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Verena Haser

METAPHOR, METONYMY, AND EXPERIENTIALIST PHILOSOPHY

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Metaphor, Metonymy, and Experientialist Philosophy

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Metaphor, Metonymy, and Experientialist Philosophy

Challenging Cognitive Semantics

by

Verena Haser

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Chapter 1
Introductory remarks

1.1 Subject matter and central claims

The past decades have seen a spate of papers and monographs on metaphor from scholars adhering to different approaches. A bibliography restricted to pertinent publications from 1985 to 1990 lists about 3500 references (Van Noppen/Hols 1990), while an earlier, but no less impressive, bibliography contains approximately 4000 titles (Shibles 1971). The question therefore arises, why then another book on metaphor and related topics?

The present study does not offer yet another rehearsal of the various accounts of metaphor that have been put forward in the literature. There is no shortage of discerning surveys of the most significant approaches. Some recent works, notably Leezenberg (2001), can hardly be bettered. My focus will be on one particular school of thought which has exercised a profound impact on modern linguistics, and will presumably continue to do so for years to come. Commonly known as *cognitive linguistics*, this approach has grown in ascendancy under the influence of scholars such as George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Leonard Talmy and Ronald Langacker, to name but a few.

The study of metaphor and the closely related phenomenon of metonymy figures prominently as one of cognitive linguists' foremost concerns. For many it is Lakoff/Johnson's 1980 publication *Metaphors we live by* which effectively launched the cognitivist (or "experientialist") movement. To this day, Lakoff/Johnson (1980) remains the one most influential and popular among the "widely cited classics" produced by theorists of this stripe (Redeker/Janssen 1999: 1). Lakoff/Johnson's work on metaphor has also exerted a strong influence on the cognitivist approach to metonymy, which in recent years has become a major focus of research in the discipline (cf. Panther/Radden 1999a). The following chapters will be concerned with Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and similar works and their influence on congenial scholars.

It is one of my foremost concerns to investigate philosophical tenets associated with experientialism. Both Lakoff/Johnson's account of metaphor and cognitivist theories of metonymy are inextricably linked to the overall

experientialist research paradigm, which can only be assessed against the backdrop of a meticulous inquiry into cardinal philosophical assumptions that inform cognitive linguistics (cf. also Murphy 1996: 174).

My study is to a considerable extent "deconstructivist" in nature, which reflects the increasingly critical attitude towards Lakoff/Johnson's works in recent research. Many arguments presented in this book draw on the work of various analytical philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Putnam. In these respects, my account is somewhat similar to the comparatively brief discussion of Lakoff/Johnson's approach found in Leezenberg (2001), who anticipates some of my points of criticism. Leezenberg (2001) was published after the bulk of this book had been written. Apart from the philosopher Leezenberg, a growing number of psychologists have also leveled decisive objections at the cognitivist approach, which are largely consonant with my position (cf. McGlone in Glucksberg 2001: chapter 6). Furthermore, several linguists have voiced important criticism (e.g., Geeraerts 1993; Jäkel 1999; Taylor 2002; Drewer 2003; Rakova 2003).

Emphatically, the deconstructivist tone that characterizes parts of this book is due to the nature of Lakoff/Johnson's arguments, which following Leezenberg (2001: 136) are often "hardly worth taking seriously". For instance, it turns out to be impossible to construct an experientialist philosophy on the basis of Lakoff/Johnson's account, because their arguments do not constitute a genuine contribution to philosophy. Pace Lakoff/Johnson and other cognitivists, there is little in Lakoff/Johnson's works which really constitutes a challenge to contemporary philosophy.

Furthermore, Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning often creates problems which do not arise in other theories. Therefore my reasoning is again necessarily restricted to deconstruction. For instance, Lakoff/Johnson's postulation of metaphorical concepts creates the need to explain how we manage to store the infinite number of other metaphorical concepts that can also be posited once we apply Lakoff/Johnson's principles to actual linguistic expressions.

My approach is not exclusively deconstructivist, however. Where I felt that familiar theories of metaphor and metonymy do not suffice for explaining a phenomenon, I have offered my own solution. For instance, I propose to explain the clustering of metaphorical expressions with the help of the notion of family resemblances, and I will give an account of the metaphor – metonymy distinction that differs from those found in the literature. The methodological starting point of my study is also different from cognitivist accounts. I will show that an accurate analysis of metaphors and metonyms should relate to linguistic expressions, rather than putative metaphorical or

metonymical concepts. This principle, though orthogonal to much research in cognitive linguistics, has the potential to offer compelling accounts of metaphor and metonymy. My emphasis on actual linguistic expressions as the basic units of analysis and interpretation will strike many cognitivists as anachronistic. However, we will see that the cognitivist approach, which focuses on more general metaphorical or metonymic concepts, encounters serious problems.

My book contrasts with other critical accounts of Lakoff/Johnson's works in one major respect: I have attempted to delve more deeply into many topics that are merely skimmed over in most assessments of Lakoff/Johnson's framework. One of my foremost objectives is to take the authors at their word, having a close look at their line of reasoning. Several chapters will offer close readings of key sections from Lakoff/Johnson's works. Another feature that distinguishes my book from other publications dealing with the topic is my concern with characteristic features of Lakoff/Johnson's mode of presentation, such as recurrent argumentative strategies. A close examination of typical features of Lakoff/Johnson's exposition seems indispensable, since they are unparalleled in any publication on metaphor and metonymy outside cognitive linguistics that the present writer is aware of.

Particularly close attention will be given to Lakoff/Johnson (1999), Lakoff (1987), and Lakoff/Johnson (1980). The focus on Lakoff/Johnson (1980) suggests itself for various reasons. First, as noted above, it has some claim to being the most widely read of all publications in the field. Second, it is still hailed as a notable achievement and given credit in countless cognitivist publications on metaphor. Close perusal of the literature in the field reveals that Lakoff/Johnson (1980) has set the model for a style of argumentation that to the present day continues to influence the writings of many cognitivists. Third, Lakoff/Johnson (1980) contains the authors' first significant and in some respects most detailed account of metaphor. Finally, we will see that Lakoff/Johnson's position has not been essentially altered in subsequent works, though some recent developments in the discipline have been incorporated into their account.

Despite the profound impact of Lakoff/Johnson's work on cognitive linguistics, a study that largely focuses on two scholars cannot cover the cognitivist movement in its entirety. The work of some cognitive linguists is not relevant to the present inquiry. Groundbreaking publications by Langacker, Croft, or Talmy, for example, are outside the ambit of this investigation.

In line with my twofold objective to investigate not merely Lakoff/Johnson's claims but also the way they are presented, the following sections offer a brief sketch both of pivotal experientialist ideas and of recurrent structural features of Lakoff/Johnson's exposition. Section 1.2 provides a rough survey of the most important tenets associated with cognitive semantics in general and cognitive metaphorology in particular. Section 1.3 gives a general overview of striking peculiarities of Lakoff/Johnson's exposition. We will anticipate some major difficulties with Lakoff/Johnson's mode of presentation which will be discussed at greater length in chapter 3. For the sake of brevity, these shortcomings will be pinpointed with the help of pertinent comments on Lakoff/Johnson's works by non-cognitivists. The concluding section presents an overview of the following chapters, indicating some central claims put forward in this book.

1.2 Experientialism and the study of metaphor

What precisely is experientialism, and what are the basic tenets of cognitivist metaphorology? Detailed expositions will be given in later chapters. The present section will be confined to a brief sketch of some major assumptions.

