

2008

Metaphoric perspective theory: Language to action for the self, individuals, communities, and culture

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Metaphoric Perspective Theory:
Language to Action for the Self, Individuals, Communities, and Culture

by

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Thesis

Submitted to the Department of Communication and Theatre Arts

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Communication

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June 10, 2008

Ypsilanti, Michigan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While many students complete a thesis at the end of various degree programs, the present work represents so much more than a thesis to me. I have long felt that the types of ideas I was likely to employ in academia would not earn favor from tenured academicians. I do not devalue other lines of thought or modes of inquiry; I merely operate from a philosophical base that yearns to be different. While this work may or may not achieve that end, it is one of many attempts I have made to set myself apart from the traditional scholar in modes of thought, methods of thought, and topics of thought.

None of this insanity would have been possible without the uplifting support and critique of Dr. Michael Tew, Dr. Dennis Patrick, and Raymond Quiel. I thank them not only for their assistance with the present work but also for being my professors and guides in more than a dozen classes. I am forcibly aware now that without the influence of these and other professors, I would not have the will, imagination, or confidence to do something so audacious as evinced by this work, to create a new communication theory at the age of twenty-five.

I would also like to acknowledge the eternal support of my wife, who has often forcibly turned off the television I was watching and pushed my nose into a random communication text. Her demeanor was often motivation enough to get back to work. Her input, kind and unkind alike, has contributed greatly to the commencement and completion of this work. She believes that I will, one day, be as established and renowned as Kenneth Burke. While I find this unlikely, it has encouraged me beyond value to continue in my pursuits, regardless of the opposition.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to everyone I know who has suffered from the lack of my attention while I was working on it. Given the amount of time and effort that was put into this thesis, that includes nearly everyone I know.

ABSTRACT

Metaphoric and tropic language have been a hallmark of human communication throughout the ages. From ancient examples and first attempts at scholarly understanding to postmodern lexicons of metaphor theory in two-dozen disciplines, the understanding of this lingual phenomenon has evolved and grown over arguably the entire length of human history. Communication scholars note the presence and prevalence of tropic language in practice and assert the power that it may have on how humans conceptualize the world around them.

Presented here is complete theory based in these long lines of lingual thought that asserts a direct and powerful relationship between language use and thought, belief, understanding, and action. Amidst a growing database of communication theory offering prediction and solution, this theory of explanation includes a complete philosophical grounding and a methodology for understanding metaphoric perspectives in action. The present work continues by offering two extended examples of the theory in application.

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Metaphor: The 800-Pound Gorilla in the Room

“Businesses are machines.” “Relationships are a process.” “Children are monsters.”

Metaphors are incredibly common and diverse. They are wide-reaching and wide-ranging tools of expression. They are used consciously and artfully. They are used unknowingly and mechanically. Metaphors dominate every aspect of communication: in large public address, organization interaction, group situations, interpersonal communication and even when speaking or thinking to oneself. “Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish – a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language... We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3).

Anything so incredibly rich, diverse, powerful and pervasive is worthy of consideration. What are these metaphors, other than another run of the mill categorical grouping of words with a certain function? What is it about metaphors that make them so integrative? Why do we use metaphors in the first place? Do metaphors have an impact on our day-to-day lives? If there is an impact, to what extent is that impact inherent in the metaphor or manifested by our usage of it? Do metaphors exist in a vacuum, operating independently of one another? Do metaphors exist as stones thrown on a pond, the resulting ripples from each multiplying and magnifying each other?

When it comes to metaphors there are innumerable questions. The incredibly pervasive nature of this linguistic phenomenon gives rise to the idea that if there is some sort of impact or effect inherent in or manifested by the use of metaphor, the resulting impact could be enormous. The sheer reach and scope of metaphor demands that it be

scrutinized and postulated about. The inquiry into a subject like metaphor must begin with the beginning; the origins and history of the form must be considered. As the history of this linguistic phenomenon is revealed we can begin to consider its role, function, and importance within the frame of its origins. From the frame of metaphor and other forms of tropic language, the present work will present metaphoric perspective theory, a construct that seeks to explain the integral nature of metaphoric and other tropic language on thought, belief, understanding, and action.

In deference to the reader, the present work is divided into three organizational chapters. The division of this work into chapters could be simplified into a purpose classification, as Chapter One serves inquiry, Chapter Two serves an explanatory purpose, and Chapter Three serves a demonstrative purpose. Chapter One begins with the origins and history of tropic language. This lays a foundation for the second half of Chapter One, as some metaphoric theories and applications are considered. By outlining some of the existing thought on tropic language, this chapter sets the stage for the presentation of a new theory of metaphor, presented in Chapter Two. Chapter Two begins by laying philosophical grounding for the theory, with individual precepts either embracing or rejecting facts and ideas presented throughout Chapter One. Chapter Two moves on to construct a metaphoric perspective piece by piece, showing composition as a way of explanation. Chapter Two finally presents a method for finding these metaphoric perspectives in action. Chapter Three takes the metaphoric perspective method proposed and highlights two case study examples of the theory in action. In light of these case study examples, Chapter Three presents potential implications of metaphoric

perspectives. The work then presents closing thoughts and considerations for the theory in the future.

Chapter One - Foundations

The Origins of Metaphor

The dawn of the metaphor in use is potentially unknowable in our imperfect understanding of the diversity of language use. However, we can trace the origins of metaphor to some of its earliest documented uses, discussions, and classifications. Often the present day definition of metaphor, heard in a middle school classroom, is as simple as “a comparison or likening of one thing to another without using “like” or “as,” which would be a simile.” While this simple explanation is technically true, the origins of metaphor reveal a much deeper and more complex understanding of the form.

The word *metaphor* comes from the Greek *metaphora* meaning “a transfer.” Within rhetorical usage it refers to “transference of a word to a new sense” from *metaphero*, meaning “to transfer” or “to carry over” (Metaphor, 2008). Generally, a metaphor makes a connection between two subjects. “The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 5). The terminology used to define and reference each subject had taken many forms throughout the long history of metaphor study. I. A. Richards describes the two subjects as a *tenor* and a *vehicle*. The tenor is the subject to which attributes are ascribed while the vehicle is the subject from which the attributes are derived (Richards, 1936).

“Other authors employ the general terms *ground* and *figure* to denote what Richards identifies as tenor and vehicle” (Metaphor, 2008). George Lakoff uses the terms

target and *source*. According to Lakoff, metaphors fit the formula of TARGET *is* SOURCE (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Within semiotics, parallels of these terms can be found as the *signifier* and the *signified* (Chandler, 2001). While each of these terminologies calls different interpretations and results to use, most notably with the direct relationship proposed by Lakoff, much of these differences do not add to the understanding of the present work. However, in cases where this may not be so, mention of it will be made.

Where did metaphor come from in the first place? Metaphor may be logically linked to the tendency of living things to categorize the things around them. “No creature, however primitive, can survive very long unless it can deal with issues such as: “Is this the kind of situation where I eat this, escape from it, mate with it, look after it, ignore it...?” (Open University, 2004). Individual cells interact with their world and store information about that world on the chemical level. The largest mobile organisms, blue whales, communicate with calls and song over miles and have brains that interpret and categorize information constantly. Current science cannot assert, and probably never will be able to assert, that we *know* metaphor use, comparison and categorization in language, has evolved from this instinctual tendency shared among living things. However, the similarity between these tendencies and the proliferation of metaphor usage in our human world lends merit to modern metaphors’ birth as “categorization *to survive*.”

The idea of “categorization to survive” is reinforced in the work of Roy Harris. Harris identifies the basic infrastructure of all communication as fundamentally three things: biomechanical functions, macrosocial functions, and circumstantial functions (1996). Biomechanical functions refer to the physical process of communicating,

including but not limited to the biological functioning of speech organs and the movement of sound through a medium. Macrosocial functions include those social constructs, needs, and norms from within which the communication takes place.

Circumstantial functions include all ancillary contextual aspects of the particular event.

Harris says that these three things "...jointly provide the infrastructure on which every communication process rests" (1996, p. 31). Harris further argues: "We are born into a world which has a certain communicational infrastructure already in place. It is this infrastructure which allows us to participate straight away in communication with others; and that participation is a condition of our survival. We communicate neither by choice nor by chance, but of necessity. From the start, we communicate in order to live" (p. 24). As we communicate in order to survive and Harris, among others, note categorization as an architectonic process within communication, we categorize in order to survive.

Mooij presents a different argument that harkens to the paradox of the chicken and the egg. In *A Study of Metaphor*, Mooij notes the possibility of original language being entirely literal. Concrete words directly related to perceptible things dominated early language use. "Afterwards, the need to speak about abstract ideas would have arisen, which need would have been met especially by metaphors" (Mooij, 1976, p. 11). On the other hand, Mooij presents the possibility (although presented as admittedly less likely) that the "initial stage of language would have been completely metaphorical" (p. 11).

There are problems with each of these points of view. Consider first the idea that all language evolved as literal representations of perceived objects. If abstract language evolved out of the need to refer to things with more than just the existing solely literal

lexicon, how did that language spread? How does one early speaker relate to others that this new abstract word is not a literal word? How do early speakers talk about abstracts without a language lexicon built for abstracts?

The questions raised by an originally abstract language system are just as pointed. As Mooij notes, “The metaphorical use of language is only possible if a literal use of language is already in existence... and that without literal use of language the concept ‘metaphorical use of language’ is empty” (1976, p. 11). If language began as entirely abstract, abstract needs a new definition. How does one know a literal usage from an abstract usage with only an abstract for comparison? Does the solitary abstract then not become the literal, since it becomes the original or functional means of reference?

As presented, the complex relationship between the types of language used and when they appeared on the language use timeline becomes the ancient dance of the chicken and egg. As with the avian paradox, Mooij offers no answers here as to which came first, literal or abstract language.

Mooij offers more solid claims when it comes to the functions served by metaphoric language. It may be that the rise and growth of metaphor in human language is in response to these functions and needs that it fills so well. Mooij notes first that “the standard vocabulary with its more or less fixed rules of application and mutual interchangeability – however comprehensive and detailed it may be... is not comprehensive and detailed enough to cover in advance every situation that may present itself in the external world as well as in the human mind. Occasionally, new provisions have to be made when there are no words with the literal meaning required” (Mooij,

1976, pp. 12-13). Also called *inopia*, this inadequate standard vocabulary creates a need for just the type of function offered by metaphor.

Mooij next asks how this process leads to “intersubjectively understandable results” (1976, p. 13). The process reinforces itself as new figurative word usage automatically triggers the closest informational relations in the senders and receivers. When a new word or phrase is heard, we try to reason what it might reference by accessing stored information about existing or used referents.

The principle of economy in language use is presented next, as Mooij argues that we tend to use existing words as much as we can before attempting to create new words or metaphoric relationships. “Language provides us with the equipment, as it were, not only to reconnoiter and interpret new situations, but also to find our way back from there to what we are already familiar with” (Mooij, 1976, p. 14). We use these metaphors to “describe, interpret and elucidate these situations in terms of what we have described, interpreted and elucidated before” (p. 14). Mooij finally argues that metaphors enable us to gain insight on what is unknown and contribute to insights on “what is already (all too) well-known” (p. 16).

The Adolescence of Metaphor

Unfortunately, when tracing the origins of metaphor use in our own species, we are limited by the medium of presentation that has survived. “We have no idea about metaphor use by early humans because we have no records of what they said, though metaphor is certainly a powerful element of modern pre-literate aboriginal cultures that seem to have had stable cultures for very long periods” (Open University, 2004). Being

limited by the media that survive we find the earliest possible metaphor usage in the paintings found on ancient caves in southern France. At the Chauvet-pont-d'arc caves we find drawings of rhinos and panthers from thirty thousand years ago. While they could be interpreted as literal representations of objects from the world, a sculpture of a man-lion from the same time period discovered in southern Germany was obviously a symbolic representation (Open University).

While many consider the writings of Aristotle to breathe life into metaphor for the first time in our history, there is incontrovertible evidence of written metaphor use that predates the life of Aristotle by two millennia. In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, generally regarded as one of the oldest if not the oldest surviving long work in written form, we find the following passage: “The heavens roared and the earth rumbled; it became deathly still, and darkness loomed. A bolt of lightning cracked and a fire broke out, and where it kept thickening, there rained death. Then the white-hot name dimmed, and the fire went out, and everything that had been falling around turned to ash” (Damrosch, 2007). Notice the metaphor usage in the included passage from the fourth of twelve tablets etched in cuneiform around 2750 BCE. There are at least fifteen examples of metaphoric language in this short excerpt.

We find similarly ancient examples of metaphor usage in writing within Egyptian works. In *The Maxims of Ptahhotpe* we find the following passage: “The body of love is more than contentment, and your back will be clothed by it... It is he who will live by means of it, and he will make a good arm toward you; quiet will last long, for the love of you is in the bodies of those who love you; see, it is goodwill which desires to hear” (Faulkner, 1986). This work, which is a set of musings and advice of the wise elder

Ptahhotpe to his king, Isesi, are about 4500 years old. Ptahhotpe uses heavily tropic language to impart his lessons in written form. Also consider "...death is before me today, the sky when it clears, a man's wish to see home after numberless years of captivity," which is an excerpt from a four thousand year old Egyptian poem (Open University, 2004).

