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Discerning similarities: concept and word at the intersection of analogy and metaphor

The uniquely human abilities to analyse (in the sense of "distinguish" as well as "identify") and to signify make possible the complex phenomena known to us as concepts and words. In debate with the theory of "conceptual metaphor" as developed by Lakoff and Johnson and with the earlier ideas of Cassirer, Rickert and Reichling, this article sets out to clarify the connections between the logical-analytical and the sign modes of reality. This approach proceeds from the ontological distinction between modes of being and concrete entities and actions. Although any concrete act of thinking or speaking functions in principle at once within the logical-analytical and the lingual aspects, this does not resolve the problem of the order relation between these two aspects, and more refined arguments are required.

Die opmerking van ooreenkomste: konsep en woord op die kruispunt van analogie en metafoor

Die unieke menslike vermoëns om te analiseer (identifiseer en onderskei) en om te beteken maak die komplekse verskynsels moontlik wat bekend staan as konsepte en woorde. Met hierdie artikel word beoog om — in gesprek met die resente teorie van "konseptuele metafoor" soos ontwikkel deur Lakoff en Johnson en met die vroeëre idees van Cassirer, Rickert and Reichling — tot groter duidelikheid te kom insake die verhouding tussen die logies-analitiese en die tekenaspekte van die werklikheid. Die invalshoek wat benut word gaan uit van die ontologiese onderskeiding tussen bestaanswyses en konkrete entiteite en handelinge. Hoewel enige konkrete denk- of taalhandeling in beginsel tegelyk in die logies-analitiese en linguale aspekte funksioneer, slaag die blote konstatering van hierdie feit nog nie daarin om die gestelde problem op te los nie. Meer gesofistikeerde argumente word benodig.

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I dentification and distinction are only possible on the basis of similarities and differences. Distinguishing between "this pen" and "that book" out of which I am working requires the simultaneous identification of the "pen" and the "book". Since both of these entities — in one sense at least — are material entities, they share the physical property of being material. In fact, it is meaningless to claim that two things are absolutely different, for such a statement presupposes a fundamental similarity between them, as it is given in the designation that both are "things".

A particular kind of difference is found in all such cases, where differences come to expression in what is similar between entities. The reverse formulation is equally valid: similarities may be evinced in what is different. Because this formulation may sound contradictory it may be helpful to explain its meaning through the use of some examples.

Differentiating between life in a biotic sense and social life brings to light a moment of similarity, given in the term life. However, life in a biotic sense differs fundamentally from life in a social sense, for the latter does not need "watering" and does not produce processes of photosynthesis, simply because it is subject to (social) norms and not to natural (biotic) laws. Similarly, the logical unity and multiplicity of a concept differs from the quantitative sense of the one and the many. Frege uses the example of a white cat and a black cat in order to highlight the shortcomings of "abstraction" *per se*:

> The concept 'cat', that has been obtained through abstraction does indeed contain no particulars, but precisely for that reason it is only one concept (Frege 1884: 45-6; §34; translation by Dummett 1995: 84).

Therefore Frege teaches us that disregarding the differences between entities does not cancel those differences; at most, it allows us to arrive at a single general concept (like that of "cat").

Consider another example. Observing the president of a country accompanied by a body-guard highlights another instance of similarity-in-difference, for although they share a spatial proximity — the small distance between them — they are very distant in terms of their respective social positions (as president and bodyguard). Once again we can discern an element of similarity, captured by the comment on distance, and an element of difference, present in the fact that what is called the

social has a meaning that is different from the spatial. But the important point is that the difference is shown in the moment of similarity. As soon as one looks at the meaning of this element of similarity, namely distance, the distinctive nature of the social and the spatial becomes apparent, for social distance (being far apart) is obviously not the same as spatial distance (being in proximity).

The designation of this kind of "difference in terms of similarity" as analogy has a long history. Of course one may also consider questions such as:

• How does one account for the presence of similarities and differences between entities?

• Are there not cross-cutting analogical connections between aspects and entities, and *vice versa*?