Perhaps the single most important idea championed by cognitive linguists is the belief that language is shaped by human experience and human conceptualization (cf. Lakoff 1987: chapters 16 to 17; Lakoff 1988; Gibbs 1996: 27). Allan's (2001) succinct definition of cognitive linguistics highlights this aspect of the discipline. According to the author, studies in cognitive linguistics can be defined as investigations which proceed from the assumption that

> language is constrained and informed by the relations that human beings (a) perceive in nature – particularly in relation to themselves; (b) have experience of in the world they inhabit; (c) conceive of in abstract and metaphysical domains. (Allan 2001: 288)

Particular emphasis is placed on the notion of *embodiment*. As Lakoff (1987: xi) puts it, "reason has a bodily basis". The term *embodiment* relates not only to our biological makeup and body-based experiences, but also to our experiences as social beings (cf. Lakoff 1987: 267). By using their *imaginative capacities*, humans can exploit the "knowledge" derived from such bodily experiences for conceptualizing abstract ideas. In cognitive

linguistics, human imagination is considered essential to language and thought. This explains the central role played by metaphor and metonymy: Metaphor and metonymy reflect the creative potential of human imagination (cf. Lakoff 1987: xi).

In setting great store by embodiment and imagination as pivotal aspects of human cognition, cognitive linguists see themselves as being opposed to traditional "Western thought" (cf. the subtitle of Lakoff/Johnson 1999: "The embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought"). According to Lakoff/Johnson, Western thought is largely dominated by what they call *objectivism*. Objectivist ideas are deemed omnipresent in Western philosophy "from the Presocratics to the present day" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 194). Though Lakoff/Johnson's objections to objectivism are directed against diverse philosophers, linguists, and other scholars, their main target is frequently analytic philosophy.

The general approach adopted by experientialists can best be illustrated by contrasting their views with those endorsed by – or at least attributed to[1] – putative objectivist thinkers. Lakoff (1987: xii–xiii) provides a conspectus of cardinal objectivist ideas experientialists are reacting against. The common denominator of many of these putative objectivist doctrines is that human language and human thought is seen as being unrelated to the way our bodies function. Some of the most important assumptions are cited below:

> – Symbols (e.g., words and mental representations) get their meaning via correspondence to things in the external world. All meaning is of this character. ...
> – Abstract symbols may stand in correspondence to things in the world independent of the peculiar properties of any organisms. ...
> – It is ... incidental to the nature of meaningful concepts and reason that human beings have the bodies they have ...
> – Thought is abstract and disembodied, since it is independent of any limitations of the human body ... (Lakoff 1987: xii–xiii)

Cognitive linguists repudiate all of these tenets. Though Lakoff/Johnson present themselves as having pioneered a new approach to traditional philosophical issues concerning meaning, objectivity, and truth (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1980: x), several scholars prior to Lakoff/Johnson (1980) have taken a similar stance. Philosophers of such an "experientialist" persuasion include Putnam, Goodman, and Merleau-Ponty (1962), among others. Putnam's work is of particular importance in this respect, since La-

koff (1987: 265) considers his own experientialist approach a refinement of Putnam's *internal realism*. Furthermore, he equates Putnam's main target of criticism, a stance called *metaphysical realism*, with objectivism (cf. Lakoff 1988: 122).

The original motivation for rejecting chief assumptions associated with objectivism can be traced to Lakoff/Johnson's early work on metaphor, which throws into relief the omnipresence of conventional metaphors in everyday language. For Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 6), metaphor is primarily a matter of thought, rather than simply a linguistic phenomenon. This emphasis on the cognitive aspect of metaphor is reflected in Lakoff/Johnson's postulation of metaphorical concepts. According to the authors, metaphorical concepts such as ARGUMENT IS WAR take precedence over and underlie actual metaphorical expressions (e.g., *attack* a claim; *shoot down* an argument; cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: chapter 1). Metaphorical concepts (or "conceptual metaphors"; e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 154) are mappings across whole conceptual domains. Examples of such domains are ARGUMENT (target domain) and WAR (source domain); they are indicated by capital letters in Lakoff/Johnson (1980). For most metaphorical concepts discussed in Lakoff/Johnson (1980), the authors cite numerous actual metaphorical expressions which are held to be surface manifestations of these metaphorical concepts.

What are the philosophical implications of Lakoff/Johnson's view of metaphor? A brief hint has already been given above: The pervasiveness of conventional metaphors in ordinary language is one of the most important sources of evidence for the view that linguistic systems are based on human imagination. Metaphors are, after all, among the most important ways of exercising our imagination. The pervasiveness of conceptual metaphors in ordinary language also shows that language – and hence for Lakoff/Johnson thought as well – is essentially embodied, relating to the way we *experience* things (cf. the above explanation of *embodiment*). Metaphors highlight the embodied, experiential, nature of language and thought for the following reason: Typical metaphors allow us to view relatively abstract concepts in terms of relatively concrete ones, the latter deriving directly from our experiences (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 109). As a consequence, language and reason are *not* abstract phenomena (cf. the contrary position objectivists are credited with in Lakoff 1987: xii–xiii).

Finally, Lakoff/Johnson's study of conventional metaphors has important implications for their theory of truth. Lakoff/Johnson jettison the

idea of an objective or absolute truth on the score that truth invariably depends on one's conceptual system, which in turn is to a considerable extent constituted of metaphors (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 159).

1.3 The dawning of a new age?

The following statement from Dirven (2002: 78) gives a fair account of most cognitive linguists' views concerning the import of experientialism:

> Cognitive Linguistics, as Lakoff, Johnson and many others see it, is a challenge to traditional Western thought from Aristotle to Descartes, as well as to many philosophical assumptions and linguistic theories ....

Some illustrious researchers in the field even see the cognitivist movement as heralding a new age. Witness the subtitle of Turner (1991): "The study of English in the age of cognitive science." Turner applies and develops key concepts from Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and similar writings. The achievements of cognitive linguistics, often equated by cognitive linguists with *cognitive science*, are presented as having few, if any, precedents in the history of mankind. Following Turner (1991: vii), the unique merits of experientialist research will emerge clearly once its basic insights have been fully brought to fruition: "The coming age will be known and remembered, I believe, as the age in which the human mind was discovered. I can think of no equal intellectual achievement". Whether this self-image cherished by theorists working within cognitive linguistics is justified is a matter that will take center stage in later chapters. For the time being, I will lend some initial plausibility to the markedly different positions of many non-cognitivists by outlining some of the chief sources of discontent.

What perplexed the present writer most when studying contemporary philosophers of language is the absence of detailed responses to Lakoff/Johnson's philosophical claims. Even though Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and Lakoff/Johnson (1999) purport to mount an all-embracing "challenge to Western thought" (cf. again the subtitle of Lakoff/Johnson 1999), hardly any philosopher of international reputation has taken up the gauntlet. References to Lakoff/Johnson's works are conspicuously absent both from publications of putative objectivists (such as Davidson) and of philosophers whose stance is commonly thought to be experientialist in spirit (notably Putnam; cf. Lakoff 1987: chapter 16).

Some possible reasons for analytical philosophers' neglect of Lakoff/Johnson's framework will be hinted at in this section. Consider Wierzbicka's (1986: 307) comments on Lakoff/Johnson's vague but wholesale attacks against Western thought. Wierzbicka's stance may well reflect the views of many philosophers:

> Sweeping attacks on 'Western philosophy and linguistics' based on vague references to an alleged 'standard view' and to unidentified 'standard theories', are, in my view, in questionable taste.

