

Metaphorical hermeneutics. Metaphor, domains and embodiment

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Abstract: in metaphor studies the issue of the “grounding” of metaphorical meaning calls forth the majority of philosophical issues related to domains and the way they anchor the world or claim to function as the ground for meaning. Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor theory provides the parameters for the analysis of this problem. In order to prevent the possible negative role of subjectivism and materialism in the ontological grounding of metaphor, I propose that metaphorical meaning and conceptual metaphor requires a stratified ontology and anthropology. This proposal implies that there is a correlation between the structure of human experience and the structure of the world in which it functions. The term structure provides a significant key to the correlation.

Keywords: metaphor; semantics; domain theory; anthropology; ontology; radial categories; subjectivism.

1. *Introduction*

Discovering the work of Mary B. Hesse in the field of physics and philosophy of science and more specifically metaphor, led to an enrichment of my own understanding of the foundations of philosophy and of the relationship between science and religion. Her insights regarding the cognitive claims of metaphor and the far-reaching epistemological and ontological consequences of her position gave rise to a fundamental rethinking of issues concerning truth and knowledge. In many ways she was a pioneer scholar in fields not yet cultivated. Subsequently metaphor research proved to be a very fertile area for women and Continental scholars pursuing new views concerning knowledge, science, truth and objectivity. The demise of the objectivist paradigm of knowledge, new embodiment theories of metaphor and empirical research concerning metaphor comprehension in a wide variety of disciplines, have brought about changes in the understanding of the nature of knowledge, reference, truth, meaning, reality and language and its relationship to the world. These theories have also provided new incentives to articulate views of embodiment that can do justice to both the multiplicity of meanings generated

and discovered through metaphor and the multivocality and multifacetedness of the possible worlds to which metaphors refer. As a result so-called non-epistemic factors such as socio-cultural, religious, metaphysical and ideological factors, formerly regarded as epistemically 'out of bounds' in science, are now seen as constitutive of conceptual meaning, cognition and conceptual changes in both ordinary experience and theoretical endeavours. These developments have profited from Hesse's contribution and from the productive discussions of her work.

Her own work has contributed substantially to the development of what Gadamer calls "metaphorical hermeneutics" which investigates metaphorical meaning. Investigations of metaphorical meaning constitution and meaning variance has revealed the significance of semantic and semiotic domains and the contexts within which they function as basis for the grounding of metaphorical meaning. In this paper I explore some of the current views concerning the grounding of metaphorical meaning in experience and embodiment. My thesis is that the embodied conceptual structure of metaphor, which lies at the basis of linguistic articulations of metaphor, is grounded in a deeper ontic structure of the world and of human experience. My provisional agreement with Lakoff, Johnson and others about the "conceptual" nature of metaphor rests on an important caveat viz. that this bodily based conceptual structure is grounded in a deeper ontic structure of the world and of human experience. It is the "analogical" ontological structure of this grounding that is of interest here. I believe their position requires a more encompassing ontological framework that articulates the stratification and many facets of reality, facts, things, human relationships, human action, human experience and cognition in diverse domains of experience. Such a framework must be able to ground its notion of "conceptual metaphor" and meaning in the ineradicably relational nature of both human beings and reality and of the relationship of human beings in and to reality.

Lakoff and Johnson's proposal to ground metaphorical meaning in embodiment and in neural processes represent significant advances in the development of a theory of metaphor. Yet there is a tendency in their work to adapt elements of an approach that could be construed as subjectivist and materialist. I shall attempt to articulate the contours of an alternative theory of meaning and embodiment which counteracts these possibilities. This theory grounds metaphorical meaning and meaning change in an ontological and anthropological framework recognizing the presence and conditioning functioning of radially ordered structures for reality. It also suggests a possible solution to the problems posed by the insistence on literal grounding by proponents of the traditional double-language thesis. Basic to this proposed notion of embodi-

ment is an ontology which recognizes the radial, structural stratification and categorization of human bodies, experience and reality. These categorizations in which humankind as well as human knowledge and reality participate, condition and constrain (ground) analogical and metaphorical meaning transfer, cross domain mappings and blends in cognition and in language and provide the basis for the analogical concepts found in the disciplines.

In metaphor studies the issue of the “grounding” of metaphorical meaning calls forth the majority of philosophical issues related to domains and the way they anchor the world or claim to function as the ground for meaning. Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor theory provides the parameters for the analysis of this problem. The thrust of my argument deals with the possible negative role of subjectivism and materialism in the ontological grounding of metaphor. I argue that metaphorical meaning and conceptual metaphor requires a stratified ontology and anthropology. In this process it becomes clear that there is a correlation between the structure of human experience and the structure of the world in which it functions. The term structure provides a significant key to the correlation.