Moving closer to the life of Aristotle but still predating his lengthy consideration of metaphor by more than millennia we find illustrative examples in the Vedic texts. Particularly in the oldest, the Rig Veda (composed around 1500 BCE), we find numerous passages offering well-versed usage of metaphor. "He stirs with life in wombs dissimilar in kind, born a lion or a loudly-bellowing bull, Vaisvanara, as of old, mounted the cope of heaven, heaven's ridge, well greeted by those of noble songs" (Anonymous, 1500 BCE). Similar passages reflecting extensive usage of metaphors can be found throughout the oldest sections of the Torah, the Jahwist or "J" sections, first recorded around 950 BCE.

Breaking away from the first uses of metaphor and other tropic forms we enter the era when philosophers, teachers, and philologists become concerned with the study of form and the formation of complex theories regarding them. Centuries before the foundational treatises of the Greek world were envisioned lay evidence of metaphor theory in formation. Egyptian teachers, viziers, and wise men had begun to formulate theories of rhetoric as early as four thousand years ago (Fox, 1983). Down through the dynasties this conceptual rhetoric, found in advice about improving the efficacy of speech, created a foundation that is mirrored and expanded upon in later Western traditions. Throughout this ancient formation of theory about rhetoric we find traces of

metaphor and analogy. They are mentioned as tools of expression with explanatory power.

Within the Greek world, the beginnings of rhetorical theory start to take shape. Empedocles, called the inventor of Sicilian rhetoric, cast his philosophical arguments in terms of metaphor, analogy and antithesis (Enos, 1993). During the fifth century BCE, Empedocles utilized metaphor in poetic form, creating treatises in verse. Later, the usefulness of metaphor and analogy would translate to other forms in the dawning rhetorical theory.

In the wake of upheavals and land disputes caused by the tyrant Thrasybulus, Corax of Sicily devised a format for men to win their legal claims for their land (Corax, 2008). He created the following format for judicial speeches: prose, narration, statement of arguments, refutation of opposing arguments and summary. This format is the foundation for later rhetorical theories (Corax, 2008). Within the form, metaphor and analogy find a place in the prose and narration sections of the Corax model. Corax would later pass these teachings on to one of his students, Tisias, who would later refine them and pass them on to Isocrates. Between Corax, Tisias, Gorgias, and possibly Isocrates, the suggestions in form and style would compose the first structured format that included notable implementation of metaphor and other artistic means (Kennedy, 1959).

We find within the works of Aristotle the next major treatments of metaphoric form. Harris argues that earlier Greeks, including Plato and Socrates, did not understand metaphor and were too preoccupied with the origins and etymologies of words to investigate the intricacies of metaphor usage. Aristotle gives us not only the first major treatment of metaphor, but also the first coherent one (Harris, 1996). In *Rhetoric* and

Poetics Aristotle continued the structuring of rhetorical forms, including a substantial section on the uses of metaphor. “Aristotle features metaphor as one of the three most effective elements of style...” (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995). In both *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* Aristotle advises orators and writers to create metaphors that are engaging, not too obscure and not too obvious.

Aristotelian Type	Example	Explanation
From genus to species	There lies my ship.	Lying at anchor is a species of the genus “lying.”
From species to genus	Verily ten thousand noble deeds hath Odysseus wrought.	Ten thousand is a species of the genus “large number.”
From species to species	(a) With blade of bronze drew away the life. (b) Cleft the water with the vessel of unyielding bronze.	(a) To “draw away” is used for “to cleave.” (b) To “cleave” is used for to “draw away.” Both to “cleave” and to “draw away” are a species of “taking away.”
From analogy	(a) To call the cup the “Shield of Dionysus.” (b) To call the shield the “Cup of Ares.”	(a) The cup is to Dionysus as the shield is to Ares. (b) The shield is to Ares as the cup is to Dionysus.

Figure 1. Aristotelian Metaphors (Rapp, 2002)

Within *Poetics*, recorded around 350 BCE, we find a seminal definition of metaphor: “the application of an alien name by transference either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy, that is, proportion” (Butcher, 1994). For Aristotle, the genus is the broader or original use of a word or phrase. The species is the specific implementation of that word into a subject statement, applying an otherwise inapplicable word to the situation. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy includes a division of this definition into Aristotle’s four distinct types.

Aristotle regards metaphors from the fourth category, those from analogy, as the most important (Rapp, 2002). Figure 1 offers each Aristotelian type and examples for them.

Coalescing the ideas of Aristotle, Plato, and Isocrates are the treatises of Cicero. Marcus Tullius Cicero, a Roman orator, lawyer, and statesman, dominated understanding of classical rhetoric (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995). In 54 BCE, Cicero completed *De Oratore*, a complex and polished statement about rhetoric. The text is written in the form of a long dialogue between two scholars who disagree on the nature of rhetoric. While they never reach a conclusion or agreement, therefore not projecting a clear view of rhetoric as a text, the work contains a discussion of style and within it, an elaboration of metaphor use.

Later, Quintilian would build off the work of Cicero by creating *Institutio Oratoria*. Quintilian, a well-paid teacher in Rome in 71 CE, is noted for saying that an orator is “a good man speaking well” (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995). He stressed the “speaking well” aspect of this, identifying eloquence and style as dominant considerations to orators and writers. Within his discussion of these tenets, metaphor and tropic language are highly regarded as tools within style.

Later, the notable contributions to metaphor and metaphor study continue into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Erasmus, the most widely read author of his time, argued that good writing must have variety and illustration (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995). Attention to style is imperative, as “language becomes a most valuable tool” and through metaphor and other tropic language it can be full of “figurative amplification” (Covino & Jolliffe, p. 20).

It may be that the investigation into the origins, history, and evolution of metaphor use and need is academic. Some scholars, including Roy Harris, argue that this

line of historical inquiry is potentially irrelevant in the understanding of larger communication problems. “How it began, whether for the individual, the community or the entire human race, is as irrelevant as trying to deal with current road traffic problems by investigating how individual motorists come to buy their first car, or delving into the original invention of the internal combustion engine” (Harris, 1996, 22). While the problems that Harris addresses and refers to with the included comment are primarily those of differences between integrationist and segregationist points of view in communication and semiology studies, Harris would likely apply this same argument to the inquiry of the origins of metaphor as well.

This may be the point of view of some or even many scholars. However, metaphoric perspective theory requires a certain understanding of the origins of metaphoric language. In fact, a certain set of assumptions about the evolution of this lingual phenomenon, as will be noted later, is one philosophical grounding for the theory. For this reason, the present study notes the comments of Harris and similar scholars but includes information about the origins and adolescence of metaphor.

Metaphoric and Tropic Language

Aristotle regards metaphors from the fourth category, those from analogy, as the most important (Rapp, 2002). These metaphors would seem most like metaphors in heavy use today. Analogy, like metaphor, is one of the tropes, a grouping of terms describing different ways to play on words. Tropes use words in ways other than what are considered the normal or literal form (Trope, 2008). As Aristotle pointedly defines

metaphor in terms of a similar trope, analogy, it is relevant to consider the tropes and how they relate to each other.

“Trope comes from the Greek *trop*, “a turn, a change” and that from *trep*, “to turn, to direct, to alter, to change.” We can imagine a trope as a way of turning a word away from its normal meaning, or turning it into something else” (Webster, 2006). Tropes being viewed as ways of changing meaning from the normal or literal form is an argument that begins as early as Gorgias of Leontinoi (500 BCE) and continues into the works of Aristotle and Quintilian (Trope, 2006). Words with “non-literal but meaningful use” were called *tropos* in the earliest works of Grecian rhetoric (Mooij, 1976, 3). A more broad understanding of tropes that is “less problematic” is that they offer us “a variety of ways of saying ‘*this is (or is like) that*’” (Chandler, 2001). Along with metaphor, some of the most referenced tropes are metonymy, synecdoche, irony, antanaclasis, simile, and analogy.

Metonymy speaks to relationships through proximity or correspondence. For example, referring to the corruption of individual politicians as “the corruption of Washington D. C.” would be a use of metonymy. “Metonyms are based on various indexical relationships between [subjects]” (Chandler, 2001, p. 12). The most notable among them is the substitution of the effect for the cause, as in “don’t get hot under the collar!” which substitutes the effect (heat) for the cause (anger). Among others, metonymy includes substitution of cause for effect (as above) object for user, substance for form, place for event, place for person, place for institution, and institution for people (Chandler). Other types have been considered, including the substitution of producer for product, object for user, and controller for controlled (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Metonymy is similar to metaphor but varies slightly in purpose and usage, if not in form. Lakoff and Johnson characterize it best: “Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding. Metonymy, on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows one entity to *stand for* another” (1980, p. 36). While metonymy still serves to increase understanding, the impetus for its employment is geared more towards temporary referential substitution than for sense making driven relationship construction.

Synecdoche has a long and contested history in definition and application. “Some theorists identify synecdoche as a separate trope, some see it as a special form of metonymy and others subsume its functions entirely within metonymy” (Chandler, 2001). Most theorists would agree that synecdoche creates the word play by relating concepts in different formats. One way synecdoche accomplishes this is by mentioning a part as representative of the whole, such as by saying “hired guns” when referring to mercenary soldiers. Also, a swimmer might think of an approaching Great White shark: “Those massive jaws are swimming closer.” The teeth of the predator are a synecdoche for the entire animal. This substitution of a part for the whole is one of the most common descriptions of synecdoche (Chandler, 2001; Lanham, 1969).

Synecdoche can also relate a part with the name of the whole, the specific for the general, the general for the specific, and a thing with its composition material. Synecdoche is diverse and widespread enough to warrant separate consideration, even though many scholars consider it simply “... a special case of metonymy” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 35).

Irony is arguably the most “radical” of the four main tropes (Chandler, 2001). Dealing almost exclusively with opposites, irony creates the opposite of the expected or the standard. Making reference to a horrible tragedy with “good times” is a use of the ironic trope. The substitution by dissimilarity or disjunction could also entail variations such as understatement, overstatement, and exaggeration (Chandler). It is possible that the rooting of irony can be traced to antilogy and the teachings of Protagoras. Antilogy, or antilogic, is based on compounding question with opposite question in a stylistic method of answering inquiry (Jarratt, 1991).

Antanaclasis is a form of word twist that uses repetition and the change of word meaning to evoke a larger meaning (Trope, 2008). While many scholars have long held the importance of antanaclasis, it is arguably another sub-form of analogy, metaphor or synecdoche.

Metaphor is closely related to simile, and the two are often confused. The only true difference between a metaphor and a simile is the explicitness of the comparison made between the two subjects. It could be argued that metaphor is a less explicit form of relating relationship than simile since it lacks “like” or “as” (Metaphor, 2008), especially due to the ease with which most metaphors and similes can be interchanged. However, some similes cannot be expressed as metaphors, indicating a special added clarity inherent in the addition of the explicit “like” or “as.” While simile argues for an apparent relationship between two subjects, metaphor states that the subjects are the same or interchangeable (Chandler, 2001). Therefore it is more appropriate to think in terms of simile as a sub-form of metaphor, using and perhaps benefiting from additional explicitness in comparison. However, the difference between the two may be academic.

In comparison to the difference between metaphor and metonymy, for example, metaphor and simile are only trivially different (Metaphor, 2008).

Last we turn to analogy, the means to which Aristotle finds metaphor. Analogy could be said to include well-understood concepts like parables, allegories, and exemplification. Each of these is, at a basic level, a more drawn-out means of metaphor. Analogy can best be explained as shared abstraction. Within analogy, the metaphorical association drawn is not between specific aspects that a target and a source share but between more abstract qualities.

Among these larger tropes there are also references to emphasis, euphemism, hyperbole, litotes, personification, *pars pro toto*, *totum pro parte*, *antonomasia*, and others as tropes (Mooij, 1976). The expansive numbers of minutely differing tropes came under fire in the age of Humanism. Various efforts were made to compile similar tropes into each other, reducing the whole into a few distinct and easily distinguishable tropes.

The most reduced tropic distinction held all as types of either metaphor or metonymy (Mooij, 1976). Some scholars of the time chose a tripartition instead, identifying only metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche. In each of these, irony was classified as a specialized type of metaphor. Stutterheim made further classification with a quadripartition into metaphor, irony, metonymy, and synecdoche (1941). As will be noted later, Burke and others made similar classifications.

How then are we to know what defines a metaphor and what would be classified as something else? Many scholars would focus on the contrast between relevant terms as an indicator of metaphor use. “The outstanding characteristic of metaphor is the sort of shock it produces” (Henle, 1958, 182). “An obvious point to begin with is the contrast

between the word... and the remaining words by which it is accompanied” (Margolis, 1962, 219). According to Mooij, “Weinrich has described metaphor as a word which is contrary to the expectations raised by the context” (Mooij, 1976, 19). Konrad and Ransom regard metaphor as the introduction of the foreign, or new element (Konrad, 1939; Ransom, 1950).

Perhaps the most representative, if not most concrete, identification of metaphor comes from Beardsley, who says: “We must look for the metaphoricalness of the metaphor, so to speak, in some sort of conflict that is absent from literal expressions” (1962, p. 298). Each of these definitions answers questions and creates new ones. In the end the clearest and most functional point is made by Reddy: “Metaphor occurs... whenever words in an utterance do not have referents within their conventionally defined, literal spheres of reference” (1969, p. 248). Mooij plays with the wording of this statement a bit but mostly agrees with its merit.