In a similar vein, Leezenberg (2001: 136–137) pinpoints some of the chief difficulties with Lakoff/Johnson's line of reasoning:

> Much of its argument [viz. the argument of cognitive semantics] against 'objectivist semantics', however, is phrased in such sweeping terms as to be **hardly worth taking seriously**. Lakoff and Johnson often resort to **straw man argumentation**, and rarely explicitly ascribe specific doctrines to specific authors; worse, where they do, they seriously distort the views they criticize by numerous **errors of a rather elementary nature**. The 'objectivist tradition' they fulminate against is not 'fundamentally misguided' or 'humanly irrelevant' but simply **nonexistent.** [my emphasis]

The scarcity of relevant references (noted also in Jackendoff/Aaron 1991 and Ross 1993) and the absence of accurate expositions of views criticized by Lakoff/Johnson is a recurrent problem in their account. More generally, Lakoff/Johnson's style of argumentation represents a graphic illustration of what the authors describe as the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor (cf. chapter 3). Even though Lakoff/Johnson (1980: chapter 13) are critical of the unfair and irrational argumentative tactics they hold are epitomized in this very metaphor, the authors' own mode of presentation incorporates many of these strategies. This curious inconsistency will be highlighted in various chapters of the present book.

Some writers (e.g., Stern 2000: 176) take issue with the polemical tone occasionally to be noted in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and similar works by the authors, which might even have prevented some philosophers from attempting to rebut Lakoff/Johnson's indictments against their theories. Other likely reasons for the scarcity of in-depth responses to Lakoff/Johnson's doctrines are not difficult to come by. The most serious obstacle to arriving at a conclusive assessment of their framework is what critics such as Leezenberg (2001: 136–137) perceive as a lack of substance, notably with respect to philosophical assumptions. Cardinal notions are not sufficiently

defined or left undefined, leaving ample room for interpretation. Surely, semanticists whose asserted intention is to revolutionize modern philosophy of language (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: chapter 26) should be expected to pay meticulous attention to the basic notion any semantic theory starts out with, viz. *meaning*. Not so Lakoff (1987), who will be seen to skate round the heart of this matter in chapter 5. For the present, witness Leezenberg (2001): "On the whole ... cognitive semantics is hardly satisfactory as a theory ... central notions like 'meaning', 'culture', 'rationality', and 'imagination' are largely left undefined, or are defined rather carelessly" (Leezenberg 2001: 138).

The vagueness targeted by Leezenberg is perhaps the most problematic feature of experientialist semantics as advanced by Lakoff and congenial linguists. I hope to show that Lakoff/Johnson's proposals and some similar works by cognitivists are often at best programmatic. Although Lakoff/Johnson occasionally do seem to take a definite stand on an issue, further scrutiny of their texts reveals that they often blend incompatible positions. Leezenberg (2001: 139–140) has even drawn attention to passages in Johnson (1981b) where one of the two most illustrious pioneers of experientialist models of metaphorical language reverts to an objectivist stance.

Even though rarely noted by cognitivists themselves, some deficiencies of Lakoff/Johnson's presentation are mirrored in cognitivist expositions of Lakoff/Johnson's theory. For instance, it is highly instructive to examine how much – or rather how little – of Lakoff/Johnson's program has come across to other leading researchers in the discipline (cf. 4.7).

The above remarks and quotations have given some hints why cognitive semantics has become unpalatable to quite a few scholars working in adjacent fields, its important status within contemporary linguistics notwithstanding. The following chapters will lend substance to the major points of criticism.

1.4 Organization of the individual chapters

My overarching concern in chapter 2 is to examine the ways in which cognitivists attempt to shed light on the distinction between metaphor and metonymy and propose my own account of this distinction. This chapter will also sketch methodological principles underlying my analyses, which contrast with those adopted in most cognitivist writings. Particular emphasis

will be placed on different approaches to metonymy. Chapter 2 thus prepares the ground for studying metaphor by investigating accounts of metonymy. At the same time, the study of cognitivist approaches to metonymy is of intrinsic interest, currently constituting one of the central areas of research in the discipline. I will show that none of the criteria discussed as essential to metaphor and metonymy in cognitive linguistics allows us to tease apart these two distinct cognitive phenomena. An alternative approach will be outlined that takes as its starting point the theory of metaphor by Glucksberg/Keysar (1990) and perceptive observations on metonymy by cognitivists such as Dirven and Radden/Kövecses. Chapter 2 also examines certain parallels between cognitivist writings on metonymy and Lakoff/Johnson's works.

The following chapters are devoted to various aspects of Lakoff/Johnson's theory. Chapters 3 to 5 provide the necessary backdrop to a detailed discussion of their work on metaphor. A deeper understanding of their line of reasoning requires both a survey of typical argumentative strategies found in their writings and an exposition of philosophical assumptions underlying their approach.

Chapter 3 examines argumentative and rhetorical strategies that are frequently encountered in Lakoff/Johnson's works. Some of these strategies, notably "evading the issue", are criticized at length by the authors themselves. My main emphasis will be on two case studies illustrating that many of the unfair tactics which Lakoff/Johnson (1980) attribute to the impact of the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor are present in their own works.

Chapters 4 and 5 will be concerned with philosophical issues. Chapter 4 is largely devoted to the general philosophical background of Lakoff/Johnson's theory, while chapter 5 delves into central ideas associated with cognitive semantics in particular. My major goal in chapter 4 is to show that Lakoff/Johnson's exposition of philosophical issues is flawed in several respects. Their own claims often do not go beyond programmatic statements, while their criticism of supposedly objectivist writings is frequently mistaken. Furthermore, key proposals put forward by Lakoff/Johnson are reminiscent of theories developed by philosophers such as Putnam and Goodman, who at times are grouped along with objectivists. Much as the authors' earlier work, Lakoff/Johnson (1999) contains mistaken or exceedingly vague expositions of doctrines attributed to Western philosophers. Recent philosophical publications by other cognitivists are open to some of the same charges that can be leveled at Lakoff/Johnson's approach. Chapter 5 shows that Lakoff's account of cognitive semantics is

situated within a philosophical tradition inaugurated by Plato, who is incidentally one of the foremost objectivists. Due to conclusive arguments by Wittgenstein, among others, this line of thinking is almost completely discarded in contemporary philosophy. We will sketch major difficulties that beset Lakoff's approach.

Pivotal conceptions permeating the experientialist account of meaning will be seen to recur in cognitivist metaphorology. This subject is taken up in chapter 6, which offers an in-depth exegesis of Lakoff/Johnson's theory of metaphor. The chapter examines cardinal ideas put forward in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and Lakoff/Johnson (1999). We will see that Lakoff/Johnson's argument for conceptual metaphor fails to carry conviction. The same applies to their account of metaphorical structuring and their contentions concerning the experiential basis of metaphors. Chapter 7 complements this discussion by investigating more closely the kind of evidence adduced by Lakoff/Johnson in favor of their metaphorical concepts. It will be argued that Lakoff/Johnson's groupings of metaphorical expressions under metaphorical concepts are almost invariably disputable. The possibility of grouping a metaphorical expression under disparate metaphorical concepts creates insurmountable difficulties for Lakoff/Johnson's approach. An alternative account of metaphorical extension will be provided that builds on the concept of family resemblances. Chapter 8 surveys recent criticism of Lakoff/Johnson's approach as well as recent developments in cognitive metaphorology. It also offers a summary of the differences between my account of metaphorical extensions in terms of family resemblances and the conceptual metaphor view, taking into consideration recent developments in cognitive linguistics. Finally, chapter 9 recapitulates central findings and discusses the major implications of the present study for cognitive semantics.