2. *Conceptual metaphor, embodiment and the “Grounding Hypothesis”*

Recent developments in cognitive semantics and cognitive semiotics in the work of Lakoff, Johnson and others, address the problem of how metaphorical meaning is possible at all through discussions of the “grounding” of metaphorical meaning. Where metaphors allow us to understand one domain of experience in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 117), it is generally argued or assumed that metaphorical understanding is grounded in non-metaphorical understanding (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 113), an assumption characteristic of most reductionist theories of metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) as well as Lakoff and Turner (1989) move from literal language to autonomous concepts grounded in patterns of bodily and social experience. My question is whether this move actually solves the problem of the grounding of metaphorical meaning without succumbing to either subjectivism or materialism. I argue that this move to ground metaphorical meaning in bodily experience requires a further recognition of the ontological and anthropological stratification which conditions meaning and meaning variance.

Mary B. Hesse’s argument that all language is metaphorical – a view also defended by Gadamer – implicitly recognizes the grounding of metaphorical meaning in the categorization and classification of reality. But this is a position which should also acknowledge that all language is categorical, implying that

both literal and metaphorical language are based on the categorization of reality.

As indicated, my thesis is that Lakoff and Turner (1989) ground metaphorical meaning in a way that leaves their position open to subjectivism and materialism. They argue that the literal meaning theory is about ordinary, conventional language which is seen to be semantically autonomous, and not about concepts. The grounding hypothesis as they develop it, deals with concepts as embedded in human experience. They do not deny that there are semantically autonomous concepts but claim that whatever such concepts there are, “[...] are grounded in our patterns of bodily and social experience” (Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 119). To these questions and the question concerning the grounding of orientational, basic, ontological and structural metaphors they answer that they are grounded “[...] by virtue of systematic correlates within our experience” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 58, 61).

In order for metaphors to allow us to understand one domain in terms of another, there must be some “[...] grounding, some concepts that are not completely understood via metaphor to serve as source domains” (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 135). In the earlier work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 56) the problem of the grounding of the conceptual system was briefly articulated as follows: “Are there any concepts at all that are understood directly, without metaphor? If not, how can we understand anything at all?” Concepts that are candidates to be understood directly are: plants, departures, fire, sleep, locations, seeing, etc. They claim that there is a difference between their grounding hypothesis and the literal meaning theory. Their “Grounding Hypothesis which is about concepts and not about language says that only *some* concepts are “semantically autonomous”. *Most* concepts are not semantically autonomous (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 119). In their position the term “literal” has been relegated to be used as a handy term either for a source domain of a metaphor or to contrast with such terms as “ironic”, “understated”, “arrived at by principles of conversation” (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 119). They emphasize the need to differentiate between experience and the way it is conceptualized (1980: 59) and argue that “[...] there are natural dimensions of experience analyzed along these dimensions in more than one way” (1980: 76). Lakoff and Johnson argue that understanding takes place in terms of entire domains of experience and not in terms of isolated concepts and argue that domains of experience are conceptualized as experiential gestalts – structured wholes – that represent coherent organization of experiences in terms of what is experienced as “natural kinds of experience” (1980: 117). Their analysis of a host of empirical examples leads them to their *conceptual metaphor* theory which assumes the existence of these experiential domains. In their work (1999) on the grounding of metaphorical meaning, they claim to develop a responsible philosophy which is empirically

grounded and not grounded in a priori assumptions. The target of their project is the dominant objectivist treatment of language, meaning, understanding and reasoning which does not take into consideration the bodily experience and figurative process of ordering. Conceptual metaphor theory has proved to be most useful and fertile for the understanding of metaphorical meaning creation. But it is exactly the architecture of these experiential domains (Brandt 2000) at stake in the processes of cross-domain mapping and meaning transfer through metaphor that requires further exploration. In sum, Lakoff and Johnson's understanding of "experiential domains" requires closer exploration, mainly in order to clarify the nature of domains and to delineate the relationship between conceptual metaphors, the experiential gestalts they are based upon and the pre-theoretical and pre-conceptual nomic conditions which condition and constrain experiential domains. Contrary to the views of Lakoff and collaborators who argue that it is possible to practice science empirically and without a priori assumptions, I would like to emphasize the fact that empirical science is as bound to a priori assumptions as is any other form of theorizing.