Some have argued that tropic language is only commonplace within poetry or primarily literary constructs. However some argue that metonymy and metaphor are architectonic modes of communicating meaning (Jakobson & Halle, 1956). Lakoff and Johnson go further, arguing that metonymy and metaphor are the basis for everyday understanding (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Chandler, 2001). “While in the later tradition the use of metaphors has been seen as a matter of mere decoration, which has to delight the hearer, Aristotle stresses the cognitive function of metaphors. Metaphors, he says, bring about learning” (Rapp, 2002).

Not everyone agrees in the power, pervasiveness or even neutrality of tropic language. In fact, some scholars have harshly criticized the linguistic forms. Metaphor,

tropic language in general, and the larger umbrella of rhetoric have been the subject of debate for ages.

During the seventeenth century, the tropes and rhetoric usage came heavily under fire. A philosopher named Samuel Parker said: “All those theories in philosophy which are expressed only in metaphorical termes, are not real Truths, but the meer products of imagination, dress’d up in a few spangled empty words... Thus their wanton and luxuriant fancies climbing up into the bed of Reason, do not only defile it by unchaste and illegitimate embraces, but instead of real conceptions and notices of things, impregnate the mind with nothing but Ayerie and subventaneous phantasms” (Open University, 2004). Parker argues that the pretty words of tropic language are useless, misleading, and utterly meaningless, lending no help to the quest for understanding. Interesting to note is that although he rails against them, throughout his written and spoken works Parker actually uses tropic language often and well.

In 1690 John Locke criticized metaphor and analogy by denouncing rhetoric and the “artificial and figurative application of words.” Locke says: “... if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow that all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness; all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheats... It is evident how much men love to deceive and be deceived, since rhetoric, that powerful instrument of error and deceit, has its established professors, is publicly taught, and has always been had in great reputation” (Open University, 2004). The use of metaphor, analogy, and the other tropes, “perfect cheats” as Locke calls them, are, according to him, tantamount to telling direct

falsehoods. Locke makes no distinction between tropic language and outright lies, laying great significance and superiority on directly literal language devoid of tropes.

Although knowledge of the tropes may go back millennia and we certainly see evidence of their use thousands of years ago, there have been certain individuals instrumental in trope theory along the way. The terming of “four basic tropes” to metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony can be traced back to Giambattista Vico in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Vico drew much of his musings from the sixteenth century work of Ramus (Vico, 1744/1968).

Drawing on this work, among others, the basic tropes were born again as “master tropes” in the work of Kenneth Burke. He argued that metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony all represent different forms of relationships between the signifier and the signified. The relationships, as categorized by Hayden White, are resemblance (metaphor), adjacency (metonymy), essentiality (synecdoche), and doubling (irony) (Chandler, 2001; White, 1979).

As noted earlier, many scholars throughout history have sought to reduce or centralize certain tropic forms. At this point in tropic theory, the exact count of a reduced number of centralized forms is still a matter of debate. While Vico, Burke, White, and others seek to define four tropes as central, basic, or master, others do not agree on the number (Chandler, 2001). Jakobson & Halle argued for a two-trope system that highlights just metaphor and metonymy, postulating that metaphor (selection) and metonymy (combination) “are the two basic axes of language and communication (Chandler, 2001).” In Figure 2, note that metaphor is concerned with paradigm on an

axis, encompassing selection, substitution, and similarity. Metonymy is syntagmatic and encompasses an axis of contiguity, combination, and contexture.

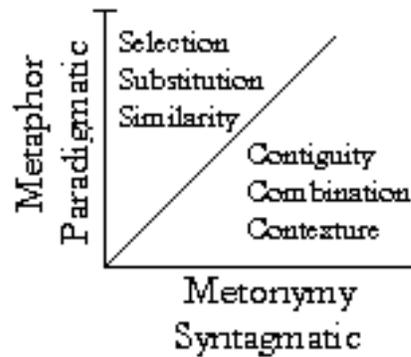


Figure 2. Axes of Language and Communication (Chandler, 2001)

The Diversification of Metaphor

Under the broad umbrella of metaphor there are a number of often subtle and occasionally diverse metaphor subtypes. The most common subtypes or categories of metaphor have definitions that are generally agreed upon by scholars. These include dead, mixed, epic, and extended metaphors.

A dead metaphor is one in which there is no obvious or present sense of the relationship between the two subjects. One of the simplest examples of this is the phrase “I have _____.” A more illustrative example would be the statements “get a hold of yourself,” or “to grasp this idea.” Each of these utilize a physical action to analogue something decidedly non-physical. The absence of a visible relationship between the subjects marks these as dead metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson disagree, arguing that a dead metaphor is a metaphor that does not interact with other metaphors and plays no particularly interesting role in metaphor concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Another metaphor sub-type is the mixed metaphor. This is not necessarily a correct or complete metaphoric form; however, it is common enough to warrant definition. Mixed metaphors are groups of metaphors within a single idea that are not compatible. “Once you open a can of worms they always come home to roost” is a slightly comic example of mixed metaphor in action. Two relatively common metaphors whose actions are non-compatible are used together in this and most other mixed metaphors, resulting in concept conflict or confusion.

An epic metaphor, sometimes referred to as Homeric, extends a metaphor far beyond the amount of illustration necessary. A number of great examples of this metaphor sub-type can be gleaned from the wit of Dr. Gregory House, a fictional diagnostician in the TV drama *House*. “There is not a thin line between love and hate. There is, in fact, a Great Wall of China with armed sentries posted every twenty feet between love and hate” (Attanasio, 2005). “Saying there appears to be some clotting is like saying there’s a traffic jam ahead. Is it a ten-car pile up or just a really slow bus in the center lane? And if it is a bus, is that bus thrombotic or embolic?” (Attanasio, 2005). In both of these examples, the character illustrates the point far beyond what would be required for the metaphor to function, characterizing them as epic metaphors.

Extended metaphors could almost be considered to be a metaphor chain. A single metaphor is started and subsequent subjects are fit into the characteristic subject of the metaphor. A very famous example of extended metaphors frames the world and then casts people within that framing: “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players, they have their exits and their entrances...” (Shakespeare, 2000).

The common and generally agreed upon sub-types of metaphor, including dead, mixed, epic, and extended, share classification with some less universal sub-types. While some scholars may disagree on the particulars of each definition in these less widely accepted terms, there are some generally accepted qualities for each. These other sub-types include dying metaphors, implied metaphors, simple metaphors, compound metaphors, complex metaphors, and absolute metaphors.

Dying metaphor refers to a particular quantity of usage of a certain metaphor. Rather than truly being a distinct type of metaphor, Eric Arthur Blair (pen name George Orwell) coined the term *dying metaphor* to refer to those metaphors used too often. "...There is a huge dump of worn-out metaphors which have lost all evocative power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves" (Orwell, 1946). Examples such as standing "shoulder to shoulder with..." are what Orwell would call over-used or dying metaphors.

Implied metaphors are metaphors that use numbers of adjectives to imply a comparison between an invisible subject and the stated subject. The phrase "ocean blue eyes" does not state that the visible subject (eyes) is oceanic, but that they share a characteristic with the invisible subject (the ocean) by being the same deep shade of blue.

A simple metaphor is exactly what it sounds like – a metaphor built on a clear and simple one-way comparison between subjects. The attribute identified as a primary subject is applied to the other subject, the tenor. Complex metaphors, on the other hand, utilize multiple metaphoric vehicles on a single subject. "That throws light on the subject," is an example of a complex metaphor. Compound metaphors engage multiple

attributes for the subject with fewer metaphors. For example, comparing a person to a tiger evokes images of grace, stealth, power, mystique, and intelligence.

What purists might call perfect metaphor, absolute metaphors are metaphors in which there is no visible relationship between subjects. The vehicle and tenor share no obvious attributes, traits, or characteristics. When such opposites are used in metaphor, the illustrative potential comes into play to say a great deal about the tenor. “My remote control is my passport to the world,” is an example of an absolute metaphor. The nature of this sub-type explains why it is sometimes called the paralogical or anti-metaphor.

Other types of metaphor like root metaphor and conceptual metaphor have been delineated over the years. Conceptual metaphors are generally viewed as large underlying associations of subject-quality relationships. Root metaphors are generally viewed as similar but sometimes seen as large constructs that explain the entire world or worldviews. Each of these concepts has roles within metaphoric perspective theory and will be related to in later sections.

Metaphor Use in Communication Theory

Within the realm of communication theory there are countless examples of metaphoric language and theories built on metaphoric constructs. Metaphoric perspectives theory, to be presented within this work, is no exception. A few communication theory metaphors will be discussed here; some others will be mentioned in the presentation of metaphoric perspective theory, as they hold special relationships with the proposed theory. The point of this work is not to investigate the relevancies or implications of each, and it is certainly not to represent a comprehensive list of them.

However, some contrasts will be made to these ideas in the delineation of the proposed theory and others within the examples of the same, so they merit mention and some comment.

The container metaphor, noted by Harris as communication from the transportation metaphor, privileges the *process* of communication (Harris, 1996). Information is put into a certain container and sent along a certain process between sender and receiver. Harris argues that from this metaphor, we might deduce that the process is more important than product. “This is a model which seems to have had its intellectual origins in the village post office. It confuses communication with transportation; the assumption being, apparently, that information comes in neatly wrapped parcels, clearly addressed to particular destinations, and that the only communication problem is how to send them on their way and ensure their safe arrival. What, if anything, is inside the parcel, or how it got inside in the first place, is not something for the student to worry about” (Harris, 1996, 5).

Not only is it unimportant how the information, whatever it is, got into the container being transported, it is also apparently irrelevant who was involved. “Even less is there any need to worry about *who* the sender and receiver are. Everything takes place at a level of abstraction which itself apparently stands in no need of justification and poses no theoretical problems” (Harris, 1996, 6). Except, as Harris argues, unfortunately for this metaphor, it does pose theoretical problems.

The problem, as Harris succinctly puts it, is one of noncontextuality. This metaphoric understanding of communication does not engage the context that the communication takes places within. The involved parties are irrelevant, the process of

creating and formulating a message to be communicated is irrelevant, and the actual content of the message is irrelevant. All that is relevant in this understanding of communication completely devoid of contextual considerations is the process by which messages get from point A to point B.

Lakoff and Johnson have similar comments about the models, as proposed by Reddy. They do acknowledge that from within their model of *target IS source*, the constructs that ideas are objects, linguistic expressions are containers, and communication is sending do have merit and are clearly evident in how we talk about language. However, they present a few problems that the construct does not address. Most powerfully, they argue that this model presupposes that words or sentences have meanings independent of context. Within a particularly homogenous group where contextual differences may not be present, the Reddy model would function adequately to explain the process. However, the conduit model cannot be utilized in “cases where context is required to determine whether the sentence has any meaning at all and, if so, what meaning it has” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 12).

Other metaphors have been prominent throughout communication theory, namely the machine metaphor. Consider the following, as Hacker relates the Weaver description and explanation of communication: “Weaver explains that a ‘communication system’ consists of an *information source* that selects a *message* out of a set of possible ones, the *transmitter* changes the message into the *signal* which is sent over the *communication channel* to the *receiver* which changes the signal back into a message for the *destination*. So far so good – for telephone engineers. But then Weaver explains: ‘...in oral speech, the information source is the brain, the transmitter is the voice mechanism producing the

varying sound pressure (the signal) which is transmitted through the air (the channel). When I talk to you, my brain is the information source, yours the destination; my vocal system is the transmitter, and your ear and the associated eighth nerve is the receiver” (Hacker, 1987, 485-505).

In this paraphrasing of the Weaver interpretation, Hacker highlights the center role that metaphor plays in the Weaver model, specifically the machine metaphor of communication. Weaver understands human communication by understanding machines and electronics, translating attributes and mechanisms to communication that are prominent in machines. Without the ability to draw metaphoric connections to machines, this explanation of communication might sound nonsensical. However, it does not stand alone. The explanation stands alongside a testament to its relevancy, as we see the processes described here functioning and flourishing within the machine world. The applications of the metaphor begin to make more sense.

Yet any scholar, Weaver included, must be wary of the implications of the association of things with other things. What is the danger here? As Lakoff & Johnson note, references to objects from metaphorical standpoints will call up “used” sections of the metaphor (1980). The machine metaphor used by Weaver involves “used” aspects of comparison to machines, such as the interconnectedness of the individual parts, the reliance on causal connections between parts to modulate action, and (perhaps not intentionally) the idea that the process that takes place changes very little over time.

What about the “unused” portions of the metaphor? When we think of communication in terms of being like a machine, we do not necessarily call to mind the connection that communication requires engineers to design it, skilled tradesmen to

assemble it, and mechanics to maintain or repair it. We do not necessarily call to mind the connection that communication, like machines, does not function without outside impetus. Yet what if we did? What if each of the “unused” aspects of the metaphoric comparison between machines and communication were called to mind when we made the connection?

We could observe that machines do not adapt well to new circumstances. A microwave is designed to cook things for a short period of time to a certain temperature. Could we dry clothing in a microwave? The same basic function of heating, internally and externally, is required. Yet the machine in question does not apply to very many *similar* functions, only to very specifically related ones, like making popcorn or defrosting frozen hamburger.