Chapter 2
Metaphor and metonymy in cognitive linguistics

2.1 Introduction

Studies of metaphor are notoriously inconsistent when it comes to delineating their subject matter. Some scholars favor a broad conception, employing *metaphor* as a generic term for several, or even all, kinds of figurative language (cf. Goodman 1968, Levin 1977, Lodge 1977, Genette 1980). Others adhere to a narrow view, reserving the label *metaphor* for a more limited set of extensions (or "mappings"), which are often characterized as crossing different domains and as being based on similarity. Metaphor narrowly construed is contrasted with other kinds of nonliteral speech, notably metonymy. This narrow conception is favored by most cognitive linguists and many other writers (e.g., Black 1993 [1977]; Eco 1984).

Even if we focus on the narrow conception of metaphor as being opposed to metonymy, it seems impossible to give a satisfactory definition which covers the various phenomena that are pegged as metaphorical by different writers (cf. Leezenberg 2001: 4–6). The main emphasis of this chapter is on cognitivist approaches to metaphor and metonymy. Even within cognitive linguistics there is no consensus on how to define these phenomena.[2]

The main elements of metaphorical "equations" such as *Life is a walking shadow* are often referred to as tenor ("thing we are talking about") and vehicle ("that to which we are comparing it"). *Ground*, or *tertium comparationis*, denotes the link between tenor and vehicle (i.e. common properties; Ullmann 1962: 213). Thus, in the metaphor *Life is a walking shadow*, *life* represents the tenor, *walking shadow* the vehicle, and *transience* the ground.

Alternative terminologies abound. Popular alternatives for *tenor* and *vehicle* are *target domain* and *source domain*, respectively. The focus on domains is due to the cognitivist tenet that concrete metaphorical expressions are "sanctioned" (Lakoff 1993: 209) by general conceptual metaphors (i.e., mental mappings across domains). The present writer is opposed to the cognitivist approach as concerns the postulation of general metaphorical concepts, and hence source/target domains, as the primary level of mapping. I will use the term *target concept* to refer to the meaning of actual

linguistic expressions which cognitivists associate with a certain target *domain*. For instance, the metaphorical sense of *attack* ('to set upon with hostile words') will be referred to as the target (concept), the source concept and literal meaning being 'to assail physically'. Cognitive linguists commonly refer to a general source *domain* WAR and a general target *domain* ARGUMENT in such a case.

The terms *target* and *source* usually relate to *concepts* rather than non-linguistic entities. Saeed (1997: 303), for example, refers to the target domain as the "described concept", and the source domain as the "comparison concept". Whether metaphors involve some kind of relation between concepts or between the entities denoted by linguistic expressions is a matter of debate (cf. Leezenberg 2001). The differences between these views are of little importance for the purposes of this exposition. Source/vehicle and target/tenor will be used to refer to concepts *or* referents of expressions. This kind of usage is convenient since theorists are not always unambiguous as to which conception they subscribe to. The terms *source* and *target* are also applied to metonymic extensions (e.g., Blank 1999: 173).

Many cognitive accounts focus on conventional or dead metaphors and metonymies, recognizing a continuum between innovative, conventional, and dead figurative expressions. Various conceptions of what constitutes a dead metaphor vie with each other. Traugott (1985) distinguishes between dead and conventional metaphors along the following lines: In contrast to dead metaphors, conventional metaphorical expressions still admit of a literal reading. A case in point is the conventional metaphor *come* in *The time will come when ...* (vs. *He will come*), as opposed to the dead metaphor *until*. The latter lexeme has lost its original spatial meaning 'up to' (cf. Traugott 1985: 18). Other conceptions of "dead" metaphors can be found in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 54–55), Davidson (1984g [1978]), and Searle (1993), to name but a few.

The delimitation of metaphor and metonymy has been subject to divergent analyses. The concepts most frequently used to characterize the differences between metaphor and metonymy are *contiguity* and *similarity*. Metonymies are held to involve *contiguity* between source and target (cf. Ullmann 1962: 218; Gibbs 1993: 258), whereas metaphorical mappings are often believed to be motivated by – or to give rise to – *similarity*. Metaphors typically involve similarities and analogies between *dissimilar* concepts or entities (cf. Aitchison 1994: 146). For this reason, metaphoric extension is typically held to involve a mapping across different domains. By contrast, metonymic extension is typically supposed to take place within

one domain. Another way of drawing the boundary between the two phenomena has become popular due to Lakoff/Turner (1989: 103): "In *metaphor* [as opposed to metonymy], a whole schematic structure (with two or more entities) is mapped onto another whole schematic structure."

Section 2.2 will be concerned with the various criteria for distinguishing metaphor and metonymy itemized above. Following a discussion of problems besetting traditional similarity-based accounts of metaphor, we will examine attempts at spelling out the notion of contiguity. My principal hypothesis is that none of the criteria suggested by cognitive linguists offer a fully satisfactory means for teasing apart typical metaphors from typical metonymies. General problems with cognitivist accounts will be discussed in 2.3. I will outline an alternative approach in section 2.4.

2.2 Criteria for distinguishing metaphor and metonymy

Comparatively detailed suggestions how to distinguish between metaphor and metonymy can typically be found in literature on metonymy rather than metaphor. Publications on metonymy are legion (cf. Lakoff/Turner 1989: 103; Goossens 1990; Dirven 1993; Traugott/König 1991; Croft 1993; Taylor 1995; Kövecses/Radden 1998; Seto 1999; Blank 1999). Some influential accounts are of earlier vintage (e.g., Skinner 1957; Ullmann 1962).

2.2.1 Structural mappings as the criterion of metaphoricity

Lakoff/Turner (1989: 103) suggest that with metaphors, as opposed to metonymies, "a whole schematic structure (with two or more entities) is mapped onto another whole schematic structure." Their proposal builds on basic assumptions of cognitivist metaphorology, according to which actual metaphorical expressions are regarded as manifestations of underlying metaphorical concepts existing "in" our minds. Examples (1) to (3) below from Lakoff (1993: 206) are metaphorical expressions that are putatively based on the metaphor(ical concept) LOVE IS A JOURNEY:

(1) Look *how far we've come.*
(2) Our relationship is *off the track.*
(3) We're *spinning our wheels.*

According to Lakoff (1993: 207), the LOVE IS A JOURNEY mapping has a distinctive structure, which is characterized by several links between entities in the source domain JOURNEY and corresponding entities in the target domain LOVE. These links are labeled "ontological correspondences." For example, the lovers in the source domain correspond to travelers in the target domain. The following "set of ontological correspondences" connects the domains of LOVE and JOURNEY:

> The lovers correspond to travelers.
> The love relationship corresponds to the vehicle. [here *vehicle* is meant in the literal sense of the word]
> The lovers' common goals correspond to their common destinations on the journey.
> Difficulties in the relationship correspond to impediments to travel.
> (Lakoff 1993: 207)

In contrast to metaphorical transfer, metonymic extensions are not characterized by this kind of structural mapping. For example, in the metonymy German *Ein Glas trinken* 'to drink a glass', there is no structural correspondence between different elements of source (CONTAINER – glass as drinking vessel) and target (CONTENTS of the glass).

Lakoff/Turner's characterization of metaphor does not capture certain mappings. Lakoff/Turner (1989: 90) themselves and Lakoff (1993: 229) discuss an example which is not covered by their account. The "image metaphor" *My wife ... whose waist is an hourglass* does not represent a mapping of "conceptual structure" across two distinct domains. Rather, tenor and vehicle have a specific feature in common, viz. shape. This feature belongs to "a single perceptual domain" (Grady 1999: 89).

There are numerous other examples that do not fit Lakoff/Turner's account of metaphors as structural mappings (cf. also Grady 1999). Take the metaphor *black* for 'clouded with sorrow', which is characterized by a very simple mapping: Merely *one* entity (a kind of color) is mapped onto *one* abstract entity (a kind of mood). This simplicity is at odds with Lakoff/Turners's (1989: 103) conception of metaphor, according to which the source domain displays a schematic structure "with two or more entities"; this schematic structure is mapped onto another structure containing two or more entities.

