, do have some sort of structure that is rigid enough that, unlike the subjectivist conception, we cannot just understand anything with any schemata. Johnson explains that the schemata arise from bodily experience and this is what particularizes the schemata. He writes:

[T]he environment is structured in ways that limit the possibilities for our categorizations of it. But the structure of the environment by no means strictly determines the structure of our experience, which is to say, of our understanding of our world. When we speak of "experience," therefore, we do not mean merely a flow of mental representations. We mean to include bodily experience in all of its richness, and all that goes to make it up Ð the organism and its nature, the environment and its nature, and our understanding (our way of grasping) their ongoing interaction. (Johnson 207)

Our understanding of the world is the way that we categorize it and this is the structure of our experience. Our categorization of the world is not arbitrary nor is it completely determined. Our bodily experience of the world is not propositional, and thus when we make sense of our experience Ð when we put it into propositional form, we can interpret it and give it structure so that it makes sense to us. We cannot, however, give our experience just and structure, because our experience does have non-propositional structure that limits our categorization of it; we interpret our experience, but we do not invent it. The way we make sense of the world, therefore, is neither completely determined by our non-propositional experience nor completely arbitrary.

Understanding has a central role in Johnson's paradigm of truth and meaning because understanding is "an event in which one has a world" (Johnson 175). We "have a world" by making sense of our experience and thus understanding is constituted by the structure

we use to make sense of our experience. Johnson explains the importance of understanding to meaning:

For the non-Objectivist, meaning is always a matter of human understanding, which constitutes our experience of a common world that we can make some sense of. A theory of meaning is a theory of understanding. And understanding involves image schemata and their metaphorical projections, as well as propositions. These embodied and imaginative structures of meaning have been shown to be shared, public, and "objective," in an appropriate sense of objectivity. (Johnson 174)

Understanding is at the base of all the investigation into meaning and truth because how we understand our world is equivalent to how our world has meaning for us or how we understand something to be true. We have non-propostional experiences of the world and we describe these experiences by putting them into propostional structures. Putting the non-propositional into propositional structure is what constitutes understanding and understanding is equivalent to making sense of our experiences or to having a world. Truth and meaning are not something apart from human beings, but rather something intimately connected with us: "We understand a statement as being true in a given situation when our understanding of the statement fits our understanding of the situation closely enough for our purposes" (Lakoff and Johnson 180). All of the problems with the old paradigm stem from the idea that truth and meaning are separate from understanding, and Johnson proposes a theory that bases truth and meaning upon understanding. Since truth and meaning depend on how we understand, we can account for categorization, framing of concepts, metaphor, polysemy, historical semantic change, non-western conceptual systems, and growth of knowledge because truth is not purely objective but depends upon our schemata and imagination.

Understanding, therefore, depends upon how our imagination makes propositional sense of the non-propositional experience of the world. Consequently understanding occupies a fundamental position in Johnson's new paradigm:

A crucial point here is that understanding is not only a matter of reflection, using finitary propositions, on some preexistent, already determinate experience. Rather, understanding is the way we "have a world," the way we experience our world as a comprehensible reality. Such understanding, therefore, involves our whole being Ð our bodily capacities and skills, our values, our moods and attitudes, our entire cultural tradition, the way in which we are bound up with a linguistic community, our aesthetic sensibilities, and so forth. In short, our understanding is our mode of "being in the world." It is the way we are meaningfully situated in our world through our bodily interactions, our cultural institutions, our linguistic tradition, and our historical context. (Johnson 102)

The new paradigm that Johnson supports is a completely different way of understanding our existence; to "have a world" includes not only our mental processes but also our bodily interactions Ð "our whole being" Ð because it depends upon the way we understand and the way we understand depends upon our physical, cultural, psychological, and intellectual situation. Understanding, like every other concept in Johnson's paradigm, is not fixed nor is it comprehending some objective structure in the world; instead understanding is based on a history or circumstance. Johnson's paradigm does not view man as separate from his environment but as an integral part of the world; man does not use his mind to try to figure out the real world that is separate, foreign, and outside of man and his mind, but through natural interaction with the world, man understands and understanding is the basis of meaning and truth.