1. Metaphor

Language has many words and expressions which capture entitary analogies. Consider "the foot of the mountain", "the elbow of my finger", "the nose of the car", and so on. Our conjecture is that these entitary analogies are lingually designated by the use of metaphors. It is the structure of an analogy, where the differences are shown in what is similar, that underlies the apparent mystery that is sometimes discerned in the nature of a metaphor. Max Black (1979: 21) writes:

> So perhaps the 'mystery' is simply that, taken as literal, a metaphorical statement appears to be perversely asserting something to be what it is plainly known not to be.

Clearly, understanding a metaphor in a literal sense robs it of its suggestive power, lingual significance and truth value. The suggestion that we relate metaphoricity to the nature of an analogy does not entail advocating either an "objectivist" or an "antiliteralist" position. Lakoff & Johnson (1999: 119) are justified in their reaction to the view that "language consists of words expressing ideas that literally fit the world". They concede that this "folk theory" is "fundamentally right" for "basic-level concepts", but argue that in a general sense such a "commonsense theory" would deny that metaphors "serve the central function of language" and that it would banish metaphor from the realm of truth by relegating it to "language in which truth is not thought to be at

issue: poetry, rhetorical flourish, fictional discourse, and so on" (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 120).

They portray the traditional theory of metaphor as one in which "ideas have to be literal if they are to fit the world" and that ideas such as these therefore "cannot be metaphorical". As a consequence,

> metaphor must be a matter of words, not thoughts. That is why the very idea of conceptual metaphor is at odds with this interpretation of the commonsense theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 120).

The position assumed by Lakoff & Johnson proceeds from a peculiar view of the relationship between word and concept. The terms in which the problem is stated concerns "words" and "thoughts". Yet the truly modal-functional problem of the relationship between the logical-analytical aspect and the sign-mode of reality is not articulated.[1] The "very idea of conceptual metaphor" actually hides it. In order to explicate this we may consider an example used by Lakoff & Johnson (1999) in which the relationship between quantity and extension is at stake.

What should be borne in mind is that from a modal-functional (or ontic) perspective the structural meaning of the spatial aspect inherently displays interconnections with the quantitative aspect of reality underlying it. Of course, the nature of these two aspects is already manifest in everyday experience, where we implicitly encounter typically specified modal-functional properties, such as the level of water in a glass. The phrase "typically specified" captures the fact that the modal functions of reality are not experienced *in abstracto* but attached to and intimately connected with concrete entities and events functioning in a typical way within these aspects.[2] It is only through modal abstraction, as the distinctive feature of scholarly thinking, that we can explicitly

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1   Cf Strauss 2003 regarding arguments concerned with the ontic status of the aspects of reality.

2   Consider for instance the general focus of thermodynamics — a strictly modally delimited discipline with a universal scope in which the typicality of different kinds of physical entities is disregarded. In thermodynamics it does not matter whether we are talking about solid, fluid or gaseous states — the specific weight and heat remain the same. However, as soon as we take into account the relationship between micro-structures and macro-structures (within the confines of statistical physics, for example), the formerly neglected nuances (typicality) do matter, because the specific heat or weight is then differently specified in each of the three states.

enter into an analysis of the interconnections between various modal aspects.[3]

But once this dimension of theoretical thinking is opened up[4] it becomes important to distinguish between modal analogies (evinced in the interconnections between different modal aspects) and entitary analogies designated by metaphors. Does this mean that a metaphor has no intrinsic connection with concept formation?

Lakoff & Johnson (1999) trace the traditional (and according to them still standard) view of a concept back to Aristotle's definition of a definition in his *Topics* (102a): "A definition is a phrase signifying a thing's essence". They interpret this as saying "it is a collection of necessary and sufficient conditions for an object to be a particular kind of thing." This definition, which is "still commonplace in logic and philosophy," specifies membership of a conceptual category and at the same time expresses "what philosophers today would call a concept". Thus

> a definition expresses an idea, which (via Ideas Are Essences), specifies an essence that characterizes a kind of thing existing objectively in the world. Thus, from Aristotle's central metaphor Ideas Are Essences, plus the Folk Theory of Essences, we get the mainstream contemporary philosophical notion of a concept (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 379).