3. *The "magnificent tool" of conceptual metaphor*

Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 45, 129, 233) claim that "[...] the magnificent tool of conceptual metaphor". "[...] is one of the greatest of our intellectual gifts". Metaphors are pervasive both in thought and in language as well as in human subjective experience in general. A large system of primary metaphors is acquired automatically and unconsciously by functioning in everyday life. "Because of the way neural connections are formed", Lakoff and Johnson say that "[...] humans all naturally think using hundreds of primary metaphors". They also endorse the view that primary metaphor is not the result of a conscious multistage process of interpretation, but is a "[...] matter of immediate conceptual mappings via neural connections" (*Ibid.*: 57). Their "integrated theory of primary metaphor" (*Ibid.*: 46, 47) includes four parts: Johnson's theory of conflation in the course of learning; Grady's theory of primary metaphor; Narayanan's neural theory of metaphor and Fauconnier and Turner's theory of conceptual blending.¹ Conceptual metaphors are often conventional, they say. Lakoff and Johnson differentiate a set of metaphors they call "ontological metaphors". Ontological metaphors in their view are, the type of metaphor where

¹ In conceptual metaphor theory metaphors are analyzed as stable and systematic relationships between two conceptual domains, whereas in blending theory the basic unit of cognitive organization is not a domain but a "mental space" (Fauconnier 1994: 16). Mental space theory is based on the analysis of two or more input spaces, based on a generic space shared by both and resulting in a blended space.

abstract notions are thought of as concrete entities or substances.² It is the grounding of primary and conceptual metaphor that requires closer attention.

Lakoff and Johnson's emphasis on the bodily nature of cognition also takes into account the multifaceted nature of the subjective experience of the world which forms the basis of analogical and metaphorical meaning change and meaning transfer. Their notion of embodiment and conceptual metaphor is based on the important assumption that "[...] our corporeality is part of the corporeality of the world [...]" (1999: 565; see also Johnson 1987; 1989; 1991; 1993). The evidence they provide is based on extensive empirical analysis of "conceptual metaphor" and conceptual domains. When Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 462) discuss the grounding of conceptual metaphor, they argue that second generation cognitive science locates meaning in the body and the unconscious conceptual system and that meaning arises in the body and brain through our interactions with the environment and with other people (*Ibid.*: 463). Cognitive semantics studies human conceptual systems, meaning and inference and claims that: "Metaphors are products of body, brain, mind, and experience, are pervasive in our everyday thought and in philosophy itself and get their meaning through the commonalities of the body and our bodily and social experience in the world" (*Ibid.*: 462, 463). They tie this innate human propensity to the embodied spirituality of human beings (*Ibid.*: 561-565). This spirituality, in turn, comes to expression in empathetic imaginative projection - a form of "transcendence" "[...] a form of being in the other [...]" (*Ibid.*: 565) which also comes to expression in the relationship to the physical world, an ecological spirituality. "Embodied spirituality" entails that in all acts of imaginative, empathetic interaction with the world around us an element of what has traditionally been called "the spiritual", is present (*Ibid.*: 565). Thus the analysis of metaphor leads to the recognition of the presence and role of embodied spirituality in the process of meaning formation. This fact points to an important dimension of the discussion concerning the nature and role of metaphor as vehicle of certitudinal, cognitive anchors or fiduciary moments in knowledge formation (Botha 2007).

I agree provisionally with Lakoff, Johnson and others about the "conceptual" nature of metaphor. But I qualify this agreement with the important notion that this bodily based conceptual structure which lies at the basis of articulations of conceptual metaphor, is grounded in a deeper ontic structure of the world and of human experience. It is the "analogical" ontological structure of this grounding that needs to be "fleshed out" in a more encompassing onto-

² The term "ontological" is also used in the more conventional philosophical sense of the word when Lakoff and Johnson analyze Aristotelean categories and essences.

logical framework. In such a framework, facts, things, human relationships, human action, human experience and cognition in diverse domains of experience, need adumbration. Such a framework must be able to ground the notion of “conceptual metaphor” and meaning in the ineradicably relational nature of both human beings and reality and in the relationship of human beings in and to reality. In order to escape the trap of subjectivism the proposed framework needs to accommodate the fact that concepts, conceptual domains and metaphors are constrained and conditioned by a deeper, ontological framework which conditions the “itineraries of meaning” that guide and structure the acts of knowing. These “itineraries” are not only constitutive of the human mind, but also of the nature of the world. One’s access to these constraints and conditions are by means of human embodied experience and through linguistic or imaginative articulations. Lakoff and Johnson’s anchoring of meaning in the bodily existence falls short of actually recognizing that all realms of reality are permeated by and pregnant with meaning which the knower in community with others *opens up and discovers* via human interactive experience. It is exactly this dynamic “[...] intrinsic restlessness and relational insufficiency of reality” (Hart 1984: 166), which human action and cognition participate in and which points to the ‘expressive’ and ‘referential character of all of reality where “[...] meanings refuse to stand still” (Van Hoozer 1998: 127). Both conceptual metaphor and the states of affairs on which it is based in reality have this deferral of meaning built into it. Having said this, it does not exempt us from the responsibility to track down the mechanisms by means of which we approximate such meaning. It is to the contours of this notion of “domains” that we now turn.