2.2.2 Metonymy as a "stands-for relationship"

While metaphors are frequently considered complex mappings involving intricate structural relations, the relationship between source and target in metonymies seems comparatively simple. Before elaborating on this simplicity of metonymical relations it seems worthwhile to quote some extensions that are traditionally regarded as metonyms.[3]

> 1. Teil für das Ganze (pars pro toto): *hand* (für Person) ... 2. Ganzes für Teil (totum pro parte): *den Christbaum anzünden* ... 3. 'Gefäß' für Inhalt (continens pro continento): *ein Glas trinken* ... 4. Inhalt für 'Gefäß': *Leibchen* ... 5. Mittel für die Handlung: *our native tongue* ... 6. Eigenschaften für den Träger: *a youth* ... 7. Material für den Gegenstand: *ein Glas, a copper* ... (Leisi 1985: 190–191)

> [1.Part for whole (pars pro toto): *hand* (for 'person') ... 2. Whole for part (totum pro parte): *den Christbaum anzünden* 'to light the Christmas tree' ... 3. Container for contents (continens pro continento): *ein Glas trinken* ('to drink a glass') ... 4. Contents for container: *Leibchen* 'diminutive of body', i.e., 'shirt' ... 5. Means for action: *our native tongue* ... 6. Characteristics for subject (having these characteristics): *a youth* ... 7. Material for object (made of this material): *ein Glas* ('a glass'), *a copper* ... [Translation by V. H.]

Taylor (1995: 124) adds "producer for product"; another example worthy of notice is "result for cause" (cf. Abraham 1988: 483). The above survey of traditional metonymies illustrates the fact that metonymies 'exhibit a stands-for relationship' (Gibbs 1993: 260). In *ein Glas trinken* ('to drink a glass'), for example, the container stands for the contents of the container. Following Langacker (1993: 30), "metonymy is basically a reference-point phenomenon ... affording mental access to the desired target" (cf. also Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 36).

Hinting at the referential function of metonymies does not clarify the metaphor-metonymy distinction, since metaphor also involves a referential shift (cf. Feyaerts 2000: 76). The inadequacy of the stands-for function as a criterial feature of metonymy notwithstanding, some cognitivists seem to exploit it as a means of discovering novel types of metonyms. Consider Panther/Thornburg (1999: 334), who suggest that sentence (4a) is a metonymy in those contexts in which it can "stand for" sentence (4b):

(4a) He was able to finish her dissertation.
(4b) He finished her dissertation.

According to the authors, (4a) can often be employed to transport the "propositional content" conveyed by (4b): "In this sense the statement (4a) can be used to 'stand for' the statement (4b) ...." (Panther/Thornburg 1999: 334). The crucial question here is whether the authors' way of fleshing out the vague idea of something "standing for" something else allows us to single out a distinct and relatively homogeneous class of semantic shifts, and possibly, a distinct class of mental processes. This does not seem to be the case.

The putative "stands-for" relationship in (4) and the "stands-for" relationship found in classical cases of metonymy differ in crucial respects. The most that Panther/Thornburg could claim is that (4a) stands for (4b) *in addition to* "standing for itself"; for what (4a) gives expression to, first and foremost, is not (4b), but (4a). (4b) may of course be 'pragmatically conveyed', but this is possible only if (4a) "stands for itself" in the first place.

The distinction between the case of classical metonymies and "speech act metonymies" is the distinction between meaning something *different* from what is said and meaning something *in addition to* what is said. The truth of (4b) logically implies the truth of (4a). No such relation holds in the case of classical metonymies. For example, in a typical metonymy like *She is listening to Schubert all day*, the metonymic reading is clearly 'She is listening to music by Schubert', and this reading does not in any sense imply the truth of the literal reading 'She is listening to the person Schubert.'

In short, while Panther/Thornburg's account throws light on phenomena that are in some sense similar to traditional metonymies, I suggest that we reserve the term *metonymy* for the classical cases, which are situated in the realm of the non-literal in the sense that they exhibit the logical features noted above. The reason for my objections to a broader concept of metonymy is the following: As will be seen, none of the criteria singled out as characteristic of metonymies allows us to make a clear distinction between metonymy and metaphor. Once this basic distinction is lost, however, it does not seem to make any sense to insist on the label *metonymy* in particular: However we construe that term, its essence lies at least in part in its contrast with the notion of metaphor. In the case at hand, stands-for relationships also characterize metaphors, not merely metonyms, since in metaphors the source concept "stands for" the target concept (cf. also Feyaerts 2000: 76).

2.2.3 Similarity

Many scholars, including some cognitive linguists, hold that metaphors exploit similarities (e.g., Grady 1999; Feyaerts 2000).[4] Similarity is often equated with the number of attributes shared by two entities (cf. Warren 1992: 73–74; Taylor 1995: 60). The putative mental process at work in the interpretation of metaphors has been described as a *matching* of source and target features. Since infinitely many attributes can be ascribed to an entity (cf. Glucksberg/Keysar 1990: 4),[5] psychological models stipulate that only a subset of these attributes are selected as figuring in the assessment of similarity (cf. Tversky 1977; Glucksberg/Keysar 1990).

Classical accounts of similarity have come under strong attack in recent years, as have theories of metaphor which postulate similarities as the all-important basis of metaphorical transfer (cf. Paivio/Begg 1981; Paivio/Walsh 1993: 309–310; Taylor 1995: 60–62). Some of the problems raised by accounts appealing to similarity as the *motivation* of metaphorical extension will be reviewed in this section.

Metaphors involve similarities between dissimilar concepts. This fundamental tension has far-reaching implications for the nature of the features shared by tenor and vehicle. As Ortony (1979: 167) notes, "attributes that may be nominally the same often seem to change their meanings as they are applied to terms in different domains." Consider Black's paradigm example *Man is a wolf*, which transfers features of beasts (*fierceness*) to human beings (cf. Black 1981 [1955]: 73–74). If *fierceness* is applied to human relations, we witness a change in meaning. While wolves are fierce in the sense of 'scavenging, brutish, predatory', social relations are characterized by a different type of fierceness (e.g., aggressive competition). Tourangeau/Sternberg (1982: 218) aptly note that "the meaning of a ... feature depends in part on the domain in which it is applied."

The basis of the metaphor *Man is a wolf* can be captured by means of a general term (*fierce*) which can be literally applied to both tenor and vehicle. Such a term is not available in all cases, however. Recall that semantic distance between tenor and vehicle is the hallmark of many metaphors. The degree of semantic distance between tenor and vehicle is often a measure of the difficulties faced by speakers attempting to paraphrase the *tertium comparationis* via non-metaphorical language (cf. Ortony 1979: 169). These difficulties are reflected in some scholars' tendency to "explain" metaphorical extensions across semantically distant domains with the help of metaphorical language.[6] That attributes from different domains may be

merely *metaphorically* similar (cf. Ortony 1979: 174–175) is most clearly brought out in examples such as *That's a tall tale*, where the attribute *tall* is merely *metaphorically* related to *tall* in its normal use (cf. Tourangeau/Sternberg 1982: 215). Attempts at explicating the similarity-relation underlying such metaphors in terms of "common properties" are *circular* in that they rely on a *metaphorical* understanding of the "features shared by tenor and vehicle" (Searle 1993 [1979]: 96). This criticism is not invalidated by the fact that there are always some properties which are common to both tenor and vehicle. Goodman's (1972c: 437–439) observation that any two objects resemble each other in infinitely many ways is irrelevant to certain metaphors (e.g., *tall tale*), since the commonalities between tenor and vehicle that *can* be identified do not play a role as constituents of the ground.