What about communication? If we called this “unused” aspect of machines to mind within the metaphoric comparison, what would it suggest about communication? It might suggest that communication does not adapt well to circumstances for which it was not perfectly suited. By this logic, telephones are incredibly poor replacements for face-to-face communication. The same basic function of interaction is solved but the particulars of interpersonal communication are lacking, such as the ability to read nonverbal indicators. The application of this “unused” aspect of the metaphor would suggest to us to stop communicating via email, telephone, letters, video conferencing, and a plethora of other media. However, we know very well that the strengths of many of these media outweigh some of the possible flaws. In this case, then, the “unused” aspect of metaphor, if applied, would be a disservice to our understanding of the target, as the

source and target *do not share all characteristics we might attribute from one to the other.*

What else might be suggested by the “unused” portions of the metaphoric comparison? It could be argued that machines, especially ones without internal memory and processing microchips, are mindless drones, slaves to their function. Is the same true of communication? Is communication methodological and static like the processes of machines? Is communication programmable like machines? Harris, an integrational semiologist, notes in *Signs, Language and Communication*, that the machine metaphor suggests communication functions in a vacuum, independent of context, as do many machines (Harris, 1996). Does communication require context or does it function equally well without it? Does communication break down like machines do?

Some of these we could answer “yes” to, pointing out that while certain “unused” attributions in metaphoric comparison may increase misunderstanding or distort understanding of the target, some other “unused” aspects of the comparison may illuminate the target or improve understanding. Consider the difference if we metaphorically think of communication as a living, breathing thing. Living things do not break down; they die. Thus communication is not something that breaks down but can be fixed or repaired; it would be something that dies, which cannot be brought back to life. What fault can there be, then, in the inclusion of often “unused” aspects of metaphoric comparison? The fault lies in the uncertainty. If we could control what “unused” aspects were called to mind we could highlight those that increased understanding only. Yet we cannot. We are just as likely to call to mind those that increase misunderstanding. At all

times, metaphoric comparison runs the risk of calling to mind “unused” portions of metaphor, along with all the baggage they may bring with them.

Some scholars would note that using these metaphors to conceptualize communication might be more difficult than it seems. Others might argue that the task is impossible and therefore useless. “What is communication?” thus appears on first inspection to be either a trivially silly question or a virtually unfathomable one. Either everyone knows the answer already, or else no one can begin to grasp what an adequate answer might look like” (Harris, 1996, 15). The problem with these metaphors is that of the used and unused portions of the metaphor. Each time a scholar tries to conceptualize communication in terms of something, all the problems associated with that source object arise and the metaphor is attacked. This leads to very complex explanations and unavoidable misunderstandings.

“This dilemma opens the door on the one hand to theorists who offer simplistic accounts in which the range and complexity of human communication processes are absurdly underestimated, and on the other hand to theorists who would invest our every word or gesture with profound sexual, sociological or even cosmic significance. Some claim to have discovered our nervous system already engaged in the production of signs with every act of perception. Others can barely account for a handshake without invoking the mathematics of Chaos theory. In brief, there is superficial reductionism at one extreme of the theoretical spectrum and *ivresse des grandes profondeurs* [deep drunkenness] at the other” (Harris, 1996, 15). While some attempts will be made later in the construction of the metaphoric perspective that Harris might categorize negatively,

the author feels that the nature of the discipline leaves this unavoidable and treks ahead anyway.

Metaphoric Power and Impact

This work may not be the most succinct way of delineating the scope and magnitude of metaphor consideration, but it does prompt the thought that something with so much theory based on it must surely be powerful. How, then, does this tropic language, these metaphors, creep into such a powerful position within our minds? How does it gain that power in the first place? What came first: the vehicle, the tenor, or the metaphor? The origin and pervasiveness of this power have direct implications for any theory, including the one presented in this work, seeking to explain or expand upon metaphoric impact.

Lakoff and Johnson argue extensively that the human conceptual system is “fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (1980, p. 53). According to their work, the way that we think about the world around us is structured in terms of metaphor, by way of metaphor concepts. With a thorough treatment of the subject including countless examples and illustrations, Lakoff and Johnson trace everyday language to these powerful metaphor concepts.

Within the Lakoff and Johnson model, the target and source share a fast bond in metaphoric use, to the point that they characterize the metaphor to represent that the target IS the source. For example, consider the construct of arguments. There are countless metaphors related to arguments, a number of which follow a particular pattern:

*Your claims are indefensible.
 He attacked every weak point in my argument.
 I've never won an argument with him.
 He shot down all of my arguments.*

Evident in this group of everyday statements made about argument is Lakoff and Johnson's example of the metaphor construct ARGUMENT IS WAR. The example illustrates the idea of metaphor concepts – that there are many metaphors in the simple format of the *x is y* metaphor, and that these larger metaphors are umbrella terms that are representative of countless similarly expressive but more complex metaphors. In the example, the concept is ARGUMENT IS WAR; the many metaphors that align under the concept are those listed above, like “your claims are indefensible.” It is suggested that the power of metaphor lies within these larger constructs that are the embodiment of the root meaning of the blanketed metaphors.

Not all metaphoric expression about argument will fit within this concept. Lakoff and Johnson do not argue that there are single source concepts for major targets and that most or all expressions can be understood in those terms. Admittedly, there are millions and millions of constructs that all cover countless metaphorical expressions. Argument is not just war... consider the following examples:

*He laid his main points in a nice neat row.
 My argument has a solid foundation.
 Once the first point fell, the whole argument came tumbling down.
 This point supports the other points, holds everything else up.*

In these metaphoric expressions, an argument is not war, an ARGUMENT IS STRUCTURE. Within this construct, arguments are things to be constructed properly, as those that don't will be too weak to stand. This is another incredibly common and widely

spread metaphor concept that applies to argument. While Lakoff & Johnson illustrate countless increasingly complex variations of their model in action throughout *Metaphors We Live By*, let it suffice to say that the possibilities of metaphor concepts are possibly limitless.

However, some constructs are more powerful than others. It is important to note that certain concepts are much more common and widespread than others. American culture tends to see much more ARGUMENT IS WAR and ARGUMENT IS STRUCTURE concepts than it tends to see of ARGUMENT IS TEAMWORK or ARGUMENT IS TRAVEL concepts. Metaphoric expressions that characterize argument as teamwork or travel, for example, are much more common in more community oriented societies and collectivist cultures. Our own individualistic culture highly prefers to characterize argument as war, evident in the broad reach of this concept in daily language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Metaphors We Live By builds on the prevalence and pervasiveness of certain strong metaphor concepts to argue that those concepts can and do have an impact on how we interpret the world around us. We engage the target in the world and in the process, make assumptions and conclusions about its nature, relating it to other targets in our minds. This, Lakoff and Johnson argue, is the nature of how we remember and relate the vast amounts of information that we take in and store throughout our lives (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

As we constantly engage new targets, we constantly refer to our memory, a databank of past targets and relationships between them, in an effort to place this new target. “A metaphor can serve as a vehicle for understanding a concept only by virtue of

its experiential basis” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 18). We cannot understand or utilize metaphor that references experiences we have not had and, likewise, experiences are all considered in light of other experiences, creating metaphorical relationships between them.

In this, Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphor concepts serve to help us categorize the world around us. Further, for humans to understand and conceptualize anything in the world outside their minds, they must interpret and categorize the information picked up by their senses, as alluded to by Gleizes & Metzinger: “...he accepted, without the slightest intellectual control, all that his retina presented to him. He did not suspect that the visible world can become the real world only by the operation of the intellect” (1968, pp 207-208).

The nature of metaphor allows us, within that categorization, to draw relationships between various targets and the metaphor concepts they are related to. This can sometimes create what Lakoff and Johnson refer to as “used” and “unused” parts of metaphor. When considering THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS we call to mind information about buildings to use and attach to theories, aiding our sense-making of theories. In this example, the “used” parts of the metaphor are the ideas that buildings have foundations, support, and are constructed. We relate this information to our sense making of theories, relating that theories must also have a foundation, support, and be constructed.

What of the “unused” portions of the metaphor? When we call information about buildings we could come up with: buildings have rodents, buildings have internal lighting, and buildings have entrances and exits. Why do we not utilize the metaphor and state that theories must also have rodents, internal lighting, and places to enter or exit?

We do not include these “unused” pieces of the metaphor because they often do not inform understanding of the target.

Some “unused” portions of the metaphor do inform about the target. Consider the illustrative, and rather amusing, examples from *Metaphors We Live By* when certain unusual and typically “unused” aspects of the metaphor are applied from buildings to theories:

*He prefers massive Gothic buildings covered with Gargoyles.
Complex buildings usually have problems with the plumbing.*

Becomes:

*He prefers massive Gothic theories covered with Gargoyles.
Complex theories usually have problems with the plumbing.*

The application of these two pieces of information about buildings to theories does not advise quite so much as did things like foundation, support, and so on. However if we applied these “unused” pieces of the metaphor, we might learn that the subject has a preference for large, ostentatious, foreboding, and dominating theories (attributes we might attach to “Gothic” or “Gargoyles”). We might also learn that the more complex the theory, the more likely it is to run aground of minor complications between the crisscrossed facets that make it up (as we find it problematic to locate and solve problems with large scale plumbing and electrical work). While these “unused” portions on the larger scale do not offer the sense-making that the “used” portions do, Lakoff and Johnson argue for their importance.

Lakoff and Johnson further make the case for these metaphoric expressions rooted in powerful metaphor concepts actually impacting action. “It is important to see that we don’t just *talk* about arguments in terms of war. We can actually win or lose arguments.

We see the person we are arguing with as an opponent. We attack his positions and defend our own..." (1980, p. 4). The metaphor concept of argument as war is so strong in our culture that it guides the way we engage in argument.

The metaphoric expressions do more than just illustrate the target with illusions of the source: the target *becomes* the source. We don't just *refer* to arguments in *terms* of war; we *act* as if arguments *are* war. The metaphor guides how we engage in argument, even how arguments are conducted and structured. The categorization of knowledge through metaphor relationships into metaphor concepts leads to the creation of norms from which we tend not to stray. "...this is the *ordinary* way of having an argument and talking about one. The normal way for us to talk about attacking a position is to use the words "attack a position." Our conventional ways of talking about arguments presuppose a metaphor we are hardly ever conscious of... We talk about arguments that way because we conceive of them that way- and we act according to the way we conceive of things" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 5).

It would appear that there are three main premises to take from *Metaphors We Live By*, the seminal work by Lakoff and Johnson. First they pose that metaphoric expressions are *patterned*, that they tend to fall into large umbrella concepts that vary dependent upon the culture. Second, they argue that these concepts play a role in sense making, as they *categorize* input. Finally, Lakoff and Johnson pose that the attribution of certain targets as certain sources has an impact on *action*, that metaphor does not just inhabit the world of language but shapes the world of deed.

According to Roy Harris, "Language comes to be seen as an intellectual straightjacket which moulds our perception of reality" (1996, p. 33). Might this not

extend to a particular incarnation of language: metaphor? As we lend greater and greater weight to metaphor and the impact of metaphor on human thought and action, the potential strength of metaphor as a guiding force continues to grow in kind. The stronger this force becomes, the less we are potentially able to combat it, to think or act outside of it, or to abandon it altogether.

The interaction between the metaphors we engage in and any results presumes a pathway along which this particular interaction could take place. Harris notes that this would be the realm of self-communication or self-talk (1996). It is important to consider the potential power of one to communicate with the self.

According to Harris, Plato himself situated thought as a soul talking to itself (1996). Watson states that "...what the psychologists have hitherto called thought is in short nothing but talking to ourselves" (1970, p. 238). While in some points of view characterizing self-talk as "just thinking" might seem to reduce the importance of the act, B. F. Skinner says that this process of thinking or talking to the self possesses "special properties" (Skinner, 1957, p. 208).

Skinner notes that: "When a man talks to himself, aloud or silently, he is an excellent listener... He speaks the same language... and has had the same nonverbal experience as his listener. He is subject to the same deprivations and aversive stimulations, and these vary from day to day or from moment to moment in the same way. As listener he is ready for his own behavior as speaker at just the right time and is optimally prepared to "understand" what he has said. Very little time is lost in transmission and the behavior may acquire subtle dimensions" (Skinner, 1957, p. 208).

Communication with the self becomes less the reduction or simplification of the communication act and more the example of the ideal or perfect one. Consider what interpersonal communication might look like if it was characterized as Skinner views self-talk: no misunderstandings, identical experience and interpretation, matching readiness and engagement... It is not hard to envision the implications of widespread communication with these desirable aspects.

Harris argues, however, that there are important differences between self-communication and interpersonal communication that must be taken into account. In a humorous delineation of examples, Harris points out the problems with likening the two. "Between self-communication and interpersonal communication there are ineradicable differences... I can greet others and take leave of them, but I can neither greet myself nor bid myself farewell. I can attract the attention of others by a wave or a shout, but waving or shouting to myself does not attract my own attention. I cannot tell myself what I already know: I can at best remind myself of it. And when I discover that I have sent myself an invitation to my own dinner party, it is time I took a holiday or went for a medical check-up. Not, in any case, time to write myself a note of acceptance" (1996, p. 172).