According to their approach, metaphors are constituted by mappings across "conceptual domains". These mappings may derive from experiences, such as when the rising level of water being poured into a glass enables cross-domain mapping between quantity and verticality:

> This correspondence between quantity and verticality arises from a correlation in our normal everyday experiences, like pouring more water into the glass and seeing the level go up. Early in development, Johnson hypothesizes, such correlations are 'conflations' in which quantity and verticality are not seen as separate, and associations be-

3   Modal abstraction simply means that scholarly disciplines are demarcated by highlighting a certain aspect which serves as its functional delimitation while at once disregarding other points of entry distinct from the chosen one. If a biologist looks at the world, for example, s/he does so from a biotic perspective and not at the same time from an economic, social or juridical point of view.

4   Actually the phrase "opened up" refers to a general feature of subject-object relations. For example, appreciating a sunset as beautiful opens up its aesthetic aspect by objectifying it in this mode, which is, of course, correlated with the human subject appreciating the beauty of the event.

> tween them are formed. After the conflation period, according to
> Grady, the associations between More and Up and [48] between Less
> and Down constitute a cross-domain mapping between the sensori-
> motor concept of verticality (the source domain) and the subjective
> judgment of quantity. Conventional linguistic metaphors like 'Prices
> fell' are secondary manifestations of the primary cross-domain map-
> ping (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 47-8).

The absence of a theory of modal functions and concrete (natural and
social) entities and processes (in principle functioning in all aspects),
accompanied by the absence of an acknowledgement of the ontic status
of functional modes of reality,[5] means that the metaphor theory of
Lakoff & Johnson suffers from blurred distinctions. In the example of
cross-domain mapping between verticality and quantity the implicit
assumption is that such mappings occur between conceptual domains.

However, as soon as one enters into an analysis of what is ontically
given (in its "pre-conceptualised" reality), one immediately realises that
spatial configurations — such as a vertical lines or verticality — in a
constitutive ontic sense already presuppose the quantitative meaning
of the "more" and the "less" (that is, of the quantitative aspect of reality).
The nature of dimensional extension is not purely spatial, because
there are always a number of dimensions within which it is meaning-
ful to speak about length (one-dimensional extension), height (two-
dimensional extension), volume (three-dimensional extension), and so
on. Consequently, the notion of verticality is embedded in that of dimen-
sionality, and the latter collapses into nothingness outside its coherence
with the (foundational) quantitative meaning of one, two and three.[6]

Therefore the structural meaning of the spatial aspect is inherently
connected to the (foundational) quantitative meaning of number. Con-
sequently, one should not confuse "conceptual domains" with "ontic func-
tions" because the latter ultimately co-condition both our (integral)
experience of reality and our ability to acquire concepts. This confusion
may also tempt us to deny ontic interconnections between modal as-
pects on the basis of the supposed disconnectedness of "conceptual

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5   An argument for the ontic status of modal aspects may be found in Strauss 2003:
    66 ff.
6   An extensive analysis of the (inter-modal) meaning of spatial continuity may be
    found in Strauss 2002.

domains." In a different work Lakoff finds himself even in a position where his emphasis on "conceptual metaphor" convinces him that continuity and discreteness are opposites (Lakoff *et al* 2000: 324), instead of realising that these terms refer to mutually cohering but distinct ontic functions of reality.

Furthermore, as soon as one wishes to elucidate the relationship between a concept and a word it appears that one first has to account for the implied modal distinctions.

2. Concept and word

The diametrically opposed positions taken in this regard often argue that anyone engaging in the activity of thinking is automatically activating language and anyone using language is already involved in conceptualisation. These arguments simply state that any concrete human activity necessarily functions at once in the analytical and the sign modes (aspects) of reality, acknowledging that the ontic modes of reality do not only make possible the concrete functions which entities and events may have within them, but also entail that such modes form the (non-subjective, ontic) transcendental reference points for human reflection on their uniqueness and the coherence between them.[7]

Only once the distinction has been drawn between concrete activities and their diverse functions does it make sense to ask second-level questions about the uniqueness of and the coherence between the analytical and sign modes. And only at this point will it be meaningful to address the problem of whether or not the sign mode presupposes the meaning of the analytical mode or *vice versa*.[8] Fodor (1977: 43) aptly remarks:

> The goal we have been pursuing is the traditional one of reducing meaning to some more basic and better understood entity. But analyticity is too intimately related to meaning to provide such a reduction. In fact, as far as anyone knows, there is no meaning-independent way of characterizing either analyticity or meaning.