The correspondences found in some metaphors are more adequately described as involving some kind of *analogy* rather than feature overlap (cf. Tourangeau/Sternberg 1982: 218–220). Analogy is often treated as a special type of similarity which holds between *relations* between entities, rather than between the entities themselves. Approaches which attempt to *explain* metaphor in terms of analogy incur problems which recall those of less sophisticated versions. In analogical metaphors of the type *My head is an apple without any core*, the "common relations" between tenor and vehicle are only *metaphorically* similar. The relation between a person's head and some x is merely metaphorically the same as "the relationship between an apple and its (removed) core" (Ortony 1993a: 343–344). Furthermore, the analogy view does not explain "how these proportional similarities are generated", and "why only certain proportions are considered relevant to the analogy" (Way 1991: 39–40).

The latter objection ties in with more general considerations put forward by Goodman (1972c). Goodman argues that an appeal to similarity as the *basis* of metaphorical mappings is vacuous on the grounds that any two objects resemble each other in many ways:

> Similarity does not explain metaphor ... : the fact that a term applies, literally or metaphorically, to certain objects may itself constitute rather than arise from a particular similarity among those objects. Metaphorical use may serve to explain the similarity better than ... the similarity explains the metaphor. (Goodman 1972c: 440)

Psychologists espousing the position that similarities are primarily the result rather than the basis of metaphorical transfer can draw support from

pertinent experiments. Tversky/Gati (1978) and Keysar (1988) demonstrate that grouping entities together *induces* similarities, with metaphors constituting one particular way of grouping (cf. also Camac/Glucksberg 1984; Glucksberg/Keysar 1990). Such studies solidify the claim that metaphors can be used to create similarities between concepts which are not related prior to metaphorical transfer – at least not in the sense that these relationships

> ... produce associative facilitation of lexical decisions. This in turn implies that word pairs that form the topic and vehicle of metaphors need not be related prior to their being interpreted as components of the metaphor itself. (Camac/Glucksberg 1984: 450)[7]

Similar findings are reported in Kelly/Keil (1987), who instructed subjects to compare two domains (e.g. periodicals and food) before and after being presented with metaphors which induce a juxtaposition of the domains. After having comprehended metaphorical statements like *The New Yorker is the quiche of newspapers and magazines*, subjects perceive more resemblances between tenor and vehicle and even between other concepts pertaining to the same domains. In this way, metaphors produce a change in the evaluation of similarity between two entities as well as between the domains these entities belong to. Further objections to time-honored similarity-*based* theories of metaphor have been voiced by Black (1981 [1955]: 71–72; Lakoff/Johnson (1980: chapter 22), Glucksberg/Keysar (1990: 11), Indurkhya (1992: chapter 7), and Kubovy (1995).

Since metaphorical juxtaposition of the most diverse concepts may effect a construction of similarities (cf. Kelly/Keil 1987), attempts to impose principled limitations on the nature of concepts which can be "assimilated" to each other through metaphorical transfer may be doomed to failure. This elusiveness compounds our problems in deciding whether or not semantic developments are attributable to metaphor or to other phenomena. What seems clear is that traditional similarity accounts of metaphor have to be modified in some way to give us leverage on the distinction between metaphor and metonymy. A compelling explanation of how metaphors create similarities has been put forward by Glucksberg and Keysar in their various publications (e.g., Glucksberg/Keysar 1990; Glucksberg/Keysar 1993; Keysar/Glucksberg 1993). The merits of their theory can best be assessed in relation to frame-based accounts of metonymy. Hence, their suggestions will be discussed only after we have scrutinized these approaches.

2.2.4 Contiguity

If the notion of similarity is fraught with difficulties, so is the concept of contiguity, and hence metonymy. Most cognitive linguists subscribe to the familiar definition of metonymy in terms of contiguity: "'Metonymy' is a semantic link between two senses of a lexical item that is based on a relationship of contiguity between the referents of the expression in each of those senses" (Geeraerts 1994: 2477). However, they part company over how to specify the notion of contiguity, which seems to have been introduced by Roudet (1921) (cf. Blank 1999: 171). What types of contiguity should be distinguished? How to elucidate the notion in non-metaphorical terms, i.e., what precisely is contiguity, or "experiential 'togetherness'" (Waltereit 1999: 234)? Should the concept be extended to implicatures? There is no consensus on how to answer such questions, even though in recent years something like a received view has emerged. Many linguists emphasize the omnipresence of metonymy in ordinary language and reject the assumption that metonymy essentially serves as a "poetic embellishment" (cf. Lakoff/Turner 1989; Gibbs 1994; Feyaerts 1999).

Psychological studies lend support to the assumption that metonymy is typically based on firmly established associations between entities. Gibbs (1993: 259) approvingly cites a principle originally advanced by Turner (1987), which restricts the use of metonymy to particular types of contiguity relations: "A thing may stand for what it is conventionally associated with." For instance, names of famous composers are often used metonymically to refer to their works (e.g., *He loves Mozart*). However, it is not always possible to establish a metonymical relationship between a product and its "producer". Utterances like *Mary was tasty* in the sense of 'The cheesecake that Mary made was tasty' are inappropriate (cf. Gibbs 1993: 259). The differences in acceptability reside in the fact that metonymic transfer has to be "sanctioned by a body of beliefs encapsulated in an appropriate frame" (Gibbs 1993: 259).[8] Note that Gibbs also puts forward claims which do not fully square with this account.[9]

2.2.4.1 Metonymy as contiguity in discourse

Traugott/König's (1991: 211) definition of metonymy encompasses not only "traditional concrete and overt contexts" but also "cognitive and covert contexts, specifically the pragmatic contexts of conversational and conventional inference". What the authors term *conceptual metonymy* involves

a special kind of contiguity, namely "contiguity in linguistic (including pragmatic) contexts" (Hopper/Traugott 1993: 81; cf. Heine, Claudi, and Hünnemeyer 1991 for a similar approach). The scholars endorsing this conception of metonymy are not cognitive linguists in the strict sense. Nevertheless their approach merits special attention for its intrinsic interest and for the fact that it is well-known within and outside cognitive linguistics. It should be noted that in Traugott/Dasher (2002), this account of conversational and conventional inferences is no longer labeled a theory of *metonymy*; the authors prefer the term "invited inferences" in the latter work. Note also that this approach presents a seminal study of a topic which is for the most part outside the scope of this book. The study of invited inferences is rather different from my own account of metonymy developed in later sections, since its main focus is on the historical development of the extensions concerned and on the contexts in which these extensions arose.

An example of a sense extension that originates in conversational implicatures is English *while* (cf. Traugott/König 1991). Language users are prone to furnish "enriched interpretations" of propositions indicating the co-occurrence of two events by means of *while*: The fact that the speaker singles out two particular coincident events out of countless other events which occur simultaneously may point to a deeper significance (cf. Traugott/König 1991: 199–201). In appropriate contexts, sentences linked by means of *while* imply a concessive relationship. The conversational implicatures pertaining to *while* have become conventionalized in the course of time; *while* has acquired a concessive meaning.