Within this train of thought, Harris advances the argument that self-talk and interpersonal communication should not be seen as too closely related. "It is an absurdity to treat A communicating with A as a special case of A communicating with B, the sole difference being that one person plays both roles. No less absurd than a physiological theory of movement which treated falling down as a case of knocking oneself over" (Harris, 1996, p. 172). This is not to say that Harris suggests a reduced role, importance,

or eminence of self-talk. Harris is arguing for the separation of self-talk as a distinct process that, as noted by Skinner, has special properties. Skinner further establishes similar differences and separations between self-communication and “simply being conscious of one’s own sensory experience” (Harris, 1996, 173).

If the prominence of metaphor and other forms of tropic language is as it appears, any influence it might have would be far-reaching indeed. If it does have influence, as has been argued briefly, that influence would in turn be far-reaching. The perfect pathway for this influence lies along the channel of self-communication, which as noted could be considered to be the purest and most perfect form of interaction.

Chapter Two - Metaphoric Perspective Theory

Philosophical Foundations

It is important to note here the indirect contributions of certain scholars to the formulation of this theoretical perspective. As the saying goes: “no idea comes from nowhere...” It is important to acknowledge the ethereal and concrete inspirations and relationships to the theoretical model included herein. Metaphoric Perspective Theory is grounded heavily in ideas very similar to those proposed by I. A. Richards’ understanding of metaphor and misunderstanding. As Richards is noted for saying, “Though we cannot measure our losses in communication we can guess at them” (Richards, 1936, p. 2). Richards believed that misunderstanding framed communication and that metaphor was a process and a tool for making the connections to answer those misunderstandings. Metaphoric Perspective Theory builds upon that, as will be demonstrated, in that complex and variable metaphoric constructs can and are used to

bridge misunderstanding. The Richards model of comparison fields is echoed in the processes of metaphoric association and metaphoric valuing that are foundational to Metaphoric Perspective Theory. Echoes of Richards are also present in the prevalence of self-communication within Metaphoric Perspective Theory, as related to his ideas about the importance and power of “feedforward.” Amidst a host of obvious and subtle influences, I. A. Richards certainly stands out within the construct of Metaphoric Perspective Theory.

At this point we come to a place that is grounded in enough operational definition and solidification of parameters to begin the formulation of new constructs. Based in the historical prominence of metaphor and tropic language, the tendency of human thought towards categorization and the influence and power of self-communication, the present work can begin to argue for this construct. The construct proposed is that of the Metaphoric Perspective.

So what is this mysterious phenomenon? The etymology of the term is no mystery in light of the covered literature. It must be some combination of metaphors and perspectives. Yet what does that mean?

Metaphoric perspectives are the end result of abstract categorization. They are the culmination of the symbol-using human and the symbol-based methods of his mind. They are the way in which we look at, interpret, assume about, and act towards the world. Metaphoric perspectives are the influence of language use on thought, belief, understanding, and action.

To adequately flesh out this theory it is important to identify the foundation it is built upon. A reasonable and useful way to do this would be to delineate the facets of

each of three categorical descriptors for the construct: epistemology, ontology, and axiology. An understanding of each of these descriptors will create a base from which further investigation into metaphoric perspectives can continue.

Epistemological statements assert a certain nature of knowledge. They offer claims about the origins of knowledge and its composition, limits, and abilities. The theory of metaphoric perspectives assumes an epistemological base of attainable knowledge.

Information is taken in through the senses and received by the brain. This mass of information that is consistently and constantly bombarding the brain is organized, categorized. Through a process of mental metaphor making, we assert in our own minds that *this* is like *that*, creating connections between pieces of information that we find similar traits in. In doing so, we categorize the information about our worlds by similarity and dissimilarity.

We can think of this understanding of Knowledge as a well-designed online encyclopedia. For example, when we look up the word “Lion” in this online encyclopedia, we are given paragraphs of information about the large four-legged feline predator. We are offered a few pictures of lions in the wild and/or in captivity and are presented with a small map showing their preferred habitats across regions and continents. We also have a selection of links at the end of the page that include one-click transportation to zoo websites, sports teams, and European history.

These various links at the bottom are the insight offered by this understanding of knowledge. When we seek out the word “Lion” we are not just presented with a mass of information about the animal itself. We are also presented with instant connections to a

mass of information about things that share traits with the animal. We can connect instantly to information about other large predators, African climates, house cats, the Detroit Lions football team, Richard the Lionhearted, the constellation Leo, Disney movies, and exotic saltwater fish.

In the well-designed online encyclopedia of our minds, we draw these instant connections between things we see as metaphorically similar. By connecting things with figurative or tropic language, drawing the metaphorical connections between them, we begin to attach them to each other. Some of the connections approach the strength of the “*this IS that*” pattern asserted by Lakoff and Johnson. This entire mental collection of connections and associations, the mass of things that are like each other and are each other, comprises the knowledge that an individual attains.

This understanding of knowledge is obviously subjective, since by no means do any two individuals draw the same connections between objects all the time. By having different orders of experience, each individual may construct his or her mental encyclopedia differently. Person A may see lions at the zoo and see the movie *The Lion King*. Person B may watch Lions football games and have Leo as their zodiac sign. Each of these two can then see a Lionfish at an aquarium and categorize it differently in relation to their own experience. Therefore this construct allows, in fact asserts, that knowledge is subjective.

This understanding of knowledge is heavily influenced by the work of I. A. Richards. The idea of the proper meaning superstition, “the common belief that a word has a meaning of its own,” is rooted in an understanding of knowledge that acknowledges the presence of alternate meanings and relationships (Richards, 1936, 5). In a way,

Richards' proper meaning superstition is echoed in and answered by this understanding of knowledge – due primarily to the changing nature of information and relationships between pieces of information in the new technological era. The idea of comparison fields, presented by Richards, is also fundamental to the basis for subjectivity included in this understanding of knowledge, in that the process and timeline of attained and attached relationships is what Richards would call similar but different comparison fields, from which understanding and misunderstanding between individuals arise.

Thus the theory of metaphoric perspectives asserts that knowledge is the subjective sum of all mental associations between bits of stored sensory information and how we connect them to each other.

Ontological statements are statements on the nature of being. They make claims about the nature of existence and relationship between things that exist, how those things came to exist and by what means. From the standpoint of metaphoric perspective theory, it is assumed that we *be*.

Metaphoric perspective theory asserts that human beings do exist, cohabitating the natural physical world with each other and a plethora of other life forms. We do not live in the terrors of Hume or in the paranoid and doubting mind of Descartes. We are living, breathing things that have developed the amazing capacity for abstract thought and have used it to flourish as a species.

Important to note when considering ontological grounding is that metaphoric perspective theory does take a stance on language evolution. The lexicon of the human species must have a starting point, be it in grunts, whoops, gurgles, or clicks. At some

point in our history, the system of concrete sounds we made to refer to concrete things in our environment evolved out of need.

As Mooij, among others, has noted, there comes a point when the existing lexicon is found to be lacking in certain situations. It seems easy to imagine early man with a complex (yet comparatively simple) system of whoops, crows, grunts, and groans to refer to pain, food, excitement, danger, and happiness. As groups of early man spent increasingly greater periods of time in closer proximity with each other, sounds developed for things like the sun, gazelle, rain, hunt, and weapon. I. A. Richards notes that the nature of language is misunderstanding and that we endeavor endlessly, and potentially futilely, to reconcile that (Richards, 1936).

Yet it is after this period that metaphoric perspective theory imagines a period of intense growth in the lexicon of early man. Man had already learned to communicate about concrete things with vocal symbols, a basic abstraction at worst. The more proficient the language and communication process became, the more man needed new words to communicate ideas that concrete references could not. Consider the complexity of succinctly communicating the idea “The gazelle herds have moved northwest over the last two days, we’ll follow them for two weeks and hunt, but then return to this place and wait for the water buffalo herds...” with a language lexicon devoid of abstractions.

Early man would have an increasing need to communicate to others about increasingly abstract concepts with an insufficient lexicon. Out of this need arises tropic language, figurative references to concrete things. This includes the birth of metaphoric language, drawing connections and associations between things.

The ability of early man to utilize tropic language as an abstract tool to reach and expand his potential for abstract thought is arguably the reason humans have flourished throughout history. Consider what might have happened to early man if language had never evolved beyond what we see in modern primates. We'd be advanced animals like modern primates, to be sure – with complex systems of reference, some tool use, societal norms, and group behavior. Yet could we have attained the cultural, societal, technological significance that we have without the complex and dynamic lexicon of symbols based in abstractions? Very probably not.

Of course the specifics of the scenarios described are theoretical and, due to the nature of the topic, are unlikely to ever be proven or disproved. However, the concept is sound. The theory of metaphoric perspectives finds enough merit and plausibility in this type of a chain of events in tropic language formation and, as such, uses it as grounding to stand upon. To summarize, metaphoric perspective theory asserts an ontological grounding of coexistence in a physical world, whose history is defined by the need-based evolution of abstract language use and abstract thought using the tools of tropic-relationship based memory and thought.

Axiological statements frame a construct in terms of what it values, or make statements about the value systems of human beings. They make claims about what is desirable or not, what is good or bad, what is right or wrong and what is best. Within the theory of metaphoric perspectives, it is safe to say that the axiological groundings of metaphoric perspectives are neutral.

Metaphoric perspective theory does not claim that any one standpoint is any better or worse than any other. While any may be perceived by individuals to be better or

worse, since the nature of knowledge is entirely subjective then there is no possible way that any individual piece of knowledge can have an inherent value attached to it.

What this means for the theory is that any metaphoric perspective should not be viewed as inherently right or wrong. While metaphoric perspectives can be and often are at least partially constructed of value-based knowledge, the metaphoric perspective itself is subjective and therefore cannot have any transferable inherent value. This theory finds the idea of a metaphoric perspective and its ability to inform meritorious, not any individual metaphoric perspective itself.

To summarize, metaphoric perspective theory is grounded in the following philosophical assumptions:

1. Knowledge is the sum of mental metaphoric associations made between information pieces gained through sensory input.
2. Knowledge is based on personal experience and the order of that experience, making it highly subjective and not transferable in complete form.
3. Our knowledge is grounded in abstract associations between things that are perceived to share traits, made possible by a tropic system of language.
4. Humans exist in the natural world and have developed a system of tropic language for symbolic communication out of need over time.
5. Subjective ideas or opinions cannot have inherent traits; thus groupings of such cannot have inherent values.

Construction and Composition of a Metaphoric Perspective

Now that metaphoric perspective theory has been grounded by its philosophical assumptions, we can begin to identify the actual assertions and functions of the theory itself. As stated previously, metaphoric perspective theory is a construct of the influence of language use on thought, belief, understanding, and action.

What is a metaphoric perspective? Rather than starting with the specific concept of metaphoric perspectives, it is more illustrative to start from nothing, working towards the creation of a metaphoric perspective. We will consider each of the things that go into the creation of a metaphoric perspective in order.

First, we must begin with the language itself. As noted and surmised by scholars such as I.A. Richards, we have two types of language in our lexicon. We have concrete language and tropic language. Tropic language, including metaphor use, allows for figurative or abstract reference and communication. The theory also asserts that for this type of language to be possible, the human brain is required to be capable or adept at thinking in terms of abstracts. Consider the analogy of the brain as a well-designed online encyclopedia. We mentally categorize information as a process of thought and survival. Our brain functions like an intricate cataloguing machine, storing and referencing and linking object to concept, concept to object, and a myriad of combinations in between.

The natural byproduct of this process is the well-designed online encyclopedia page. When we mentally reference “Lion” we get all those external links to related, semi-related and distantly related bits of information. We think not in terms of what a thing is, but in terms of what a thing is like. Our thought process and memory are based in categorization and metaphoric association. These things are made possible by the

framework of tropic language, just as tropic language is made functional and relatable by the categorization processes of thought and memory.

We have this system of tropic language that rests in a symbiotic relationship with our tropic categorization-based thought and memory. From this we add the next stone in the construction of a metaphoric perspective: individual targets. These are the myriad of things we are surrounded by every day that we gain information on through sensory input: the lion, the tree, the book, the sidewalk, the car, the boss, the child, the clerk, and the air quality. Every single thing in our environments is a target about which we have the potential to gain new information through sensory input. Note that environment is a loosely used word here, especially in the present age when ancient writings, the face of someone on the other side of the world, and the current temperature of Saturn are all instantly available through technological means... anything potentially sensed is a target.

Our senses consciously and unconsciously devour information about this environment, sending multitudes of information to the brain. With each piece of information that is attended to, connections are made. Through the already described process of mental categorization, the information is stored with similar information about similar targets. The new information either reinforces existing information or conflicts with it, forcing the brain to choose the greater similarities for most prominence in filing.

For example, if I've been bitten by a dog five out of the five times I've been near a dog, my brain places great prominence on being bitten. If I then meet a dog and am not bitten, the information is still stored but being bitten has the greater prominence and so is the first information called to mind the next time I meet a dog.

This is the phase in building a foundation for a metaphoric perspective where the actual complex linking of the mental online encyclopedia page is taking place. Note that as in the example with the dog, the brain is also constantly rearranging the order in which these links appear, as certain ones gain or lose prominence in the face of new experiences with targets.

From this complex collection of metaphoric language and metaphoric memory we begin to formulate conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphors are constructs of metaphor that range between and beyond individual metaphoric associations. While Lakoff and Johnson might not appreciate the label, much of the “TARGET is SOURCE” formatted metaphors come into the realm of concept metaphor.