7   Obviously this kind of reflection will always remain provisional and open to future correction and reinterpretation (owing to the conditions of historicity and linguisticality which embrace the ongoing dynamics of human endeavours (cf Grondin 1994: 10 ff, 117 ff).
8   See the analysis in Strauss 2002: 9-15.

Since, as noted earlier, analysis entails the ability to identify and to distinguish while identification forms the crux of all concept-formation, a concept always combines a multiplicity of properties that are brought into a unity (synthesised, or united).[9] Lingual phenomena such as words (whether spoken or written), do function in the sign mode (as well as others). But it can be shown that in the case of young children the analytical ability to identify and to distinguish plays a foundational role in the development of lingual skills. Consider the case of a child who has formed the concept "bird" but designated it with the name (verbal sign) /pigeon/ and "masters" a second encounter with a different bird with the only available name, /pigeon/.

The view that forming a concept is always language-bound therefore needs clarification. First, we have to observe that language involves a concrete activity embracing multiple aspects, and can never be identified with a single aspect (such as the sign mode). It follows that any lingual performance functions at once in the logical-analytical aspect and in the sign mode — again highlighting the fact that any such performance will always exhibit both functions simultaneously.

Thus, arguing for the foundational role of the logical aspect does not in any way intend to deny the actual (inter-modal) connectedness between the logical and the sign aspects of reality. The relationship between analyticity and metaphoricity may serve to elucidate the foundational role of the logical mode.

If we question the nominalistic assumption that there is no universality outside the human mind, then relating the nature of a concept to universal ontic features is not necessarily problematic. The unity of a logical concept is constituted by acts of identifying and distinguishing and is made possible — in a modal/functional sense — by the foundational connection between the logical aspect and the quantitative aspect.

Cassirer (1928a: 339) argues that the determination of a concept as a unity in multiplicity belongs to the classical legacy of logic and philosophy *per se*. Whatever is logically grasped cannot fully prescribe

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9   Since identification and distinguishing mutually presuppose each other, it should be clear that the counter pole of the synthetic act of identification is given in distinguishing — the other "leg" of analysis. Therefore it is mistaken to oppose analysis and synthesis.

the way in which the multiplicity of features should be united in the unity of a concept (Cassirer 1928: 134), because this is also a result of the real creative element in our thinking, the power to discern or to observe.[10] Logical concept-formation is always aimed at discerning the multiplicity of universal traits of that which is conceptualised. As such it is subject to universal (modal/functional) logical norms, such as the principles of identity and non-contradiction. Although the construction of each concept is dependent on logical subjectivity — human beings respond with normative freedom to these normative conditions for logicality — no concept is exclusively the product of our subjective logical functioning.

Viewed modally, the use of language presupposes the logical function. The lingual intention of (symbolic) signification is always dependent on the correct lingual identification and distinction of the relevant words.[11] This is important even in respect of the letters used to spell words, since a minor alteration may result in a complete change in meaning. Any act qualified by the sign-mode must therefore make an appeal to the foundational logical function and even to the kinematical aspect in so far as an element of lingual constancy is required by the possibility of every language to produce endless lingual variations on the basis of lingual constancy.[12] Habermas (1998: 26-7) explicitly emphasises the foundational role of the letters of the alphabet:

> Already on the level of the sign substrate of meanings, it must be possible repeatedly to recognise the sign-type in the diversity of corresponding sign events.[13]

Once a concept is understood in its logical structure, it is impossible to side-step the possibility of identifying and distinguishing what-

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10 It is difficult to find a suitable English equivalent for the German word *Aufmerksamkeit* used by Cassirer (1969: 31), "... der Aufmerksamkeit als dem eigentlichen schöpferischen Vermögen des Begriffsbildung": "... the power of observation (of being attentive) as the truly creative ability of concept-formation".

11 The expression, "lingual identification and distinction" should be seen as a modal (retrocipatory) analogy within the structure of the sign mode.