This new paradigm understands metaphors as a central way in which human beings make sense of the world. Metaphors are pervasive in language and in our conception of reality. We have schemata that stem from our bodily experience and we interpret and understand many concepts by way of seeing them in terms of the structure of these body-based schemata. If the concept that we are interpreting is not experienced bodily, then it does not have its own bodily structure, making it difficult for us to understand it. To be able easily to make sense of a non-bodily experienced concept, we give the concept a body-based schema. For example, we have fronts and backs and a rocks does not have a specific front or back, but we can understand the sentence, "The flower is in front of the rock," by way of metaphor Ð by way of understanding the rock through using the schema of front and back of which we have direct experience.Johnson writes:

[C]ertain metaphors play a constitutive role in structuring our experience. . . . [O]ne must treat metaphor as operating in a nonpropositional, image-schematic dimension where structures emerge in our experience. That would constitute genuine creativity, in that metaphor would be taken as a mode of activity in the structuring of experience. (Johnson 70)

Metaphor is a part of a creative process through which we understand; we understand our non-propositional experience by fitting it into structures that we can understand propositionally. Metaphors constitute some of the structures we use to make propositional sense of our experience. Truth and meaning depend upon understanding, and understanding depends upon the action of our imagination by way of metaphor, which structures experience in terms of other experiential structures.

Metaphorical statements, therefore, can be true without the problem of having to translate the literal meaning (M) into an intended meaning (MÕ) because we can understand the metaphorical statement as it is without translation. Metaphors can introduce new understandings of things by highlighting and hiding certain aspects of the subject. For example, the statement, "He buttressed his argument," can be understood as orientating our understanding of argumentation in terms of building. We gain some sort of understanding about argumentation through talking about it as though it is a building; we highlight certain relevant aspects of arguments by looking at arguments in the way we look at buildings. With this understanding of metaphor as interactional, we do not need an abstract concept, or pre-existing similarities, to which both the literal and metaphorical use of the word refer. What is important is not that there really be similarities but that we can understand one thing in terms of another.

The new paradigm that Johnson presents allows us to view man as an integral part of his world with meaning and truth based in understanding, which stems from his interaction with reality. Imagination and metaphor play a constitutive role in meaning and truth by creating connections and structures that allow understanding. Rather than trying to transcend this condition as the old paradigm does, Johnson's new paradigm embraces the human situation in all its complexity and with all the cultural and psychological explanations exposed by recent studies.

**Problems in the Experiential Paradigm:**

The experiential paradigm, while disposing of the major problems of the objectivist and subjectivist paradigms, encounters difficulties of its own. One problem is that the experiential paradigm over-emphasizes the importance of metaphorical understanding in understanding of the world; there are many instances of metaphorical language in which we do not need this language to structure our understanding of the concept. Since we can use non-metaphorical language to discuss concepts that we usually discuss using metaphor, Johnson has difficulty explaining why metaphor is so pervasive. Another problem is that the experiential paradigm posits the existence of the pre-structured world that we interpret, sometimes using metaphor, to make sense of the world. According to Johnson's theory, we cannot make sense of the pre-structured world since making sense of it structures it, but Johnson's theory of what metaphor is depends upon understanding the pre-structured world. Along the same lines as the problem of positing a pre-structured world, is the problem the experiential paradigm has explaining how metaphors arise in the first place. In the experientialist paradigm, metaphors cannot arise without already existing.

The characterization of the metaphoric structuring of our experience and our language upon which Johnson builds his theory over-emphasizes the role of metaphor. While Johnson and Lakoff do not claim that all language is based in metaphor of some kind, they do assert that the metaphors that we customarily employ, and may not even realize are metaphors, constitute some of the structures with which we understand our world. Many of our concepts have structures that they do not have without metaphoric structure. Metaphor is an instance of one concept being understood through the structure of a different concept, and thus metaphor is an important part of our understanding.

For instance, we customarily speak of arguments in terms of war. We say things such as:

Your claims are indefensible.

He attacked every weak point in my argument...

I've never won an argument with him...

If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out. (Lakoff and Johnson 4)

We have a clear conception of war and can physically experience it. Arguments can also be experienced but they do not have a clear structure of their own, apart from our metaphorical understanding that separates them from other types of discourse. Through seeing certain types of discourse as a verbal war, we have a clear conception of what an argument is, opposed to what an explanation is. Johnson and Lakoff continue:

The metaphor is not merely in the words we use Ð it is in our very concept of an argument. The language of argument is not poetic, fanciful, or rhetorical; it is literal. We talk about arguments that way because we conceive of them that way Ð and we act according to the way we conceive of things. (Lakoff and Johnson 5)

The metaphors that we use provide some of our concepts with clear, propositional structure, and thus we understand arguments in terms of the way we understand war; since arguments do not have the sort of directly accessible, bodily basis of structure, we fit them into a borrowed structure.