Consider the following example: Joe is new to voting in the political arena. During the first year that he is eligible to vote in the general presidential elections, Joe does a great deal of investigating the various candidates and their individual platforms. Joe discovers that candidate Thompson has misled his supporters and the general public on a number of occasions. Candidate Thompson has made a plethora of promises that he failed to keep when elected into other offices and has glossed over those topics in later public addresses. During one year while serving as a mayor, candidate Thompson pushed legislation to raise prices on products manufactured by companies owned and operated (discreetly) by members of his family. Joe comes to the conclusion that candidate Thompson is a vulture, applying the metaphoric connections of a scavenger that preys on the weak or takes from those who have none, a dirty and vicious animal.

Joe also notes that presidential candidate Smith shares some similar traits. Candidate Smith runs a dirty campaign, attacking the reputation of his opponents rather

than trying to make his own reputation shine. Candidate Smith has cheated on his personal taxes a number of times while raising city taxes for the working class he promised to help. Joe sees similar traits in candidate Smith as he does in the vulture. For Joe to say that candidate Thompson is a vulture or candidate Smith is like a vulture is to make a tropic or metaphoric assertion, to connect each individual to something they are like, similar to Joe comparing Thomson and Smith to vultures, seeing them all as sharing traits among each other. However, when Joe collects this information about Thompson, Smith, and vultures and makes those associations between them, he might begin to think of politicians on a larger scale as vultures. Here we begin to see the work of conceptual metaphor, as individual associations are linked together through inductive reasoning patterns to formulate knowledge about larger bodies of experience.

In this understanding of conceptual metaphors we see the power of this construction of information. Consider again the example of Joe. Is it possible for Joe to have first-hand experience with candidate Thompson? Of course. Joe can meet the candidate, watch him on television, read his writings, and so on. For this purpose, anything Joe has read about Thompson is also firsthand experience, in the sense that Joe can actually gain information on Thompson as an individual. For now, try to ignore the media and interpretations between the candidate and the final consumer of the information, Joe, and focus just on the availability of knowledge about the individual.

Joe can gain information about Thompson firsthand, as he can gain information about Smith firsthand. Joe can also gain information about vultures firsthand. For Joe, the connections between Thompson, Smith, and vultures may be logical and blatant based on the information he has. However, the tendency of the human brain to make those

associations and then advance them into conceptual metaphoric claims about larger bodies of experience is where Joe may get into trouble. Joe can never gain individual information about *all* politicians. He can learn about some, many, and possibly with the help of research assistants, a powerful computer, and a time machine, *most* politicians. Joe cannot possibly get them all. So out of necessity, any knowledge Joe has about the concept “politicians” *must* be inferred, *must* be based on induction, *must* be based on conceptual metaphoric associations from the individual politicians Joe can gain firsthand experience with and information about.

Here is the point where we must come to accept that since it is impossible to have knowledge, based in experience, about the larger concepts of the world and the “big picture,” *all* information we have about these things comes from tropic categorization based associations of metaphor and concept metaphor.

What is a metaphoric perspective then? It is the end result of the construction project just discussed. Metaphoric perspectives are collections of conceptual metaphors as defined above. An individual metaphoric perspective may be the combination of two well-defined and reinforced conceptual metaphors or hundreds of loosely defined and vaporous conceptual metaphors. When these conceptual metaphors coalesce, they offer a metaphoric perspective that makes large and small statements about whole sets or groups of experiential situations, types, and instances.

Consider again Joe and his politicians. Joe has made tropic associations between Thompson and vultures. He has also made similar associations between Smith and vultures. Joe even begins to think of politicians as a whole as being vultures, based on his own knowledge, which is based on his own experience. What if Joe learns that the Mayor

of the next town over is corrupt? What if Joe learns that the Prime Minister of each of two powerful European countries has been passing legislation specifically for personal gain? What if Joe reads about tyrants and despots, cruel magistrates, and vicious generals? Joe might form conceptual metaphors about groups as he gains more and more experiential information about individuals from those groups, such as the conceptual metaphor that rulers are green-eyed or that armed authority figures are the angered parent brandishing the belt of punishment. The interaction of these conceptual metaphors might lead Joe to the metaphoric perspective that “you cannot trust those in power.”

The construction of a metaphoric perspective, starting with the relevant tools of tropic language use and categorical memory and working up through the actual composition of a metaphoric perspective itself can be a somewhat complex construct to visualize. Figure 3 is an attempt to summarize and depict visually the construction and composition of the metaphoric perspective.

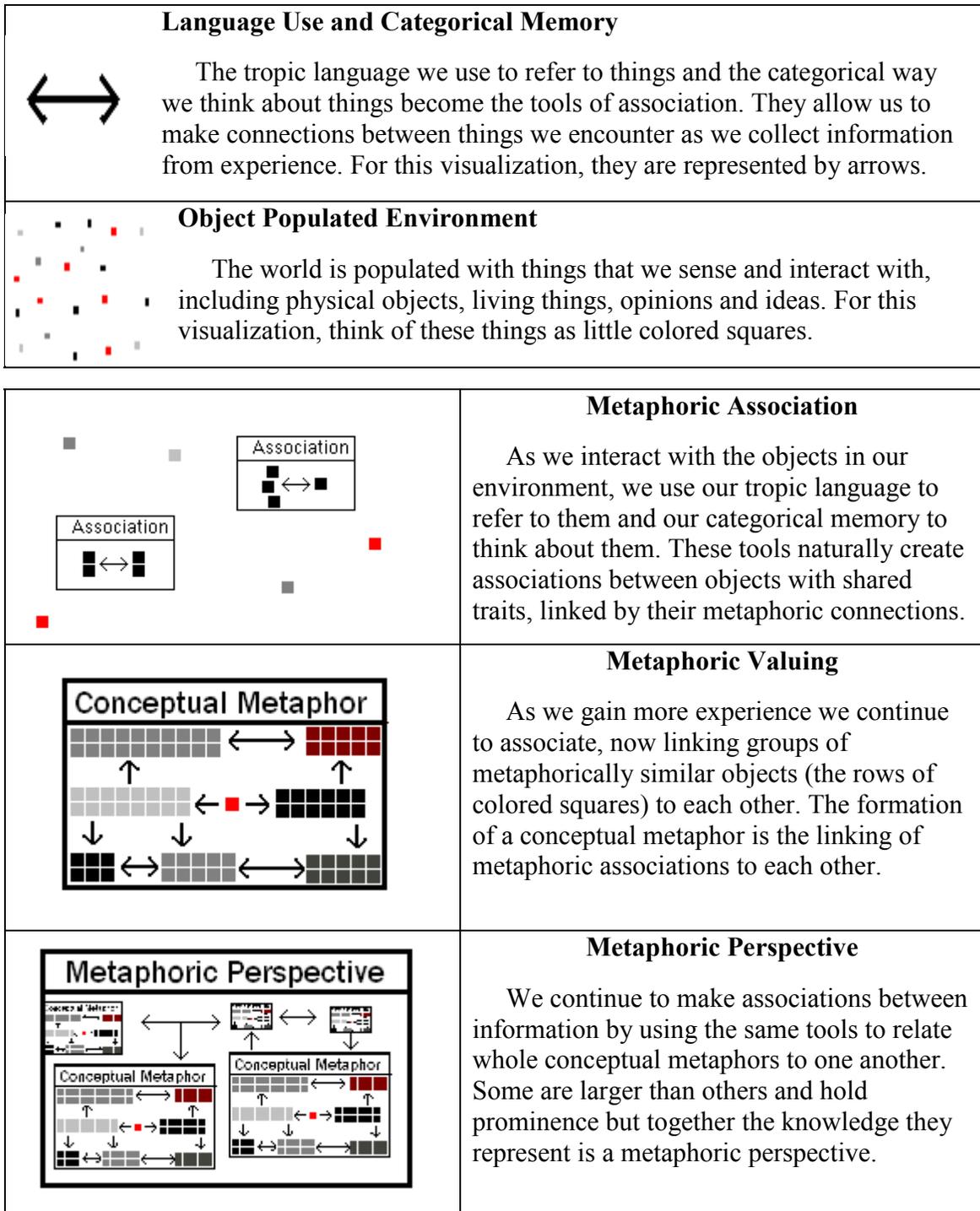


Figure 3. Metaphoric Perspective Composition

The Impact of a Metaphoric Perspective

The present work has just spent time illustrating the basic philosophical grounding of metaphoric perspective theory and defining some of the relevant conceptual building blocks of the metaphoric perspective. What is left is the question: so what? What are these metaphoric perspectives that we should be concerned with them? What effect or impact do they have?

Metaphoric perspective theory is grounded in the assumption that metaphoric perspectives are powerful forces that do have effect and impact on daily life, and thus should be understood and studied. For many of the same reasons as scholars like Lakoff and Johnson, Harris, Mooij, Rapp, and countless others note the power of metaphor, metaphoric perspective theory asserts the power of the metaphoric perspective.

In the process of defining a metaphoric perspective, it was prudent to approach the task from the bottom and work upwards, defining concepts as they arose in the construction of a metaphoric perspective from nothing. Now, to understand the impact of a metaphoric perspective, it is better served to start from the top, using a fully formed metaphoric perspective to illustrate potential impact.

Consider the hard-working example, Joe and his politicians. By the end of the construction of the metaphoric perspective, we learned that Joe had come to think “you cannot trust those in power.” This is one of potentially many metaphoric perspectives that Joe has formed, however for the sake of this illustration we can assume it is his only one. The blanket definitional statement of this work is that metaphoric perspectives are the influence of language use on thought, belief, understanding and action. From the example

of Joe and his politicians, we will consider the impact of the metaphoric perspective on each of these in turn.

How does a metaphoric perspective influence thought? The impact has already been shown in the delineation of the composition of a metaphoric perspective. The components of a metaphoric perspective are the impact here, as has been alluded to throughout. The construct of the metaphoric perspective includes constructs of metaphoric association, conceptual metaphors, the basic functioning of tropic language, and categorical memory. If these facets of metaphoric perspective theory were not present or different, an entirely different thought process would take their place.

What if the human mind did not categorize things or make mental associations based on tropic relationships? We might store information with no organization whatsoever, in huge mental piles that ran into and atop each other. If this were the case, associations would not arise, making the metaphoric perspective impossible. However, this would also make abstract reference improbable, or at least in any way we might understand it. It is possible that the absence of the constructs that form metaphoric perspective theory would not allow for abstract thought whatsoever, for how does one reach abstract thought without the ability to relate things figuratively? The constructs here allow us to think in terms of relationships and associations, allowing complex relationships and associations, ending in the creation of highly complex ideas based on those associations, which are metaphoric perspectives.

How does a metaphoric perspective influence belief? When considering the relationship between metaphoric perspectives and beliefs, it is important first to understand that they are not the same thing. While they could be understood to be similar

or even synonymous, metaphoric perspective theory asserts that they are not. Beliefs, by nature, are inherently much more changeable than a metaphoric perspective. Beliefs are born out of opinion. They are a certain valuing or opinion held by an individual about something. They are heavily influenced by socialization, especially as they are being formed during adolescence. Belief in the existence of the divine or the supernatural, belief in the goodness of people, belief in the existence of an objective and measurable universe: these are things that are taught and reinforced by family, friends, education, experience and the environment. However, at the basic level, beliefs are organized sets of experience, and how we have decided to feel about them.

Metaphoric perspectives, on the other hand, are born out of *who* we are. Human beings possess the crucial tools of tropic language use and categorical memory that allow and create, eventually, the metaphoric perspective. Herein lies the vital contrast between beliefs and metaphoric perspectives. Since metaphoric perspectives are a naturally occurring phenomenon, a direct end result of the processes by which we interact and remember, they are decidedly not a choice. A belief, on many different levels and in many ways, is a choice.

Consider Joe and his politicians. Joe could believe that “you cannot trust those in power” instead of having that metaphoric perspective. If this idea were a belief for Joe, it would have likely occurred through similar experiences. He would have gained firsthand experience and information about the politicians he knew, been told and taught about people in positions of power elsewhere, and been socialized to mistrust and be leery of those in power and those who abuse that power. He would get the same end-result idea. However, if the idea was formed in this way, Joe could feasibly still choose not to believe

it to be true. In the face of all evidence to the contrary, or completely devoid of any evidence at all, Joe could believe that “you can trust those in power,” or even that “you should trust those in power.” The nature of a belief requires evidence that satisfies the individual, so as long as the individual can buy into the belief based on the evidence they are satisfied with, they are capable of choosing that belief.

Not so with a metaphoric perspective. If Joe formed the idea that “you cannot trust those in power” as in the original example, through a language rooted process that led to a metaphoric perspective, he would not be able to choose not to reference it. It is, as will be shown next, *how* he understands, which does not allow for the possibility of negation. Joe can find examples that do not fit into his metaphoric perspective – an honest monarch, for example – but they would not change the metaphoric perspective nor would they require him to choose another. Since metaphoric perspectives are the result of natural processes and cannot be chosen, while beliefs are the result of experiences but can be chosen, these two are actually not synonymous as some might claim.