4. *Metaphors as keys to the world and the world as keys to metaphor*

Lakoff and Johnson (1987: 268) recognize that a satisfactory account of meaning and meaningful understanding rests on the recognition of the structured nature of embodied, human experience. Experientialism, Lakoff and Johnson claim (*Ibid.*: 267), rests on the bodily pre-conceptual form from which it arises and this is not “unstructured mush” (*Ibid.*: 267). They say: “[...] conceptual structure is meaningful because it is *embodied*, that is, it arises from, and is tied to, our pre-conceptual bodily experiences. In short, conceptual structure exists and is understood because pre-conceptual structures exist and are understood. Conceptual structure takes its form in part from the nature of pre-conceptual structures”. They (1980: 117, 118) argue that there are three natural kinds of experience: of the body, of the physical environment, and

of the culture. They regard them as “natural” because they are products of human nature (1980: 116). There are a relatively small number of conceptual metaphors drawing on domains of bodily experience which structure abstract human concepts (Johnson 1989: 115). Johnson claims that our knowledge is embodied in a deeper and more profound sense than mere know-how. Our conceptual system “[...] is grounded in and structured by various recurring patterns of our perceptual interactions, bodily orientations, movements and manipulations of objects” (1993: 414). He states this “[...] corporeal semantics, a semantics of embodied understanding” (1993: 422) is actually constitutive of our cognitive activity and of our concepts. So one can conclude that in their view human embodied nature and cognition is patterned and orderly and that this order is reflected in the concepts formed in and about the world. It is the nature of the pre-conceptual reality that requires further investigation.

I propose that the world consists of analogical domains and that similarities between these ontic domains are expressed conceptually in metaphors. Metaphors are not only lingual articulations of purported interactive meanings between two different semantic domains or between differences and similarities within one domain, but also typical of thought processes about the world. Metaphors express more than merely lingual states of affairs, but rely on ontic categories, (natural) kinds and image schemata and in turn “create” (Fauconnier, 1994) domains or “mental spaces”. There is no doubt that the human mind is actively involved and creative in the process of the development of new domains. Yet, I hesitate to agree with a constructivist reading of this statement. The tendency toward transcendence mentioned above is an indication that even in our most creative and imaginative moments we succeed only in gaining limited in-sight into some deep and unfathomable complexity of meaning which precedes our cognitive or linguistic grasp and which seems to always be unfolding more layers and depths of meaning. An idealist reading which ultimately locates these “domains” in “mental spaces” created by the human mind does not satisfy either because in this view too meaning is merely the result of human constructions. I have strong reservations about Lakoff and Johnson’s (1999) ultimately materialistic, neural grounding of metaphorical meaning. What else do we have, one can ask. Metaphors ultimately require the recognition of neural grounding and certainly experientialism requires some material basis.

Our basic human resource is embodiment, which inevitably calls forth the neural embodiment basis. This question becomes even more acute if one argues for the neural grounding of mental constructions. It is true that there already exists a large corpus of solid research by proponents of a neural theory of cognition and of metaphor. The early, relatively simple, definition of metaphor as the understanding of one domain of experience in terms of another domain

of experience raised the fundamental question: What are “domains of experience?” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 117; Brandt 2000: 12). The notion of a “domain” is found in the earliest metaphor literature, for instance, “source domain and target domain” but is not explicitly defined. Brandt (2000: 11-51) shows that a few authors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Turner 1988; Sweetser 1990) have done work in this area, but argues that no adequate account has yet been developed. Eve Sweetser (1990: 19) analyses semantic change and polysemy patterns. This leads her to introduce at least four systematic metaphorical connections between domains: social, physical, mental and speech acts. She says: “Metaphor operates between domains. It operates so pervasively that speakers find an inter-domain connection between knowledge and vision, or between time and space, to be as natural as the intra-domain connection between *finger* and *hand* or between *man* and *woman*” (Sweetser 1990: 19). Per Aage Brandt (2000) presents a “Geography of the Life-world” and provides an “Architecture of Semantic Domains as a Grounding Hypothesis in Cognitive Semiotics”. He claims that we are embodied according to different basic domains of reality and calls for a return to the inaugural studies of metaphor in order to show that “[...] metaphor concepts are superordinate semantic indicators of domain addresses” (2000: 48). In his “first life-world map” he distinguishes a total of four basic *gesture based* semantic domains, the physical, the social, the mental, speech-act domains (D1, D2, D3 and D4) and three *action-based* satellite or practical domains work, love and worship (D5, D6 and D7). To this he adds a second and third satellite generation of domains that are *exchange based* (D8-D10: jurisdiction, economic exchanges, aesthetic evaluations in cultural life) and three fundamental genres of discourse (D11-D13: argumentative, narrative and descriptive (2000: 45).