Traugott/König's characterization of such inferential changes as metonymical prompts the question whether metonymy as traditionally conceived and this type of conversational inferences are sufficiently similar to be grouped into one category. Implicatures of the type discussed in Traugott/König (1991) and traditional metonymies such as those given in section 2.2.2 differ in one crucial respect. With traditional metonymies, speakers usually have to select *one* reading of the lexeme concerned. For example, the CONTAINER-CONTENTS metonymy German *ein Glas trinken* ('to drink a glass') cannot be interpreted to mean that the person concerned is drinking the material (glass) out of which a "container for drinking" (glass) is made. "Co-occurrence in discourse" is not necessary for these metonymies to arise. In fact, traditional metonymies typically exclude this kind of co-presence of two readings. By contrast, co-occurrence in discourse is a *precondition* for the emergence of conversational implicatures which lead to enriched interpretations. Both the temporal *and* the conces-

sive reading of *while* have to be available for *while* to develop its concessive meaning in the way suggested by Traugott/König (1991). The difference between such implicatures and traditional metonymies is the difference between meaning *more* than what is said and meaning something *different* from what is said.

In other words, rejecting or ignoring the literal interpretation is a precondition for processing *ein Glas trinken*. By contrast, conversational implicatures leading to enriched interpretations along the lines of Traugott/König logically presuppose that hearers *accept* the literal interpretation. The two phenomena thus seem to be opposed to each other.

For these reasons, traditional metonymies should perhaps not be classified along with implicatures leading to enriched readings. The mechanism of transfer that seems to explain the shift from temporal to concessive *while* differs from the mechanism of transfer that seems to underlie traditional metonymies. One might object that there *are* important similarities between the two processes. For one thing, both are triggered by conversational implicatures, for another, both involve some kind of contiguity. Let us consider these objections in turn.

Both metonymies and the shift from temporal to concessive *while* could be argued to be due to conversational implicatures. In the case of metonymies, these implicatures arise from "floutings" of Gricean maxims and involve rejecting or ignoring the literal interpretation (cf. Levinson 1983: chapter 3); in the case of *while*, they involve accepting the literal interpretation. But then, the cover term for classical metonymies and implicatures resulting in enriched interpretations should perhaps be *implicature* rather than *metonymy*. Since the general term *implicatures* is already available, it might be preferable not to extend the meaning of a former subtype of conversational implicatures, viz. *metonymy*, to the whole class – at least for the purposes of the present discussion.

Let us now turn to the second objection. There may be contiguity of some abstract sort involved in the two types of extensions. As detailed above, however, the kinds of contiguity at issue seem to differ in important respects. The term *contiguity* is metaphorical in nature if applied to more abstract domains (cf. Bredin 1984: 47). *Contiguity* in its concrete sense can be defined as 'the condition of touching or being in contact' or 'close proximity, without actual contact' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. contiguity*). But how can one spell out the "figurative" sense of the word *contiguity*? What is '*non*-physical contact/proximity'? There are always different ways of spelling out a metaphor (cf. chapter 6). Similarly, there are different ways of inter-

preting the idea of 'non-physical contact/proximity' – which explains the considerable number of rivaling conceptions of metonymy/contiguity to be found in the literature. If a metaphorical interpretation of *contiguity* is all we have to go on, nothing prevents us from re-interpreting typical examples of metaphors such as *He is a pig* ('he is dirty/gluttonous') as metonymies: There is some abstract contiguity, one might argue, within our cultural body of beliefs (or "frames") between pigs and dirt/gluttony. Along these lines, any metaphorical association could presumably be re-described as a case of non-physical contiguity. This will be clarified in the following sections.

Even though many linguists appeal to the concept of *contiguity* as crucial to metonymy, the notion does not seem sufficient (and is possibly not even necessary) as a criterion for singling out a relatively homogeneous class of linguistic and cognitive phenomena that includes most or all classical metonymies. An alternative approach would be to abstract central features from what are classical examples of metonymy. The most important features will be discussed in the following sections. This approach allows us to single out a class of phenomena which share a number of important properties and which in virtue of these properties are distinct from other cognitive/linguistic phenomena. I will reserve the label *metonymy* for this particular class, since its description is solely based on an analysis of uncontroversial examples of metonymies and since this class does cover metonymies in the sense of extensions that are clearly distinct from metaphors.

Conceivably, one might encounter certain counterexamples not noted by the present writer. There may be expressions which are traditionally considered metonymies but do not fit my description of metonymies to be provided in 2.4. This would not be surprising, though, since traditional accounts simply offer lists, rather than theories, of metonymy. Arguably, the features abstracted from classical metonymies in this section and the following ones warrant excluding such expressions from the category of metonymies: The potential counterexamples do not fit into what seems to constitute a distinct class of phenomena whose central features allow us to keep that class apart from other types of phenomena. The fact that these potential counterexamples have been called metonyms could then be argued to be insufficiently motivated.

We will now turn to other well-known attempts at clarifying the notion of conceptual contiguity.

2.2.4.2 Contiguity as a relation within domains

The concept of *domain* has been developed in Langacker (1987). Domains are "cognitive entities constituting the context relative to which a lexical unit can be characterized" (Rudzka-Ostyn 1985: 238). Some definitions of metaphor and metonymy make reference to domains. Lakoff/Turner (1989: 103), for example, suggest that metonymical extensions involve merely one domain, while metaphors involve two domains. The authors' account falls short of a satisfactory definition, because ordinary concepts such as *human being* are typically defined in relation to more than one domain. *Human being* presupposes the domains of physical objects, living entities, volitional agents, and many others (cf. Croft 1993).

A more promising approach is taken by Croft (1993), who employs the notion of a *domain matrix*, which represents "the combination of domains simultaneously presupposed by a concept such as [*human being*]" (Croft 1993: 340). According to Croft (1993: 345), metaphorical mappings connect two independent domains which "do not form a domain matrix for the concepts involved", whereas metonymic extensions are confined to a single domain matrix. For instance, the metonymy *Dickens is interesting* "involves a shift of domains within the domain matrix" from the domain (PERSONS ENGAGED IN) CREATIVE ACTIVITY to the domain RESULTS OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY, i.e., Dickens' works (Croft 1993: 348). The hierarchy of domains is changed. What was formerly a primary domain (CREATIVE ACTIVITY) is backgrounded, while the domain RESULTS OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY achieves the status of a *primary* domain. A primary domain is "obligatorily activated whenever the lexical unit is used" (Rudzka-Ostyn 1985: 238). Croft refers to the processes at play as "domain highlighting". The function of metonymy is to "make primary a domain that is secondary in the literal meaning" (Croft 1993: 348).

The assumption that the concepts *domain* and *domain matrix* allow us to distinguish between metaphor and metonymy is controvertible. Consider Barcelona (2000a: 8):

> The cognitive domain is characterized by Langacker (1987: 154–158), Taylor (1995: 83–87), and most other cognitive linguists, as an 'encyclopedic' domain (i.e., it includes all the entrenched knowledge that a speaker has about an area of experience). Thus it will normally vary in breadth from person to person, and in many cases, it has no precise boundaries. How can, then, the neat distinction between two domains be used to distinguish metonymy from metaphor?

Barcelona's query is well taken. How the author tries to remedy the difficulties pinpointed in the above passage is illustrated with the help of expressions for emotions, specifically sadness. Barcelona's line of argument should be quoted at length. The following examples serve to illustrate his points:

(5) She is *in the pits*.
(6) I'm in *low* spirits.
(7) Cheer *up*.
(8) Pete is *down in the dumps*.