They do share a relationship in that metaphoric perspectives do have an effect on beliefs. Since the constructs here influence, in fact allow, the way that we think, they in turn influence and allow the way that we believe. Beliefs are in part based on the experiences and information or knowledge that we have collected. The way in which we think about that information and how we relate it to itself increases the possibility for some types of beliefs and reduces the possibility for others. It does not, as asserted, predetermine those beliefs since beliefs can arise without any evidence or evidence others might find unrelated or lacking. However, it does tend to limit the spectrum of available beliefs, thereby limiting the likelihood of certain beliefs arising.

How does a metaphoric perspective influence understanding? As already alluded to when considering the impact of the metaphoric perspective construct on thought and belief, metaphoric perspective also influences understanding. It is not so much an influence of the metaphoric perspective on understanding as it is that metaphoric perspectives *are* how we understand. The power of tropic language and categorical memory allow and limit how we think. They create associations as a mere product of their process. These associations are associated with other associations, eventually resulting in metaphoric perspectives. It is these metaphoric perspectives, large and small, relevant and irrelevant, that form our highest conceptual model for understanding.

When Joe meets a new politician, he is going to call to mind his database of knowledge about other politicians. He is going to compare and associate the new experience to past experiences, drawing links and looking for similarities so that he can situate this new experience within the old. To do this, Joe calls his dominant metaphoric perspectives to mind (while this is arguably an unconscious result of the need to relate to new experience, the consultation of a metaphoric perspective can be consciously forced or considered consciously out of context). When confronted with an experience about which Joe has a metaphoric perspective, he engages it for reference because it is the strongest set of knowledge he has. He understands his new experience in terms of the existing metaphoric perspective.

How does a metaphoric perspective influence action? The influence of metaphoric perspectives on thought, belief, and understanding create a powerful influence on action. Since this construct guides the larger processes governing idea creation (thought, belief, and understanding) it has a limiting effect on action. For example, if Joe were to meet a

person whom his metaphoric perspective would advise him not to trust, the power of that metaphoric perspective would reduce the likelihood that he would lend them money. He would be less likely to do anything to contradict with his dominant way of thinking about things, thereby limiting his potential actions as response to stimuli.

His metaphoric perspective might also suggest particular actions in response. From those that are left, not relegated to those responses that don't fit with the metaphoric perspective, some are presented as best or better. The metaphoric perspective Joe has about those in power would limit the likelihood that he would lend one of them money, vote for them, or let one baby-sit for his children. It would also suggest that out those things he could do, certain ones seem to fit with the metaphoric perspective best, such as avoiding in-person dealings with them or turning off the television when they are giving a speech. Here we see that metaphoric perspectives impact action in two ways: first, by suggesting things we should not do and limiting potential actions; second, by suggesting things we could do from the remaining responses, encouraging potential actions. While human action always has an element of unpredictability, the impact mentioned here is directly related to fit. Our way of interacting and thinking creates a tendency to act in ways that fit with how we think, allowing for powerful metaphoric perspectives to limit and encourage certain actions.

In terms of action, some scholars are so afraid of or venomous towards any construct that suggests strong influences on action that they negate them altogether. To this end, some scholars might contest a construct such as a metaphoric perspective. "In my opinion, root metaphors defining a complete world-view are not reasonably needed" (Mooij, 1976, 16). While metaphoric perspectives and root metaphors are only linked at a

basic level, on the surface, this might seem to fly in the face of metaphoric perspective inquiry. However, further consideration of this point of view is worthwhile.

Mooij notes: “It would be disastrous if metaphors would force us to apprehend the whole field of our experience in one and the same manner, according to one example, norm or paradigm” (1976, p. 16). Mooij is absolutely correct in this sense. Mooij is conceiving of concept or root metaphors that become a fixed railroad track along which our thoughts and actions run. The railroad track cannot be abandoned or redirected. It would truly be disastrous if we allowed the power of metaphor to control our thoughts and actions.

The construct of metaphoric perspectives does not suggest the “railroad” concept. Metaphoric perspectives serve as a guide, not a predetermined track. For comparison, the metaphoric perspectives are the road signs and mile markers along the highway. They inform, direct, and illuminate. They influence and guide action but do not directly control it. For this purpose, the metaphoric perspective leaves the dangerous realm suggested by absolute metaphor control that is suggested by Mooij.

By the processes which define it and the power that it has, a metaphoric perspective impacts thought, belief, understanding, and even action. In terms of defining the most relevant constructs with metaphoric perspective theory, the reader should now be able to conceptualize metaphoric perspectives in terms of their philosophical grounding, construction, composition, and impact.

A Method for Metaphoric Perspective Theory

It is important to note that the method presented here harkens to notable conceptual contributors. These scholars have unknowingly impacted the method formulated for Metaphoric Perspective Theory. As will be seen, the presented method is similar in process and scope to metaphoric criticism, as presented by Sonja Foss in *Rhetorical Criticism*. That method undertakes a very similar stage-oriented process to identify and gather relevant metaphors from a particular artifact (Foss, 1995). However, Metaphoric Perspective Theory method differs in that the primary purpose is not understanding potential or actual impact or imparted message from the audience point of view, as is a prime focus of the Foss method, but to gain understanding about the metaphoric perspective itself and the impact upon the person(s) who hold it.

Certain applications of the method, particularly those of community and culture, are influenced by ideas like fantasy theme analysis posed by Ernest Borman (1972). While that method differs in process from the one presented here, the purpose and conceptual intent are very similar. Some metaphoric perspectives could have been attained as “fantasy chains” through the Borman construct and reveal similar insight. As readers familiarize themselves with the construct of the metaphoric perspective and the method presented in this work, these and other echoes to notable scholars will be evident. However, the particular invocation of process and purpose utilized here offers certain insight perfectly suited to the metaphoric perspective... so on with the method.

The ability to theorize about the existence of metaphoric perspectives is lame without the capability to find a metaphoric perspective in use and determine its impact. To this end, metaphoric perspective theory offers a procedural method for seeking out

and understanding metaphoric perspectives in action. The six functions suggested within this method are not absolute, and other methods may be successful or potentially better. However, the presented method will accomplish the two stated goals: to identify a metaphoric perspective and to consider its potential impacts.

Various forms of individuals or groups can hold metaphoric perspectives. While a single individual can certainly hold a metaphoric perspective alone, it is also possible for small groups and large groups to share common metaphoric perspectives. For the purposes of this work, metaphoric perspectives are investigated in terms of being held by a single person, either oneself or another individual, and groups of people, in terms of communities or whole cultures. As will be discussed later, there are certain facets of importance related to each. Within the method, the particular individual or group being investigated will be referred to as the subject.

Within the metaphoric perspective method it is important to note that the process can begin with or without a topical focus. For instance, one could try to inquire about the dominant metaphoric perspectives in a particular community related to the economic climate, or one could choose to investigate the same subject with no topical focus. The difference in results between the two involves what early results the investigator will choose to attend to, within the first two stages of the method. If using a topical focus, the investigator will weed out obviously unrelated information that was returned during the first stage, allowing for the topical focus throughout the rest of the method. If no topical focus was intended, the investigator will examine the results from the first stage of the method and choose to pursue those topics that arose frequently or powerfully. Each of these only serves to frame the process based on the interest of the investigator.

The first step of the six in identifying metaphoric perspectives, as seems obvious from the discussion of their formation, requires an in-depth consideration of the tropic language utilized by the subject. This is called the tropic survey. The basic function of the tropic survey is to gather examples of tropic language use from the subject.

Dependent upon the subject investigated, the means of completing a tropic survey will change. For example, a tropic survey of the self or an individual as subject can involve direct observation, interview, textual analysis, experiment, ethnography, and so on. However a tropic survey of a community will reduce the efficiency or relevancy of experiment, interview, and direct observation. Likewise a tropic survey of a culture, especially with a large culture, will negate or reduce the relevancy of any method that does not work well with representative samples.

The second step in the metaphoric perspective method is called metaphor mapping. During metaphor mapping, the preserved results from the tropic survey are analyzed for similarity and association. In much the same process as would take place naturally and unconsciously in the subject, the investigator looks for those things that might connect the resulting tropic language. Related sets of tropic language are grouped together by their similarities. If a topical focus was used, those results related to it are preserved and those that are not are discarded. If a topical focus was not used, the investigator can determine if there is topical prominence within the results and identify which pieces of information to continue with based on that. The remaining examples of tropic language will form the basis for the next step.

The third step of metaphoric perspective method looks at the groupings formed during metaphor mapping and identifies the larger themes that hold them together. This

step, called conceptual construction, is the process of identifying the conceptual metaphors that are prompted by the groupings of topic language.

The fourth step of metaphoric perspective method uses the concept metaphors identified during conceptual construction to find associations and common themes, allowing for the first suggestions of a dominant metaphoric perspective. This step, called perspective formation, creates the “result” that will be considered for impact in the last two steps.

The fifth step of metaphoric perspective method, called internal impact, is just what it sounds like. This step takes the resulting metaphoric perspective and considers what potential impact it has on the individual who holds it. How does this metaphoric perspective guide that person’s understanding of their world? How does it impact how they think or what they believe?

The sixth and final step of metaphoric perspective method, called external impact, looks at any potential impact of having this metaphoric perspective on the world outside the individual. How does it limit their actions when interacting with others? What actions does it suggest? When considering groups of people (communities or cultures), this step wants to know what the impact is to the larger world of having a large number of people hold this perspective.

It is important to note here that for this method to reveal any meaningful findings requires intensive work at the early stages. Imagine a particular incarnation of this method gains one hundred examples of topic language use during the topic survey. Of those one hundred, thirty fit into a common topical focus. During metaphor mapping, those thirty are grouped into six groups of five examples each. During conceptual

construction, those six groups are combined into three concept metaphors. Finally, each of those three combines to form a single metaphoric perspective. It takes a large amount of initial data to form a metaphoric perspective. Too few examples will not only limit the attainability of a cognizant and coherent metaphoric perspective, it will also limit the reliability of that metaphoric perspective as representative.

If sufficient data are collected during the tropic survey to be able to, during perspective formation, identify at least one representative metaphoric perspective, the process of asking questions and determining potential impacts of holding that metaphoric perspective can take place. For the theory, the last two stages can serve to be the most informative about the subject group. Figure 4 shows a condensed version of the basic process in metaphoric perspective method. Following Figure 4 and composing most of chapter three are two examples of this method in practice, as the present study identifies metaphoric perspectives in action.

Tropic Survey	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose a method of sampling the subject 2. Compile observed tropic language use
Metaphor Mapping	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify results related to topical focus OR 2. Identify prominent topics within the results
Conceptual Construction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather prevalent metaphors into thematic groups 2. Identify any representative concept metaphors
Perspective Formation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observe associations between concept metaphors 2. Identify any representative metaphoric perspective
Internal Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the impact on thought, belief, understanding? 2. What is the perceived impact to the individual?
External Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the impact on action? 2. What is the perceived impact on the external world?

Figure 4. Metaphoric Perspective Method

Chapter Three – Application and Case Study

Example One – Human Beings and Animals

To illustrate what might be gained through an investigation of dominant metaphoric perspectives, the present study will now elaborate on a few typical examples. Each will be considered not as meritorious but merely as a means of illustrating ways in which any other metaphoric perspective can be considered and what questions it might pose or answer.

For this first example the present work will consider a culture as a subject. Arguably, the greatest insight offered by the theory comes from the investigation of dominant metaphoric perspectives at the culture level. This example will investigate the subject of the current American culture. It will have a topical focus of “human beings and animals.”

For the first step of the metaphoric perspective method, the example needs to conduct a tropic survey, compiling a list of observed tropic language use. Direct observation of an entire culture is a mammoth and inefficient task. For the purposes of the example (just as an illustration) the present work obtained examples of tropic language in textual analysis of television programming.

The data field from which the tropic survey was conducted included a randomized schedule of forty-eight hours over a period of fourteen days. Observation hours were selected at random between 9AM and 2AM each day with no more than four hours taking place on any single day. The average observation period per day was about three hours and twenty minutes. Observed channels were selected at random during each session. Once a channel was selected, it was observed for tropic language use for ten minutes and

then a new channel was randomly selected. The channel sample pool included one hundred and twenty seven available options of network and cable only channels, comprising a range of content including news, cooking shows, cartoons, drama, comedy, sports, commentary, music videos, and, of course, commercials. The complete list of tropic language observed numbered at 1406 examples of tropic language, or an average of one almost every two minutes.

The second step of the metaphoric perspective method is metaphor mapping. For this example, the present work examined the complete list of obtained examples of tropic language from the tropic survey, trying to identify those that pertained to the topical focus of “humans and animals.” All instances of tropic language that fit the topical focus were put together in one group and all others were discarded. Included as Figure 5 is a partial list of the 211 examples of tropic language that fit into the topical focus out of the complete data set.