12 The core meaning of the kinematic aspect is given in a uniform (constant) motion.

13 "Schon auf der ebene der Zeichensubstrats von Bedeutungen muß der Zeichentypus in der Vielfalt korrespondierender Zeichenereignisse als dasselbe Zeichen wiedererkannt werden können."

ever is given within reality. This possibility is related to what should be called the logical object-side of reality. Only via this object-side of reality is it possible to understand the range of a concept.[14] A denial of this reality would cause great difficulty in discerning the dissimilarity between the domain of a concept and the set of objects intended by a concept. Failure to acknowledge the logical object-function can easily generate the incorrect view that a concept is merely a group of characteristics of an "object" and that the logical extension of a concept is to be equated with the multiplicity (number) of objects subsumed under it. Frege (1895: 455) clearly recognises this:

> The domain (Umfang) of a concept does not consist of the objects that the concept encompasses, like a forest constituted by trees, since the domain is only attached to the concept itself.

Yet the subjective contents of a concept cannot bypass the logical object-side in its reference to that which is being logically analysed (objectified). Only in relation to the subjective logical unity of a concept is it possible to view the range of implied objective logical characteristics in its connection to the contents of a concept.

Early in the twentieth century Cassirer increasingly conjoined the nature of a concept with that of words and their meanings (Cassirer 1928: 130). According to Rickert (1929: 50-1), the endeavour to think of a concept as a unity sets an unattainable task for our understanding (a task-setting idea in the Kantian sense) which can only be realised by a word, because the unity of a word replaces the unity originally sought in our understanding.

Closely related to what we have said about letter signs (with reference to Habermas) the linguist Reichling (1970: 60) recognises from a semantic angle that lingual activities do not merely communicate thoughts, since knowledge of the sounds involved is also essential. In the final analysis, however, the renowned author of *Het Woord* (Reichling 1967) completely reduces his problems in terms of the meaning of a word to what he marks as the "things known" in the different usages of language. For example, many things are known about a cow — more than those mentioned in a dictionary — and when we identify the

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14   A spatial analogy within the modal structure of the logical aspect.

sound-form /cow/ in a certain context it is not necessary to think about anything special in our cow-knowledge:

> Therefore, the use of the word cow is made possible by the totality of facets of your knowledge of the cow which fits the situation. Such a totality of knowledge-facets, in conjunction with the word-form that enables the use of that word, constitutes the meaning of that word in the case concerned (Reichling 1970: 60).[15]

A remarkable situation is uncovered here. Whereas Cassirer and Rickert try to solve their concept problems in the direction of a meaningful word, Reichling explores the opposite direction, trying to resolve his embarrassment about the meaning of a word with reference to the knowledge-facets which are relevant in a specific situation.

Simply by reformulating Reichling's original remark the foundational role of concept-formation as well as the difference between the logical and the lingual modes can be explained. Instead of saying that the recognition of a specific sound-form (such as /cow/) does not necessarily imply that we simultaneously think of every cow-characteristic we know, we prefer to say that we do not necessarily have to signify every cow-characteristic. For example, in a certain situation the word "cow" may merely mean: something big and heavy.

In lingual terms, no objection can be raised against the way in which only these (spatial and physical) features are signified (lingually objectified). If, however, we now proceed to identify this meaning-nuance of the word cow with the concept "cow", we encounter serious problems. A correct concept of a cow must, in analytic terms, imply not only the spatial and physical characteristics of the cow, but also every other modal characteristic, for otherwise the predication of any one of the neglected features amounts to logical contradiction. In a logical sense, therefore, other fundamental traits of a cow must also be included in our concept "cow", such as its health, its (sensory) appearance, and so on.