We can, however, talk about arguments without using any metaphorical language. For example we may say, "The premises of an argument are related to the conclusion in such a way that if the argument is valid, the conclusion cannot be false and all of the premises be true," demonstrating that we can understand arguments in a way in which they have a structure all of their own and in which they do not need to borrow the structure of a directly bodily experienced concept. If we do not need metaphors to provide a structure so that we can makes sense of our experience, then Johnson's theory that metaphors are pervasive because we need them to provide a structure so that we can makes sense of our experience, is unsatisfactory: we do not need metaphors to have a clear structure for every concept that we usually discuss metaphorically. Johnson's new paradigm, therefore, does not explain why our language contains so many of these unnecessary metaphors.

Johnson's and Lakoff's explanation of how metaphor structures our concepts does not account for why we are not always bound to use metaphors with concepts that we normally speak of metaphorically. We are able to talk about concept that Johnson says are given structure through metaphor without invoking a metaphor. For example, Johnson mentions that rocks do not have fronts and backs, outside of our metaphorical understanding of them, but we can easily describe the situation of a ball being in front of a rock without reference to "in front." We might say the ball is to the north of the rock or that the ball is between myself, or someone else, and the rock. It seems that metaphorical structuring takes place in our language but not in necessarily that we must understand the concepts of which we speak metaphorically with this same metaphorical structure, or that the metaphor necessarily provides our concepts with a structure that they did not previously have.

Another problem with Johnson's theory is that it necessitates the existence of a world that we do not know; the world that we interpret and structure through metaphor. Johnson writes, ". . .. between symbols and the world, there falls understanding" (Johnson 175) and " How we carve up our world will depend both on what is 'out there' independent of us, and equally on the referential scheme we bring to bear, given our purposes, interests, and goals" (Johnson 202). Truth, according to Johnson's view, is the result of our mental faculties imposing structure upon an outside world. Johnson must supposes both the existence of a world that is structured in a non-human way and the human mental faculties that structure the world in order to be able to explain how the truth of statements is generally agreed upon and how meanings are shared. He argues that we, as human beings, are presented with the same world and similar cognitive processes that make sense out of the stimulus from the world. Johnson and Lakoff write:

The physical world is what it is. Cultures are what they are. People are what they are. . . Human concepts do not correspond to inherent properties of things but only to interactional properties. This is natural, since concepts can be metaphorical in nature and can vary from culture to culture. (Lakoff and Johnson 181)

The physical world is real and it shapes our understanding . Our concepts are not representations of the physical world but rather our concepts are formed from our interactions with the physical world; we create concepts through interacting with reality and this is why cultures vary to certain extent but not entirely.

The problem is that Johnson cannot provide evidence of this uninterpreted, unstructured world since we can only make sense of that of which we have made sense Ð that which we have interpreted and structured. Johnson cannot successfully defend a theory of truth that posits human understanding as its basis and also depends upon the existence of a world apart from our understanding to function. To explain how we seem to generally agree upon meaning and truth, Johnson's theory of truth as human understanding depends upon the existence of an uninterpreted world, but if the truth is based only in human understanding, then we cannot know about any uninterpreted world apart from human understanding.

An example from Metaphors We Live By, demonstrates the sort of discussions that Johnson provides about how we interpret our world: . . . we perceive various things in the natural world as entities, often projecting boundaries and surfaces on them where no clear-cut boundaries or surfaces exist naturally. Thus we can conceive of a fogbank as an entity that can be over the bay (which we conceive as an entity) and in front of the mountain (conceived as an entity with a FRONT-BACK orientation). (Lakoff and Johnson 162)