We now have a number of arguments alluding to the existence of some ontological, experiential and/or embodied grounding of metaphorical meaning and meaning change. What they lack is an explanation of the fact that in all these domains all other domains seem to be echoed or reflected. On the one hand, these authors deny the existence of a “[...] rock-bottom core of literal concepts to which all meaning or conceptual structure can be reduced”, yet do suggest some basic experiential grounding (Johnson 1993: 421). On the other hand they do suggest it is about the nature of the embodied experiential grounding that views diverge. Obviously all three sets of proposals above have merit and share one common denominator, namely their approach to the grounding of metaphorical meaning from the angle of cognitive linguistics and cognitive semantics. Brandt would prefer to call it Cognitive Semiotics. Brandt’s proposals have a Continental philosophical flair which reminds strongly of Husserlian phenomenological (life-world) roots, but his analyses are very much in the

style of Cognitive Linguistics with its close attention to sentence structure and meanings of single concepts. He has left “domain theory” behind and wants to work with “mental spaces” presumably grounding the nature of meaning in the mental capacities of human beings.

Brandt’s proposal and methodology of an architecture of semantic domains recognizes the bodily basis of semantic domains and multimodal gestalts (Brandt 2000: 19) and develops a taxonomy of domains in the proposed “first life-world map” (2000: 13). His appeal to the “life world” is an important step in the right direction as is the proposal of Lakoff and Johnson to ground metaphorical meaning in experiential gestalts and human embodiment. It is true that meaning comes to expression in a variety of speech acts, facts, events, things, societal relationships etc., and that all incorporate some form of metaphorical language. Lakoff and Johnson’s emphasis on embodiment as the basis of meaning is a choice for an anthropocentric grounding. They claim that it is mistaken to think that the spatial relations upon which our conceptual system relies and which we take for granted are just “objectively given features of the external world” (1999: 575). They argue that we make the best of what our brain and our visual system offers us of this world. In this quote as in other sections of the major work of Lakoff and Johnson, embodied realism locates metaphorical meaning in the body, the brain and the neurological functioning of the human brain. Their view seems to lack recognition of the stratified nature of non-human reality, which correlates with the stratification of human embodied experience. They locate and explain metaphorical polyvalency on the basis of embodiment without recognizing the pre-given ontic basis for this polyvalency. This phenomenon still requires some deeper ontological grounding, certainly more than a grounding in human mental or neural capacities.

5. *Cross domain mappings and radial categories*

An important clue to both the problem of conceptual and metaphorical polyvalency and polysemy is, I suggest, the notion of radial category. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999), radial categories belong to the nature of a domain. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 117) answered the question concerning the nature of a domain of experience by referring to “natural kinds of human experience” that were “natural” in the sense that they are products of human nature. Some of these may be universal and others vary from culture to culture. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 117, 118) argued that there are three natural kinds of experience “experiences of the body, of the physical environment, and of the culture”. They constitute the source domains upon which metaphors draw. Understand-

ing takes place in terms of entire domains of experience and not in terms of isolated concepts. They indicate that “domains of experience” are structured wholes within recurrent human experience that are organized as experiential gestalts. Experience “[...] in terms of such natural dimensions seem to us to be *natural kinds of experience*” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 117). In their later work, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999) “domains” are not explicitly defined, but seem to be assumed. In their view of “cross domain mapping” and “radial categorization” or “radial structure” (1999: 177, 224, 225, 233, 500, 501, 512), one finds that this new strand of research entails: “(1) a strong dependence of concepts and reason on the body and (2) the centrality to conceptualization and reason of imaginative processes, especially metaphor, imagery, metonymy, prototypes, frames, mental spaces, and radial categories”. Basic level conceptualization is the cornerstone of “embodied realism” (1999: 01), they say. Metaphorical language is a reflection of metaphorical thought and metaphorical language in the form of cross domain mappings is primary; metaphorical language is secondary” (1999: 123). To this they add “[...] metaphors ground abstract concepts through cross-domain mappings using aspects of our embodied experience and that metaphors are the very means by which we can understand abstract domains and extend our knowledge into new areas” (1999: 543).