A different example may elucidate the logical-analytical nature of concepts. Does the concept of a chair appeal only to its opened-up lo-

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15   "Welnu het gebruik van uw woord koe word mogelijk gemaakt door het geheel van de facetten van uw koe-kennis, passend in die situatie. Zo 'n geheel van kennis-facetten dat in eenheid met de woordvorm het gebruik van het woord mogelijk maakt, vormt de betekenis van het woord in dat bepaalde geval."

gical features, or must we assume that all the non-logical characteristics are implied by opening up the logical object-function of a chair? If these non-logical characteristics are not implied, then plainly an unbridgeable gap exists between the logical subject-object relation and the non-logical aspects of a chair. We have to conclude, therefore, that in making the logical object-function of a chair patent (manifest), the non-logical (modal) characteristics (specified according to the typical entitary uniqueness of the chair) are also logically objectified. Therefore, the multiplicity combined in the unity of the concept of a chair enables us to make predications such as: this chair is beautiful (aesthetic); this chair is expensive (economic); this chair is big (spatial); this chair is heavy (physical), and so on. If such (modal) characteristics were not implied in the correct concept of a chair in an analytical sense, all these statements (explicating them in distinct judgements) would, in a logical sense, be contradictory. In other words, if the correct concept of a chair does not imply these characteristics in an analytical way to begin with, they cannot afterwards be predicated of the chair, except illogically. From: P is non-Q one cannot infer: P is (such-and-such) Q.

Against this background it therefore seems completely admissible in lingual terms to exclude various essential features from the meaning of a word in a specific context (without disobeying any lingual norms), while it remains imperative that every one of the elements of a logical concept should, in analytical terms, be implied in the concept. That which is not semantically implied in a specific word (with reference to something signified) must therefore (without any contradiction) be analytically implied in the corresponding concept.

In general it may therefore be said that all typical semantic phenomena, such as ambiguity, synonymity, redundancy and metaphoricity, are foundationally dependent upon our analytical ability to discern.

Naturally there are more cross-cutting interconnections to be considered, because the possibility of human analytical discernment combined with lingual imaginativeness can also explore relationships between modal functions and entities (or events).

3. The embodied mind: conceptual metaphor

Lakoff & Johnson (1999: 17) challenge the Western tradition insofar as it assumes that "reason" is autonomous in the sense of being independent of "perception, motion, emotion, and other bodily capacities". They are convinced that all "neural beings [...] categorize". They distinguish between "categories" and "concepts": the former are the "stuff of experience" and the latter the "neural structures that allow us to mentally characterize our categories and reason about them". However, they emphasise that categories, concepts, and experience are inseparable (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 19). They refer to the "categorization" of animals regarding "food, predators, possible mates, members of their own species, and so on". Animals do indeed experience reality exclusively in terms of their natural inclination, directed at what is physically, biotically and psycho-sensitively important to them: they experience reality in terms of what is negotiable and not negotiable, or edible and inedible; in terms of same sex and opposite sex, or comforting and alarming. This capacity depends upon their sensing apparatus and on their "ability to move themselves and to manipulate objects" (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 17).

They claim that categorisation is a consequence of the way in which we (as "neural beings") are "embodied" and that most of our categories are formed automatically and unconsciously "as a result of functioning in the world" (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 18).

In terms of the distinction between modal functions and the dimension of entitary structures and events, the idea of the "embodied mind" emanates from the undeniable fact that human beings have subject functions in all aspects of reality, including the physical, biotic and sensitive modes. However, in Lakoff & Johnson's approach the emphasis is so heavily on the concrete (entitary) functioning of the human body that no consideration is given to the ontic (and conditioning) role of the modal aspects of reality.

The effect of this shortcoming is that their reasoning tends to be circular in certain respects. The complex nature of the human body is definitely constituted by various kinds of entities in their interlacement, from the physically qualified material constituents, the biotically qualified organs, and the sensitively qualified configurations in which desires, needs, emotions and the nerve system are based, up to the guiding nor-

mative human orientation supported by these foundational layers. It is only in and through this complex (enkaptic)[16] whole of the human body that we are "embedded" ("embodied") in the world by our participation in all of its dimensions, including aspects and entities and events.

From our lived experience of being spatially extended, able to move and subject to physical and biotic laws, it is natural to explain the possibility of understanding the functional nature of these realities by means of appropriate functional concepts of spatiality, motion, force and vitality. This functional subjectivity caused Merleau-Ponty (1970: 148) to claim that "space is rooted in existence" and to overstate his case by saying "I am my body" (Merleau-Ponty 1970: 150).