While this is an interesting insight into the way in which we understand our surroundings, it does not reveal anything about the uninterpreted, unstructured world. Johnson's immediate purpose with this illustration, however, is not to reveal the unstructured world, but is to demonstrate that we structure some things with the structure of other things when we use metaphor. Nevertheless, this example supports Johnson's theory of truth, which rests upon the distinction between how the world really is (the unbounded fogbank), and how we understand the world (the bounded fogbank). We understand the fog as not being a bound entity, even though we speak as if it were; this is why "the fogbank is over the bay," is a metaphor, but the truth of the fog being unbound, according to Johnson's understanding-dependent theory of truth, relies upon our understanding and the way in which we structure the world. The unbound fog, therefore, cannot be part of the uninterpreted world since it is part of our understanding. Johnson's theory is based upon the existence of the uninterpreted world, but it leaves us unable to know about this world. If we cannot know about the unstructured world, we cannot know if or how we structure the world, and without knowing how we structure the world, Johnson cannot base his theory of metaphor upon knowing how we structure the world. We cannot know that we impose bodily experienced structures upon non-bodily experienced concepts because all of our concepts are already structured. Johnson and Lakoff's theory, therefore, cannot begin because it is based upon making sense of the pre-structured world, of which, by their own theory, we can make no sense.

Another way of exposing the same difficulty is presented by John M. Kennedy and John Vervaeke in their the article, "Knowing Through the Body." Not very much is known about experiential bases and thus how metaphorical concepts arise is also mysterious. Kennedy and Vervaeke summarize Johnson's argument concerning the "source-path-goal" schema, which includes the metaphor, "Purposes are destinations":

A pervasive experience is that an item (a form or object) becomes an object of attention, is tracked through the perceptual field and then stops or passes us. The experience, schematically is a source, a path and then a

goal: this is labeled the "source-path-goal" schema. There is an initial location A, a final location B and a movement between A and B. "There arises", Johnson says, "a connection in our experience between structure in the domain of intentions and structure in the domain of physical actions" (p.11). The intended situation is connected to location B and the intended action sequence corresponds to the movement from A to B. This system of connections can be named the "Purposes are destinations" metaphor, Johnson notes. It is "an imaginative projection". . . . We use the pattern of the physical events (the "source") to organize our understanding of the "target" domain. (Kennedy and Vervaeke 408)

Johnson explains the physical base for the metaphor, "Purposes are destinations" by appealing to "connections in our experience" that arise between the structures of the two concepts. Kennedy and Vervaeke continue to explain the difficulty they find with Johnson's explanation:

[W]hat made the connections possible in the first place is, apparently, that intended actions and tracking an object from A to B have the same schema. It is not clear, then, how intended action could derive its schema in the first place from a projection that rests on connection that can only be made if the schema is already present! (Kennedy and Vervaeke 408)

Johnson talks of "connections in our experience between structure" but supposedly the structure arises from the metaphor itself. Metaphoric concepts are imaginative structuring of concepts that otherwise do not have the sort of structure or schematic system that we understand and metaphors are the imposing of a structure or schemata of this sort onto the concept that lacks this sort of organization. The connections that allow us to create the metaphor in the first place must be between something, and Johnson seems to say they occur between the structure in the domain of the concepts, which would be the schema of the concepts, but one of the concepts allegedly gains structure or schematic understanding from this connection. The process seems to be unable to begin without having already begun.

**Johnson's Two Part Project:**

Johnson's project can be divided into two parts: a description of metaphor and its pervasiveness and a psychological explanation of the pervasiveness of metaphor. The first part of Johnson's project convincingly demonstrates that metaphor is far more widespread than we may think; metaphor is not only a poetic way of speaking, but is a way of understanding concepts in terms of one another. We employ metaphors much of the time without even realizing that we are using them. Examples such as, "That boosted my spirits," and "His argument has a weak foundation," illustrate the commonplaceness of metaphor in daily speech. The pervasiveness of metaphor shows that other theories of truth and meaning that attempt to marginalize metaphor, such as objectivism, have difficulty explaining the role of metaphor.

The second part of Johnson's project, however, is not as successful. To explain why we use metaphor so often, Johnson posits an account of image schemata to explain causally how we make sense of our world. As I have argued, Johnson's psychological explanation has difficulties explaining why we can talk of concepts that we usually discuss in metaphors, non-metaphorically, how we can posit the existence of a world of which we cannot know, and how the experiential bases of image schemata can come about without already existing.