The term “domain” is used to indicate domains of conceptual metaphors, linguistic domains, semantic domains, domains of experience, etc. “Cross domain conceptual mapping” (1999: 71) is described as a “cognitive mechanism” which is based on the existence of “conceptual metaphor”, an embodied system of “basic-level concepts” that “[...] have evolved to “fit” the ways our bodies, over the course of evolution”, have been coupled to our environment [...]” (1999: 91). Each metaphorical idea harbours a cross domain mapping. “[I]t has both a source and a target that is at least partly structured by that source” (1999: 255). Fundamental to the domains are categories and prototypes. A “prototype” is the most central, or typical instance of a category. Radial categories are extensions of the prototype, they are less “typical,” and may differ from the prototype in one or more features. In a radial category there is one central case and the other cases are extensions of the central one. The example which they use to illustrate this is “harm”. The central kind of harm is physical, but there is also emotional, financial and social harm. These are metaphorical extensions of the central case. They may represent metaphorical extensions of the prototype (as in “harm”), or alternatively, categories that are missing one or more features associated with the prototype (as in “mother”). Discussing another example, Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 224) claim that our very concept of causation is multivalent: It consists of the entire radial structure, with human agency at the center and many extensions. The word “causation,” they say “[...] designates

a human category, a radial category of extraordinary complexity". We have a central prototypical case of what "causation" is in our physical experience of for example being punched in the arm, but, they (1999: 233) argue "The question is, however, problematic just about everywhere else, because we are moving away from the central prototypical case of causation to other very different senses with different logics and different criteria for determining what is true". So causality differentiates according to a great variety of contexts or aspects of human experience and reality. This raises the question concerning differentiation between the prototypical meaning of causality and the differentiated analogical meanings of causality which are found within the radius of the domain inhabited by the prototypical case. How is this determined? Some distinctions in the philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd are helpful in this respect.

6. *Experiential and embodied domains: An alternative view*

In this section I draw attention to a notion similar to that of radial category, but different in that it is claimed to have an ontic grounding. This notion originates in the philosophy of the Cosmonomic idea of Dooyeweerd, Vollenhoven et al, which breaks with the double language idea and its conventional grounding of meaning in the literal. This philosophy acknowledges the fact that all of reality is characterized by the potential of multiplicity of meaning, drawn together in what is referred to as the religious centre of human and cosmic life. It has also broken with an understanding of embodied realism which denies that we live and experience a world "given" to us. According to Dooyeweerd (1955, vol. II: 549) there is no "earthly world" -in-itself, but only one that stands in a "concentric relationship" to humankind. But this implies that all of reality and all of human experience of reality can ultimately not be grounded in human embodiment.³

The alternative view of the domains involved in experience and embodiment, proposed in this article assumes a few basic hypotheses based on the philosophy of Dooyeweerd;

1. All entities in reality and human experience function in a diversity of mutually coherent but irreducible aspects or facets of reality - also called *modal or functional domains*.
2. The modal domains exhibit both similarities-in-differences

³ This approach of Dooyeweerd calls forth a number of philosophical issues which are outside of the scope of this paper such as the conditions that make human experience and knowledge possible (Dooyeweerd 1955, vol. 11: 548).

and differences in their similarities – also called modal or functional *analogies*.

3. Analysis of the world around us rests on the identification and distinction of these similarities and differences exhibited by entities and/or aspects or facets of entities.
4. Concept formation rests on the identification of such similarities and differences in which features that have been identified and distinguished are united in a *concept*.
5. The quest for a literal grounding of meaning associated with the double language thesis needs to be replaced by a grounding of meaning in the distinction between non-analogical (or original) modal meaning juxtaposed to analogical modal meaning.

On the basis of these assumptions it is important to differentiate clearly between the standard usage of the term “metaphor” as found in poetry, prose and literature and the more sophisticated way in which it is often used in metaphor theory where it indicates deeper ontological, orientational and structural states of affairs. Such metaphors inevitably incorporate some form of ontic analogy. In order to differentiate the conventional understanding of metaphor from conceptual metaphors and a deeper type of ontological “metaphor” a provisional distinction between metaphor and analogy will in future be utilized.

“Metaphor” indicates any statement or utterance which understands some concrete domain of human experience and reality in terms of another concrete domain of experience and reality. Concrete entities can be any facts, things, events, action and societal relationships. So for example “education is gardening”, “therapy is archeological excavation” or “parental love is a never ending stream”, “the state is a system” are examples of metaphors relating two (concrete) entities, even though some of the source or target domains are actually “abstract” in the conventional sense of the word. This distinction is based on one in which two kinds of “domains” can be discerned: *entitary domains* and *modal or functional domains*.⁴ The focal analogical element which is often captured in a metaphor is embedded in the semiotic radius and/or semantic field of an ontic domain. So for example one can discern different emphases or foci

⁴ With these distinctions in place the notion of metaphor becomes more refined and requires further specification when used within the context of the systematic distinctions of Herman Dooyeweerd’s philosophy. Cf. also Strauss (1988: diagram 3) distinguishes between metaphors and analogies on the following basis: Metaphors are linguistic in nature and are entitary analogies that pertain to similarities and differences between entities in reality, whereas similarities and differences between aspects of reality are indicative of modal analogies that come to expression in the analogical element.

in the use of the term “system”. A metaphor in which an organic system like a plant is utilized in the target domain would accentuate the biotic analogical element in the relationship, whereas a mechanical system accentuates the mechanical analogy. To use “mental space” theory here, one could say that the “blended space” which comes to expression in the metaphor of an organic system differs from the blended space resulting from the use of the mechanical system metaphor. The main reason for this is the fact that the actual input space “system” harbours different connotations in the two examples mentioned.