But since reality has at once an order side and a correlated factual side, it is simplistic and one-sided to take into account only the factuality of our bodily subject-functions when it comes to concept-formation, neglecting the conditioning role of the various aspects (as spheres of order or law-spheres) and the type-laws governing the various layers of the human body. In being subject to physical laws such as the law of gravity, our bodily existence experiences the effect of physical forces, for example when the movement of our arms and legs manifests the pull of gravity. But are we justified in claiming that our concepts of movement and causality are (exclusively) derived from our ability to move and use our muscles? Lakoff & Johnson (1999: 19) write:

> Our abilities to move in the ways we do and to track the motion of other things give motion a major role in our conceptual system. The fact that we have muscles and use them to apply force in certain ways leads to the structure of our system of causal concepts. What is important is not just that we have bodies and that thought is somehow embodied. What is important is that the peculiar nature of our bodies shapes our very possibilities for conceptualization and categorization.

At first glance the answer to this question would seem to be in the affirmative. However, the unanswered question beneath the surface is this: what are the conditions for this "peculiar nature of our bodies"? The answer has to account for both the type-law of the human body and the universal modal (functional) laws specified by this type-law.

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16 This term is intended to indicate that each foundational entitary layer of our "human body" on the one hand maintains its own inner nature and on the other hand (on that basis) serves the encompassing totality of the human body as a whole.

Modal physical laws hold universally for all factual physical processes (including the functioning of the human body according to its physical subject-function). Therefore they cannot be the product of our bodily functioning, but must rather be appreciated as conditions (laws) for the physical functioning of our bodies. Hence causal concepts, though co-dependent upon our physical (bodily) subject-function, are also dependent upon the universal modal structure of the physical aspect itself. But then we have to distinguish between our concept of physical relations and the ontic reality of such relations (and their ontic conditions).

Lakoff & Johnson do in fact stumble upon the difference between what we have called modal functions and concretely existing (and functioning) entities. In their discussion of Zeno's paradoxes they accept, for example, that "[m]otion is not a metaphorical concept" (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 157). Similarly, they speak of "spatial relations", closely approximating a thorough critique of positivism, for modal terms employed in the description of what has been observed by the senses are not themselves entities that can be perceived. They consider spatial relations to be concepts at the heart of our conceptual system for they "are what make sense of space for us" in that they "characterize what spatial form is and define spatial inference",

> ... [b]ut they do not exist as entities in the external world. We do not see spatial relations the way we see physical objects (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 30).

What is significant, however, is that they do not realise that the "part-whole structure" itself is also (in its modal functional sense)[17] an original "spatial relations concept" (cf Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 28-9). They understand this relation as something inherent in physical entities:

> [T]he properties that make for basic-level categories[18] are responses to the part-whole structure of physical beings and objects. Gestalt perception is about overall part-whole structure, as is mental imagery. The use of motor schemes to interact with objects depends significantly on their overall part-whole structure (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 28).

17 See the more detailed explanation of the argument in Strauss 2002.
18 Basic-level categories are those in the "middle" of hierarchical categories, such as chair and car in the "category hierarchies furniture-chair-rocking chair and vehicle-car-sports car" (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 27).

But they add another dimension to their approach by introducing their peculiar view of "conceptual metaphor" in the following way. As their starting-point they look at the scope and richness of our subjective mental life where "subjective judgments" are made about "such abstract things as importance, similarity, difficulty, and morality" and where we encounter "subjective experiences of desire, affection, intimacy, and achievement":

> Yet, as rich as these experiences are, much of the way we conceptualize them, reason about them, and visualize them comes from other domains of experience. These other domains are mostly sensori-motor domains [...], as when we conceptualize understanding an idea (subjective experience) in terms of grasping an object (sensorimotor experience) and failing to understand an idea as having it go right by us or over our heads. The cognitive mechanism for such conceptualizations is conceptual metaphor, which allows us to use the physical logic of grasping to reason about understanding (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 45).