A further problem, however, with Johnson's project maybe that he looks to psychology to explain the pervasiveness of metaphor. His project cannot succeed because it employs psychological explanation. Wittgenstein criticizes psychology in the Philosophical Investigations because, "The existence of the experimental method makes us think we have the means of solving the problems which trouble us; though problem and method pass one another by" (Wittgenstein 232). The problems that bother us perhaps are problems akin to Johnson's problem that metaphor is pervasive and we use it to express the truth but we know that metaphor does not express literal truth. For example, arguments do not literally have foundations. Psychology provides hope for a causal explanation for what it is about human beings that allows for this seeming inconsistency but the causal explanation does not solve the problem; psychology can provide theories of the way our minds work, but knowing that our minds are put together in such a way that we can understand metaphors as true even though they are literally false, does not help us to resolve the problem that this seems inconsistent to us.

Johnson and Lakoff do seem to be concerned with this question of how we can make sense of metaphors being true because they address questions about truth, meaning, and understanding ;based upon the difficulties traditional theories have explaining metaphor. Johnson and Lakoff write in the preface of Metaphors We Live By:

This book grew out of a concern, on both our parts, with how people understand their language and their experience. . . . In the process, we have worked out elements of an experientialist approach, not only to issues of language, truth, and understanding but to question about the meaningfulness of our everyday experience. (Lakoff and Johnson ix-x)

They want to figure out answers to philosophical questions concerning language, meaning, truth, understanding, and experience, suggesting that they want to make sense of what we do and not just that they want know the process that allows us to have language, meaning, and truth in the way we do. Johnson, however, writes in the preface of The Body in the Mind:

My purpose is not only to argue that the body is "in" the mind (i.e., that these imaginative structures of understanding are crucial to meaning and reason) but also to explore how the body is in the mind Ð how it is possible, and necessary, after all, for abstract meaning, and for reason and imagination, to have a bodily basis. (Johnson xiv)

Johnson states that he is interested in both how to makes sense of meaning and understanding and how we are so constructed that meaning and understanding are what they are. The problem is not that they are interested in the causal explanation, but that they attempt to make sense of metaphor, meaning, understanding, and truth by explaining how we are so constructed that we have to have them in the way we do, and this causal, psychological explanation does not really help us to answer the philosophical question about how to make sense of them.

Another way of understanding Wittgenstein's reason that psychological projects that explain philosophical questions fail is that psychology does not provide helpful, new information, but just creates a hypothesis about what it is about our minds that can explain the problem with which we already are concerned. Wittgenstein writes in the Philosophical Investigations:

18. It is sometimes said that animals do not talk because they lack the mental capacity. And this means: "they do not think, and that is why they do not talk." But Ð they simply do not talk. Or to put it better: they do not use language Ð if we except the most primitive forms of language. Ð Commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing. (Wittgenstein 12)

Psychology might explain that animals do not speak because their minds do not have the ability, but this only tells us what we already know Ð animals do not talk. A better way of discussing the ability to use language is to look at it as "Part of our natural history," rather than as a peculiar ability of our minds. Any project that relies upon psychology, therefore, is doomed to bypass the problems with which we are concerned and to fail to provide us with any helpful new information. We can verify that this problem with the psychological explanation is an important problem for Johnson's theory by seeing if we can account for metaphor's pervasiveness without appealing to psychology.

**A Clear View:**

Wittgenstein leaves us unsatisfied with the sort of answers psychology provides but he suggests as an alternative that we view our situation as part of our "natural history." He writes in Philosophical Investigations:

415. What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; we are not contributing curiosities however, but observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes. (Wittgenstein 415)

We ought to observe what is right in front of us and that which we do not doubt in order to investigate our natural history. In Johnson and Lakoff's case, what is in front of us and is difficult to doubt about metaphor is the first part of their project Ð the description of metaphor and how we use it. For example, we use expressions such as "That boosted my spirits," and "His argument has a weak foundation," often and we also use other expressions that are related to these in such ways that we can group them under categories like, "Good is up," and Arguments are buildings."

All of the first part of Johnson's project is merely describing our common, daily language and arranging expressions in such a way that we can easily see how some expressions are closely related to one another. Wittgenstein approves of this sort of project, writing in Philosophical Investigations:

The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. (Wittgenstein 109)

A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words. Our grammar is lacking in this fort of understanding which consists in 'seeing connections'. (Wittgenstein 122)

The descriptive part of Johnson and Lakoff's projects that does not posit explanations of new information from psychology. The first part of the project, therefore, can help us to become clear about metaphor. The descriptive project arranges what "we have always known" and only needs to be brought to our attention, in such a way that we can see

connections. Johnson and Lakoff do, therefore, begin the worthwhile process of arranging so that connection become clear.