In the relationships between two concrete entities an analogy - a similarity-in-difference or a difference-in-similarity, comes to expression. These analogical relationships are often mediated by and articulated in lingual metaphors. Not only are there an infinite number of potential analogies present in any such relationship, but some are already known as existing and recognizable analogical elements whereas others are “created” in the course of the opening up of the potential analogies present in the semiotic radius and/or semantic field of the domains on which the analogy is based. “Analogy” in this philosophical approach, indicates a similarity between the ways in which concrete things function.⁵ For example, there are modal analogies between “economic growth” and organic growth, between “social distance” and spatial distance, between “psychological stress” and physical stress, between “political movement” and physical movement, etc. Another way of explaining analogies would be in terms of the following examples; organic growth, economic growth, psychological growth, political growth, etc. These analogies are grounded in irreducible kinds of functionality which constitute the semantically autonomous domains that anchor or ground meaning and also form the basis of the multiplicity of meanings that metaphors and analogies reveal.

7. Dooyeweerd on the analogical structure of reality and human experience.

Dooyeweerd (1954) distinguishes different types of mutually cohering but irreducible (origin-al) domains in reality and human experience. In each one of the irreducible aspects or facets of reality and of human experience, the whole spectrum of other domains is mirrored. Every human act, thing, fact, event, entity, and societal relationship in principle exhibits all these (and most probably more) aspects or facets either passively or actively. In each one of these ways of

⁵ These ways of functioning are also called aspects, facets, dimensions, “properties” or “irreducible kinds of functionality,” of concrete entities (Hart 1984: 149 ff.).

functioning all of the rest of reality is *reflected or echoed*. This is what Clouser (1991: 215) calls the “Principle of Aspectual universality”. One could portray this process of reflection or echoing metaphorically by imagining a prism breaking up a beam of white light into the spectrum of rainbow colours.

Each irreducible ontic domain is characterized by an original⁶ or non-analogical modal nucleus or kernel - the most basic common denominator or irreducible core (Hart 1984: 157) for the type of functioning characteristic of that aspect of reality. One is tempted to say this meaning nucleus is the “literal” core, but the fact that this core expresses itself via analogical relationships rules out this language use. So for example the meaning nucleus of the economic mode of reality could be formulated as “frugality,” whereas the meaning nucleus of the spatial aspect would be “continuous extension” and that of the aesthetic aspect as “allusiveness,” (Seerveld 1980: 131). Every thing, fact, event, act and societal relationship can be approached from any one of these modal angles. The active or passive presence of this aspect can be discerned in all of reality and human experience. The “modalities” or functional aspects “[...] form a modal framework in which we grasp concrete phenomena from different points of view” (Dooyeweerd 1954). What makes this understanding of a core function or nucleus remarkable is the fact that it can only come to expression via a vast number of analogical elements. So effectively a multiplicity of potential ordered meanings is already present in the core or non-analogical meaning of an irreducible aspect of reality, (not only of human experience).

These analogical extensions of the non-analogical meaning of an aspect of reality are ordered hierarchically. This is because in the analogical concepts the preceding aspects (substrate modalities) are assumed and subsumed. One cannot say *space* without implying that it entails number/countability. One cannot use any concepts that refer to *movement* without implicitly assuming or implying space, physicality and number. Things that move occupy space and can be counted. These are necessary conditions (see Hart 1984: 159). One cannot use *social* without assuming the analogical elements of some entity. It presupposes space, discrete quantity, countability, movement, logically discrete identity and difference, communication via language which has been formulated in concepts, sentences, historical/cultural formation, etc. Implicit in such concepts are also the possibilities of interactively opening up passive aspects that are dormant. These projections are related to human experience and possibilities, i.e., perceivability, quantifiability, economic exploitation, ethical evaluation, etc. So a physical entity like a piece of gold ore can be mined as

⁶ “Original” is the qualifier of a term used to indicate univocally the irreducible, nonanalogical core nature of a functional mode”, (Hart 1984: 161).

international economic commodity, but it can also be developed in precious jewelry (aesthetic) or be presented as a token of love (ethical truth). The last three examples demonstrate the way in which dormant and passive aspects of a rock are interactively opened up by normative human intervention. The peculiar characteristic of the aspectual nucleus is the fact that it colours an aspect of reality and in turn reflects the full scope of the inter-modal coherence of the irreducible aspects of reality.