Proud as an eagle	He is a dirty little rat	Drink like a fish
Wow, she's a whale	Bob is such a snake	The courage of a lion
Multiplying like rabbits	A monkey could do that	What a weasel.
Playing possum	Curious as a cat	Such a beast
Living like an animal	Man's best friend	Eat like a pig
As slippery as an eel	I don't date hippos	I am not an animal
My little sex kitten	What a cow!	Dumb as an ox
The memory of an elephant	She's too feline for me	Your mom is a boar
My attorney, Mr. Shark	Sly as a fox	The stoolpigeon sang
Wise as an owl	My husband is hibernating	Those media vultures
He's a squirrel on Red Bull	A blind fish could follow it	You have the IQ of a cricket
They're all slug-heads	You whine like a mule	He's a dog, he'll stray
Stubborn as a goat	He's got a bull temper	Those unemployed leeches
She's like a dog in heat	Playful as a cat	Sorry, she isn't declawed

Figure 5. Some Tropic Language

Now that a more focused list of tropic language was compiled, the example proceeds to step three of the method, conceptual construction. Here the method identifies conceptual metaphors that group the focused list of tropic language together. A perusal of the metaphor maps allows the example to divide the data into two general groups, each represented by the conceptual metaphor they support. These groups are created from the nature of the tropic language: each of the tropic language examples draws an association between human beings and animals or a particular animal. In each instance there are certain traits, stated or implied, that human beings and the source animal share, thus the association and the tropic language. These fall within two general categories: first, that animals have good traits that humans have, should have, or want to have; second, that animals have bad traits that humans have, shouldn't have, or don't want to have. In the first instance the tropic language implies that the association is a good thing; in the second instance the association is a bad thing. The first group created, in line with the topical focus, is "animals are better than people," and the second that "animals are worse than people." These two statements are the conceptual metaphors, drawn from the tropic language data pool.

In the fourth step of the method, the example is charged with using the conceptual metaphors to discern a dominant metaphoric perspective. The relationship between the conceptual metaphors that animals are either better or worse than people is that in both instances, the relationship is constant. The dominant metaphoric perspective must involve a relationship between animals and people. To decide which way the metaphoric perspective will lean requires comparing the conceptual metaphors' relative strength and how they associate with each other. Within this example, the instances of tropic language

that fit into the conceptual metaphor that “animals are worse than people,” by using tropic language to suggest that animals have negative or undesirable traits, outnumbered the opposing ones two to one. There were vastly more instances of the negative relationship among the tropic language, making that conceptual metaphor stronger in this example. This leads the fourth step to identify the dominant metaphoric perspective as: “animals are worse than people” or “people are better than animals.”

What is the internal impact of this metaphoric perspective? How does this metaphoric perspective impact the way the culture thinks, understands, and believes? Cultures with this metaphoric perspective think of animals as lesser, baser creatures – the metaphoric perspective fosters the idea that the animals are subject to the needs and wants of the people. It fosters some of the colorful beliefs about animals that have echoed in human history such as “animals do not feel pain,” “animals don’t think,” and so on. Some leaps and strides in the opposite direction have been made, namely with organizations like PETA, trends like veganism and vegetarianism, and support of the endangered species lists. However, consider the power of the metaphoric perspective, as discussed previously. While some people may assert the emotions, thoughts, and personality of their beloved family dog, do they think the same way about a slug?

What is the external impact of this metaphoric perspective? How does this metaphoric perspective impact the way the culture acts? A metaphoric perspective that positions humans above animals encourages actions that benefit those people instead of the animals. A culture with this dominant metaphoric perspective would be less concerned about clearing a forest to make room for a freeway or mall than a culture holding the opposing metaphoric perspective. The understanding and beliefs fostered by

opposing movements, as stated before, also impacts the actions in the opposing way. However, the work of animal rights groups may limit actions like starving a pet dog, but does it stop one from squashing a mosquito? Would this dominant metaphoric perspective explain or contradict prize fishing, American egg farming, or water pollution?

As noted previously, human behavior is the eternal statistical outlier, in that no human behavior can ever be predicted with perfect accuracy. However, the presence of this dominant metaphoric perspective does explain a great deal of how the subject culture thinks, believes, understands, and acts towards animals. It is the explanation and prediction of tendency that is fostered here. This is an incredibly brief consideration of this example of a metaphoric perspective, to the point of illustrating the use of the method. A work devoted entirely to the example could easily go at length finding various impacts that are explained or predicted by the presence of the metaphoric perspective. For the purpose of time and more to illustrate the method than investigate a single metaphoric perspective, the present work will move on to another example.

Example Two – Darwinian Communication

For this second example the present work will consider an individual as a subject. At the individual level there is the possibility for great insight, especially if the subject is the self. This example will investigate the subject of an individual with a topical focus of “communication.”

As noted previously, there are countless metaphors and metaphoric constructs for conceptualizing communication. Many of them have great flaws and great strengths. An

investigation into the metaphoric perspective on communication of each individual would likely result in one different idea of communication per person investigated. While this reduces the transferability of any of the constructs discovered, it does support the idea that people all think about communication in slightly different ways and there may be insight to be gained from those individual perceptions, as certainly as some insight can be gained from the conduit, container, machine, or transportation metaphors of communication. This example will not only again illustrate the process of the metaphoric perspective method but will also show this communication theory can be fed back into itself to gain new insights into communication.

When conducting a tropic survey on the individual subject level, a data collection method of direct observation works well. Survey and interview can also work very well. These data collection methods allow the investigator to limit the breadth of the response to fit their topical focus. For example, using an interview in this instance would allow the investigator to fashion questions such as “how would you describe communication?” “What is communication like to you?” “How do you compare communication to other things?” The responses to these types of questions and direct observation of interaction would create the data set for the tropic survey.

Consider the following responses and statements from a single individual in regard to communication:

Communication is persuasion.

Arguments are about survival. The strong survive and the weak do not.

I always seem to be stronger after winning an argument than before starting one.

Communication is like sparring with winners and losers but without hatred, jealousy, rage, or animosity.

Communication is combat with blunted weapons.

It is precisely the passion with which a point is made that determines its power.

Bad arguments die off as the good ones flourish and gain popularity.

Fortunately for the metaphoric perspective methods' brevity, often a defined topical focus and targeted questions during the tropic survey can do the work of metaphor mapping internally. As is seen in this example, since the questions focused the responses onto the topic, the metaphor mapping has already grouped the like ideas together.

When trying to formulate conceptual metaphors from a small sample set (from an individual sample subject), the focus should be on identifying themes as they differ, even if only slightly. Within the tropic survey and metaphor mapping we are presented with responses that fit into the following conceptual metaphors, based on how they associate with each other and fit together: "Communication favors those best suited to it," "communication requires opposing sides," "communication is rooted in combat" and that "communication has winners and losers." While these points are not as oppositional as those found in the culture example, with the smaller sample and data sizes the focus should be on distinguishing between minor differences to establish similar but different conceptual metaphors.

When formulating a perspective from these concept metaphors, we associate each of them with one another and determine the influences each has. The most prevalent are those that stress the differences between communication and combat. While it is likened to combat, communication is also differentiated from such, more overtly than not. The strength of this claim comes from the reference to sparring within the tropic survey. Note that the ideas of winners, losers, opposing sides, and favoring the best suited are all reinforced within sparring and within the model that frames communication as survival. While combat is represented as a conceptual metaphor, it is the weakest representation.

The metaphoric perspective implied here could be best stated as “communication is Darwinian,” in that it is a system rooted in survival of the fittest. This by no means suggests that the fittest is the strongest or the fastest, but fit in terms of communication fitness (better speaker, better speaking organization, greater ability to connect to audience or opposition, etc...). From this metaphoric perspective, it is suggested that, like Darwin’s model for species, there is no malice or anger towards winner or loser, but still a fierce competition. It is not as in war, where the combat has reasons of its own – it exists for itself, surviving to survive. This metaphoric perspective suggests that communication is competitive, fierce and passionate, and has winners or losers not for outside reasons but to reinforce the behavior itself.

What is the internal impact of a metaphoric perspective such as “communication is Darwinian?” Does it impact how the individual thinks, believes, or understands? Absolutely. If the individual understands communication in terms of survival of the fittest, then he or she will approach communication situations as if he or she wants to or needs to survive. Even if the other party is differently-minded, the individual will judge the other as a winner or loser, think of them as well-suited or not, and believe in their own ability to survive or fail.

What is the external impact of a metaphoric perspective such as “communication is Darwinian?” Does it impact how the individual acts? This metaphoric perspective would encourage argumentative behavior, as the individual thinks and approaches communication situations as if they were survival. The individual would be more likely to act in oppositional ways towards a communication opponent, whom he or she would have already been affected to think of as an “opponent.” The strength and merit of ideas

would be represented by their ability to survive on the sparring field, and an individual with this metaphoric perspective would constantly act to test them.

Again, as noted during the first example, this example could be stretched to many pages and to much deeper considerations than have been represented here. The chief point of these examples is not to argue a particular metaphoric perspective or to give a full illustration of a complete metaphoric perspective method inquiry but to give a brief representation of the method at work. Using this method enables the investigation and identification of metaphoric perspectives and sets a framework from which to explain or inquire into their impact.

Implications of the Metaphoric Perspective

It has been noted that metaphoric perspectives have insight for the self, individuals, communities, and cultures. It is possible to use metaphoric perspective theory to inquire into any self, individual, community, or culture, certainly the second and last of these, as was illustrated previously. Each of these different subject groups can offer different understandings of themselves and those individuals they contain or represent.

Consider metaphoric perspective inquiry of cultures. What does this offer that it would be worthwhile? An understanding of the dominant metaphoric perspectives of a culture is as useful, and as informing, as an understanding of the dominant customs of a culture. Just as scholars study the folklore, the habits, the music, and the histories of cultures, so should they study the metaphoric perspectives of the same. An understanding of the folklore of a culture grants an understanding of the soul of the people it represents.

The mythos embodied by and composed of the folklore holds culture values, norms, beliefs, opinions, ideals, and lessons.

Similar value and content is found in the metaphoric perspectives of those cultures. By understanding what the dominant metaphoric perspectives of a culture are, we gain insight into their personality, hopes, dreams, opinions, and values. What might we learn if we asked what dominant metaphoric perspectives were held by citizens of the Middle East towards the United States? What might we come to understand if we looked for the dominant metaphoric perspectives of the Los Angeles gang culture?

The same value translates to communities, as metaphoric perspectives can be understood on the level of the neighborhood, the campus, the workplace, the city, and so on. What might an understanding of the dominant metaphoric perspectives of residents in high foreclosure neighborhoods tell us? What might we learn about the interaction abilities and tendencies of adolescents if we asked them how they characterize themselves in terms of others (a metaphoric perspective inquiry topically focused on status perception)?

When the subject group of the individual is offered for inquiry, it is potentially applicable to any individual. Yet consider the potential value of the application of metaphoric perspective theory to certain individuals. What might we find if we inquired into the dominant metaphoric perspectives held by Hitler? What about Martin Luther King, Jr.? From the writings of historical figures like Mark Twain, we could conceptualize the metaphoric perspectives that he may have held through life. What might they explain about the author or his works? With proper access to the lexicon in

use at the time, metaphoric perspective theory can be applied to any point in history and offer insight into cultures, communities, and individuals.

The self as subject allows the theory of metaphoric perspectives to serve an introspective function. While no greater understanding of the world is attained, the application of the method to one's own tropic language and the search for one's own guiding metaphoric perspectives can offer insight into one's own thoughts, beliefs, understanding, and actions.

Moving Forward

Metaphoric perspective theory is not presented in the present work as a solution to a problem. There are a plethora of theories throughout communication research and communication philosophy that seem to pose end-all solutions to problems that are perceived or argued to be present. While this is indeed a noble pursuit, it is not one answered by metaphoric perspective theory. This theory is presented here as another potential tool for understanding what is and is not a problem.

While the discipline certainly does not *need* more theory, the author believes fervently that this particular method of inquiry and understanding has merit and offers insight not offered elsewhere by the discipline. Metaphoric perspective theory claims to speak to the direct relationship between language use and behavior. While some predictive function may be created in the discovery of an informing metaphoric perspective, most of the function is explanatory. Metaphoric perspectives allow us to understand why people think, believe, understand, and act as they do. The theory asserts that these behaviors are inescapably rooted in the tropic nature of the language and that

investigation of that language use allows understanding of the metaphoric perspectives that guide the behaviors. The cyclical and symbiotic relationship between the theory, its method, and its grounding is no accident, as the author asserts that the interconnected and codependent forces at work offer the best picture of self, individual, community, and culture.

This theory could be applied to countless subjects. A truly inspired (and well-funded) investigator could even compile databases of dominant metaphoric perspectives from cultures around the world. Comparison of each within themselves and between each other might lend greater understanding to international relations, conflicts, and even war. We might find new insight into why certain celebrities retain status in some countries and not others. We might gain a new outlook on our cultural relationship with the rest of the world. The inspired investigator could apply metaphoric perspective theory to the history books, moving one by one through the great figures of our past and gaining insight and understanding into how they thought, driven by what language they used. The possibilities for application of the theory to subjects are endless, and therefore the potential insight gained about subjects is likewise endless.

This theory rests heavily on subjective assumptions and philosophical groundings. Any critique of the theory would undoubtedly make mention of these, noting that certain of the assumptions included herein are false, biased, misleading, or illogical. At the time of the writing, the logic included in the formation, creation, and method of metaphoric perspective theory is deemed by the author to be sound enough. Those problems with the work that were left unchanged are those inherent in any subjective work and are, unfortunately, unavoidable in philosophical inquiry. Of course many of the assertions and

assumptions within the confines of the theory cannot be proven, but they also cannot be disproved, and as stated previously, are sound enough. In the future some of the theory may be changed or modified to increase its applicability, reliability, or relevance, but for now it stands as a subjective model of explanation for how one author envisions metaphor impacting thought, belief, understanding, and action.

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