To continue Wittgenstein's project of attaining a clear view of metaphor we ought to investigate history, bringing to our attention connections through time. Wittgenstein illustrates his conception of language with an analogy:

Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses. (Wittgenstein 8)

Language has a history, just as an ancient city does; the new sometimes adds to the old and sometimes completely replaces it, but either way the old in some way affects what proceeds it. Our investigation into metaphor, a part of language, therefore ought to be an anthropological investigation into the roots of specific metaphors to see how they arise and how this birth relates to our using them as if they were literally true.

Since we cannot conduct this anthropological description of the evolution of specific metaphors because of lack of time and information, we can use and example of the birth of a metaphor as a model for the rise of metaphor as a basic phenomenon. Instead of positing a psychological explanation for what occurs hidden in the mind, allowing us to have metaphorical understanding, we ought to examine an example as a model for what commonly occurs in the formation of metaphor and look for what is right before us but is so basic that we do not notice it Ð a basic phenomenon. The basic phenomenon is a basic feature of human life that is deeply embedded in, and a part of, the way humans live or the "human form of life," (Wittgenstein 241). In the case of metaphor, the basic phenomenon shows metaphor that we use as if it were literally true is pervasive because it is a basic part of the way humans live.

We begin our investigation for the basic phenomenon that clears up our confusion about metaphor by examining the origins of metaphor. Walker Percy in an essay entitled, "Metaphor as Mistake," describes the birth of metaphor, telling the story of a boy who sees an amazing bird flying swiftly and darting about the sky. After observing the hawk, the boy wants to know, "What is that bird?" (Percy 69). Percy points out that the boy has already perceived the bird in all its grander and aptness in flight, but he also wants the bird named. Percy writes that Cassierer emphasizes:

[T]he primitive comes face to face with something which is both entirely new to him and strikingly distinctive, so distinctive that it might be said to have a presence Ð an oddly shaped termite mound, a particular body of water, a particular abandoned road. . . . the metaphor arises from the symbolic act in which the emotional cry of the beholder becomes the vehicle by which the thing is conceived, the name of the thing. (Percy 69)

The primitive impulse, as a basic phenomenon, is to name whatever is "entirely new" and "strikingly distinctive" gives rise to metaphor. When we encounter that which we have no vocabulary to describe or to name, we nevertheless desire to describe or name it, and thus we use our existing language to describe or name the new experience. We get confused by noticing the inconsistency between the "literal" use of words in a metaphor and the way we use the metaphor, but by examining the entire history of a metaphor, we can see

the stages along which the "literal" use of the words evolved into the "metaphorical" use. We can thereby see that a metaphor can be true just as a "literal" statement can, because the literal use of the words has been extended to include instances it originally did not.

Continuing Percy's example, we will pretend that the boy was not told the name of the hawk and that none of his friends had ever noticed the hawk. Then the boy might invent a name or description for the bird, saying perhaps that he saw a hawk in the woods but that this hawk moved so swiftly that it was more of a particle of sunlight reflecting among the tree branches than a normal hawk. Suppose he tells his friends about the 'sunlight hawk' and then they go into the woods and see this type of hawk, which they recognize by the hawk appearing to be sunlight sparkling in the trees. The hawk becomes known as the 'sunlight hawk' and the boy and his friends use the name, 'sunlight hawk' as if this is truly the hawk's name or a true description of the hawk even though it is not made of sunlight. In a similar way in which we can trace the name, 'sunlight hawk,' to its origin to understand how it can be applied truthfully to a certain bird, we can trace other metaphors to see form where they stem and why we use them as if they are literally true. Percy suggests that we will find it a basic phenomenon that we have the primitive desire to name novel experience to be the root of metaphor, exemplifying a sensible way of viewing the birth of a metaphor that does not require any sort of psychological explanation of mysterious mental processes.