Lakoff and Johnson would attribute these potential and dormant functions which conceptual metaphors can actively open up, to the human embodied experience. Obviously that is also true, but the fact remains that these non-human entities possess these qualities and/or properties that can be potentially uncovered through human experience. This can be illustrated with a description of the radial structure of the phenomenon of causality that differs from the one offered by Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 224).

Causality is originally a physical phenomenon, but can be seen from a great diversity of vantage points each grounded in reality and not merely in human experience. From the legal perspective, legal causality (who is legally to blame) comes into view as an analogical relationship between the physical and juridical domain. From an ethical perspective, the ethical analogy “ethical causality” (who is morally guilty) and from the social perspective the social analogy “social causality” (an impaired driver) can be discerned. This example can be expanded to include the economic analogy, “economic causality” (costs of the accident), etc. The radial categories within the physical domain thus show an original (or non-analogical) and an analogical use of concepts demonstrated by the notion of causality. Obviously such analogical refractions of a core meaning reflect a multiplicity of possible domains and these domains are in turn grounded in the experience of embodied persons.

8. *Personhood: a stratified embodiment*

In the creative and interpretive interaction with the world the embodied human experience provides the basic experiential gestalts, image schemata and conceptual metaphors that make up the conceptual framework which functions as scaffolding for the network of meaning which language and specifically conceptual metaphor reveals. The way these cognitive abilities function, point to an irreducibly stratified embodiment of both the cognitive agent and the world she is cognitively interacting with. The challenge is to demonstrate how this irreducibly stratified reality is recognized and uncovered or discovered by the agent (and not created by the agent) and how it constrains metaphorical

meaning and meaning change. This requires an understanding of embodiment⁷ which correlates to the purported contours of a stratified, irreducible reality. This view implies a view of personhood which acknowledges the stratified embodiment of the whole, integral human person in his/her relationship to himself, others, cultural artefacts, the non-material, vegetative and animal worlds and ultimately to what he or she believes to be God or a deity.

Human personhood is centered in an integral embodied existence which manifests more than what has traditionally been called the “body”, that is more than only the physico-chemical, biological and psychological dimensions of human existence. Acts performed by the human person always involve the full-bodied person in whose activities one is able to discern a great diversity of aspects or facets and complex levels of structures. All human acts are enacted by the fully integrated person and not only by bodies, souls, minds or spirits. These actions take place within the limits of the constraints set by a great diversity of aspects, facets or functions of human life and reality. This notion of personhood aims to overcome the divides between soul and body, subject and object, body and consciousness (mind), and aims at avoiding the trap of seeing cognition primarily as representation, and truth as correspondence with reality. It also grounds embodiment in the transcendental conditions that make its existence possible. It postulates at least four different overlapping “bodily” structures that presuppose one another and that are simultaneously involved in all human acts. Johnson (1991) refers to a similar state of affairs but calls it “overlapping patterns”. The way full-bodied humans interact with the world around them sets the stage for an alternative understanding of the interactive nature of human knowledge and the inter-domain relationships, to which metaphors refer. These domains are irreducible as well as enaptically interlaced. This means that each domain has its own identity but also builds and depends on other domains (Kalsbeek 2002). There is the physico-chemical (inorganic) domain, based on the substrate of spatial, numerical and temporal aspects, the biotic (organic) vegetative domain, based on the substrate of the physico-chemical, the psychic (sensitive) domain, based on the two prior substrates and, finally, the human act structure. The latter incorporates all normative dimensions of human existence and is open-ended in the sense that the acts it produces can be qualified in a multiplicity of possible ways. This means that even though the neural grounding of metaphorical meaning is an essential and constitutive basis of meaning which is active in every construal of meaning, metaphorical meaning cannot be reduced to its material, neural basis.

⁷ Cf. Tim Rohrer’s summary of the tenfold meanings of embodiment (Rohrer 2001: 49-82). Cf. also Rohrer 2005.

9. Conclusion

In metaphor studies the issue of the “grounding” of metaphorical meaning calls forth the majority of philosophical issues related to domains and the way they anchor the world or claim to function as the ground for meaning. Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor theory provides the parameters for the analysis of this problem. I have proposed that the possible negative role of subjectivism and materialism can be avoided by an ontological grounding of metaphor. I have proposed that metaphorical meaning and conceptual metaphor requires a stratified ontology and anthropology. This proposal implies that there is a correlation between the structure of human experience and the structure of the world in which it functions. The term structure provides a significant key to the correlation.

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