The elaboration of this view of "conceptual metaphor" is developed with great care and systematic finesse, applying in particular, the idea of mappings between source domains and target domains. The strong element of this approach is its recognition of the innumerable images generated by the cross-domain mappings employed by metaphors in all possible contexts of human endeavour. By and large these cross-domain mappings involve similarities and differences between different (conceptualised) entitary (including event) domains, but also between modal domains[19] and entitary domains (or *vice versa*) — and in all these cases metaphors are instances of a distinct type of analogy in the sense defined by us.

Since the choice of source and target domains is relatively arbitrary, it is understandable that one metaphor can be replaced by another, apparently unrelated to it. It is only in the case of purely functional modal analogies that every attempt at such an exchange will be unsuccessful, since the invariable effect is that modal (functional) analogies are simply replaced by synonymous terms. Take, for example, the different ways of capturing the spatial analogy within the structure of the social aspect: social distance, social adjacency, social super- and sub-ordination, social position, and so on. All these expressions are in an important way

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19   They are not recognised as ontic functions since they are normally discussed as "concepts".

connotatively synonymous, namely insofar as they (analogically) reflect some structural feature of the spatial aspect. This possibility to "synonymise" modal analogies is absent in the case of analogies between entities (or: entities and modal properties/modal domains) as designated by metaphors. One may replace the metaphor "the nose of the car" by referring to "the bonnet of the car". While denotative synonymity is present in this case, connotative synonymity is absent.

In the absence of an articulated theory of modal functions the nature of inter-modal (inter-aspectual/inter-functional) connections is distorted by the theory of conceptual metaphor. Hence, instead of analysing the ontic meaning of the moral aspect (with love as its unique and indefinable meaning-nucleus) Lakoff & Johnson (1999: 71) embark on the task of investigating the "concept of love" by asking whether or not it is "independent of the metaphors for love".

The reason for this is that the inter-modal connections between functional aspects, evinced in what is called "backward-pointing" and "forward-pointing" analogies (also designated as modal retrocipations and anticipations) by means of which a specific aspect (analogically) reflects the meaning of other (irreducible) aspects, are structurally fitted into an unbreakable (ontic) coherence.

Lakoff & Johnson (1999: 70) see in their "theory of conceptual cross-domain mappings" an approach that can account for both everyday and novel cases, since "the theory of the novel cases is the same as the theory of the conventional cases", which is "thus best called a theory of metaphor".

The cross-domain mappings operative in "conceptual metaphor" do indeed require a truly conceptual understanding of the constitutive elements of the (original) domains. But even the caveat that difficulties emerge whenever such mappings are understood in a literal instead of a metaphorical sense[20] proves problematic.

It is precisely this difference between the literal and the metaphorical which demonstrates that metaphor has its original seat within the sign-mode and not within the logical-analytical aspect. It presupposes the conceptual-logical dimension (the foundational aspect) but ought

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20 Simply consider their account of the paradoxes of Zeno: they hold that "Zeno's paradox of the arrow can also be seen as pointing out the mistake of taking a metaphor to be literal" (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 157).

to be distinguished from it. Therefore the expression "conceptual metaphor" — although described in an intelligible way — conflates the sign-mode with its foundational logical-analytical aspect. Concepts are not words and therefore they cannot be metaphors.

Although it transcends the logical-analytical mode, the lingual nature of metaphors cannot be accounted for except on the basis of the acquisition of concepts. Without the foundational analytical role of conceiving, the entire distinction between a source domain and a target domain becomes meaningless, as does the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical.

Precisely because a metaphor is not a concept it can employ words metaphorically without violating the analytical scope of some concept or other to which the word(s) under consideration may be related.

4. Conclusion

The analytical capacity to discern enables human beings to conceive and to reason. Logical identification and distinction serve as foundational conditions for the equally basic human capacity to speak and to communicate. Lingual acts of signification may transcend the confines of logically sound concepts by exploring the possibilities of metaphoricity. Yet the ontic foundation of the similarities and differences entailed in interfunctional analogies precludes the conflation of conceptual domains and ontic domains, as in the theory of Lakoff & Johnson. The acknowledgement of the cross-domain mappings explored by metaphors presupposes the functional meaning of the sign mode — where metaphors are located — and is at the same time dependent upon the inter-functional connections between the sign mode and the logical-analytical mode, hence resisting the idea of "conceptual metaphor."

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