Johnson and Lakoff provide many examples of metaphors and so we can trace one of these to see if we can account for it satisfactorily in the same manner in which we can account for the 'sunlight hawk.' Johnson and Lakoff posit the system of metaphors, "HAPPINESS IS UP; SAD IS DOWN," and one of these metaphors is, "My spirits rose" (Lakoff and Johnson 15). Suppose a young person has lived a happy life and has never been unhappy for an extended length of time. Then, for some reason, this person becomes sad. After a while something happens that makes him suddenly feel better. If this person does not have the vocabulary to describe his spirits rising, he nevertheless will want, if this desire is a basic phenomenon or part of what it is to be human, to describe this feeling. He already uses the words, "spirits" and "rose" the way that we use them literally, so he does not use them together. Presented with the problem of lacking the vocabulary to describe his feelings, our young person tries to express himself anyway, creating metaphor. He has the word, "spirits" to use for his inner feelings but to say that his spirits or he became happy does not describe the feeling that he has; his feeling is not just one of becoming happy but is a specific internal feeling of something we do not have a literal word to describe. Perhaps he thinks of climbing a tree and of when he finally reaches the top, the sunlight suddenly hits his face, he feels its warmth, and he can see far around himself. Perhaps his inner feeling is something like this change from being in the dark branches working towards the top of the tree to the light, warmth, rest, and far sight at the top. He then says, "My spirits rose!"

The vocabulary of going up could have been drawn upon for any number of reasons. The vocabulary used in a new metaphor only must be vocabulary with which others can easily relate to the new use so that the metaphor can become widespread. Johnson and Lakoff's physical basis could be the vocabulary that was drawn upon to try to describe the feeling

for which there was no specific enough vocabulary. The metaphor could have perhaps been different but it would have had to have been equally as culturally acceptable in order to spread. We therefore need not posit strange uncomprehendable, non-propositional structures that concepts have before we link them up with and put them into propositional structures in order to account for metaphor. We need only recognize that forming metaphors is part of what humans do as human beings because it is a basic phenomenon for us to want to describe or name everything that catches our attention, even when we lack the vocabulary to do so. Metaphors that we use as if literally true, therefore, are pervasive because human beings tend to extend the use of the existing vocabulary when it is insufficient for their purposes.

**Conclusion**:

Johnson and Lakoff's project to expose the pervasiveness of metaphor, therefore, takes us halfway towards realizing that metaphor can be true and is pervasive, but then they get sidetracked, turning to psychology to explain our human nature. The psychological theory is doomed to be unhelpful to us because it provides a causal explanation for a problem that is not about what causes us to be the way that we are, but is about how we can make sense of the way that we are. The explanatory part of Johnson and Lakoff's project does not further their goal of demonstrating the important role that metaphor plays in cognition because it focuses us on schematic structures that explain how metaphors are formed instead of how humans use the metaphors. The theory thus ends up over-emphasizing the role that metaphors play in structuring our thought and thereby only explains the existence of metaphors that provide the structure to concepts that enables us to understand our experience, but many metaphors are not necessary for us to make sense of our experience. The experiential theory therefore does not explain the pervasiveness or even the existence of all metaphor.

Although Johnson and Lakoff's image schemata theory also leads us into problems as to how we can know about the pre-structured world and where and how metaphorical understanding begins, the descriptive investigation into metaphor does demonstrate the pervasiveness of metaphor and the difficulty the objective and subjective theories of meaning have accounting for metaphor. We can make use of the beneficial aspect of Johnson and Lakoff's project by continuing their descriptive investigation into the natural history of metaphor.

We can, therefore, substitute an anthropological investigation for Johnson's psychological explanation and see how metaphor can be literally false but used as if it is true. Metaphor can be described through the natural history of human beings as having the basic phenomenon to desire to name or categorize the novel according to the existing categorizes we have into which the novel does not necessarily neatly fit. The truth of metaphor is not dependent upon the literal truth of how the words are customarily used, but upon the way the metaphor itself is customarily used. Instead of bypassing the question with an unhelpful causal explanation that leaves us wondering why we are constituted in such a way as to be creatures that regularly employ inconsistencies as psychological explanation does, natural history demonstrates how metaphor is connected

to literal language. The clear view of natural history thereby shows us how we can consistently use metaphors as if they were literally true by allowing us to see the origins of a metaphor. Johnson and Lakoff's project, therefore, provides us with much helpful information, but is ultimately a misguided endeavor, looking to psychology to solve a problem that ought to be solved by getting a clear view of the problem.

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