> The effects of emotions can plausibly be supposed to be a subdomain in the domain of emotions; that is, the effects of an emotion on our body or on our behavior are obviously a part of our experience of that emotion. One of the behavioral effects of sadness consists in displaying a drooping bodily posture (drooping shoulders, head, or facial muscles). ... Now the experiential subdomain constituted by this specific effect includes as a part of it the subdomain of verticality ('drooping'), and with it, that of three-dimensional space. If the definitions of metaphor and metonymy offered earlier were applied blindly, we would have to conclude that verticality and three-dimensional space are included in the conceptual domain of sadness, and that expressions like [examples 5 to 8 above] ... would actually be *metonymic* and not metaphorical, because a part of a domain (verticality and three-dimensional space) would be standing for that domain (sadness) ... (Barcelona 2000a: 9 [emphasis original])

According to Barcelona (2000a: 9), it is not only the above examples which would count as metonymies if we accept the definition of *domain* shared by most cognitivists; rather, most metaphors would be reanalyzed as metonymies given this conception. I concur with Barcelona's account of the problem involved in defining metonymies in terms of domains, but I disagree with his attempt at solving it. The author notes that the line of thought sketched in the passage cited above does not tally with mental reality:

> It seems that, at least on a conscious conventional level, no speaker of English categorizes verticality as a part of sadness or happiness, although on an unconscious level verticality seems to enter the construction of both notions via metonymy and metaphor. Therefore when we say that metaphor is a mapping across two *separate* domains, we mean that they must be *consciously* regarded as separate.

Barcelona therefore proposes the following revised definition of metaphor: "Metaphor is a mapping of a domain onto another domain, both being conventionally and consciously classified as separate domains, i.e. not included in the same superordinate domain" (Barcelona 2000a: 9). This definition allows him to classify examples (5) to (8) above as metaphors, rather than metonymies.

Barcelona's proposal is not compelling. Domains are *encyclopedic* knowledge structures – they 'include all the entrenched knowledge that a speaker has about an area of experience' (cf. Barcelona 2000a: 8). The relations between encyclopedic knowledge structures are not determined by speakers' conventions. For this reason, I do not go along with Barcelona's definition of metaphors as mappings involving domains that are 'conventionally classified as separate'. Examples of mappings which Barcelona (2000a: 4–5) classifies as metonymies will illustrate the problem more clearly:

(9) She's just a pretty *face*. (FACE FOR PERSON)
(10) He walked with *drooping shoulders*. He had lost his wife. (DROOPING BODILY POSTURE FOR SADNESS) (EFFECT FOR CAUSE)
(11) John has *a long face*. (DROOPING FACIAL MUSCLES FOR SADNESS) (EFFECT FOR CAUSE)

According to Barcelona, all of these examples are metonymies in that "the mapping occurs within one common domain". As for example (9), the face is a "subdomain" of the domain PEOPLE, onto which it is mapped. In (10) and (11), the "common domain is that of sadness, which includes as parts the emotion-cause and its effects" (Barcelona 2000a: 5).

A relatively minor difficulty is that (10) is not a figurative expression at all. The central issue is Barcelona's assumption that the relation between the domains he posits is a matter of convention. Ordinary speakers do not *conventionally* classify FACE as a subdomain of the domain PEOPLE, let alone DROOPING FACIAL MUSCLES as a subdomain of SADNESS. That we recognize drooping facial muscles as an indication of sadness, or faces as parts of people, is not due to a convention, but simply the result of a process of association grounded in our everyday experience. We associate drooping facial muscles with sadness. This observation does not give us leverage on the distinction between metaphor and metonymy, because metaphors are also based on association. What *is* conventional are some of

the linguistic expressions cited by Barcelona – but so are the expressions cited by Barcelona (2000a: 9) as examples of metaphors.

There is a further difficulty. Consider *Achilles is a lion*, which for many has become *the* prototypical metaphor, as opposed to metonymy. This metaphorical expression is familiar from Black (1981 [1955]), 1993 [1977]), who is very much concerned with not obliterating the distinction between metaphor and other kinds of nonliteral language such as metonymy (cf. Black 1993 [1977]: 20). Barcelona (2000a: 7) himself refers to a conventional *metaphor* PEOPLE AS ANIMALS. According to Lakoff/Turner (1989: 196), *Achilles is a lion* maps the lion onto Achilles (cf. also Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 2000: 111). Thus, Barcelona's interpretation of PEOPLE AS (ARE) ANIMALS as a metaphor seems at odds with his own definition of metaphor as an extension involving domains that are *not* "included in the same superordinate domain" (Barcelona 2000a: 9). The concepts *human* and *animal* do belong to the same domain matrix – humans are higher animals. This difficulty cannot be remedied by conceding that the concept *human* is in some sense opposed to *animal*: Humans and animals are definitely members of the "same superordinate domain" ANIMATE ENTITIES.

Note that domains are also very much culture-dependent. The domain of animals as including humans is relatively recent (post-Darwinian). People who do not believe in Darwin's theory of evolution will have a different conceptual domain.[10]

A more general difficulty with definitions of metaphor and metonymy in terms of domains is that it is not always clear what is to count as source and target domain in the first place (cf. chapters 7 and 8). It may thus be open to debate which concepts are mapped in a given metaphor. We will set aside these problems for the present, offering arguments that presuppose interpretations of metaphorical expressions put forward by cognitivists, such as Lakoff/Turner's interpretation of the mapping at work in *Achilles is a lion*.

The difficulties involved in Barcelona's proposal emerge most clearly once we consider a number of parallel extensions. However small the semantic distance between the concepts involved, certain figurative expressions can still be interpreted as metaphors. Examples like *Our dog is a cat*, said of a dog with feline characteristics, or *Our labrador is a Yorkie* (in the sense that his timid behavior recalls Yorkshire terriers), are of the same type as *Achilles is a lion*. In this case, *Yorkie* conveys the idea of a 'dog that behaves like a Yorkie'. Such examples indicate that what counts as a relevant domain is dependent on the kind of mapping involved. There is no essential difference between *Man is a wolf*, *Some dogs are cats*, and *This*

labrador is a Yorkie (cf. also German *Ich bin ein Berliner* 'I am a person from Berlin'). The function of these sentences is much the same. In each case, the speaker ascribes some of the characteristic attributes of a particular entity to another entity which is different *in kind.* It is therefore unwarranted to set apart the metaphor *Achilles is a lion* from the other examples. Yet, the concepts involved in the extension that allows us to say *Our labrador is a Yorkie*, for example, are certainly "included in the same superordinate domain", which we have seen is Barcelona's (2000a: 9) criterion of metonymy.

What is crucial is not the semantic distance between the concepts involved but rather their function. Concepts which are very close can be mapped onto one another in the same way as concepts that are far apart. My suggestion is that the degree of semantic distance does not determine whether something is a metaphor or metonymy. It merely influences our intuitions concerning whether an expression that does function as a metaphor is a good example of its kind. Psychological research demonstrates that the aptness of metaphors is "affected positively" by the semantic distance between tenor and vehicle (Tourangeau/Sternberg 1982: 238).

In conclusion, Barcelona does little to alleviate our misgivings about the utility of the notion of *domain* in identifying metaphors and metonymies. The problems with this approach are twofold. For one thing, Barcelona's presupposition that there is an objective criterion for identifying domain matrixes is unwarranted (cf. also Feyaerts 1999 for an illuminating account of the problem). For another, this account overlooks the fact that the functions of extensions that seem to involve merely one domain may be pretty much the same as the functions of extensions which involve more than one domain. That the crucial concepts involved in *This labrador is a Yorkie* belong to the same domain is uncontentious, but irrelevant. What matters is the function of sentences containing these terms and how we *understand* the sentences. We understand the above example – which on Barcelona's criterion counts as a metonymy – as ascribing a characteristic attribute of an entity to a different entity. Its function is the same as that of prototypical metaphors like *Achilles is a lion*, which attribute typical features of lions to human beings. In other words, the source concept Yorkie is seen as a prototypical member of an *ad hoc* category, such as the category of timid, ill-behaved, etc. dogs (cf. Glucksberg/Keysar's account in 2.4).

2.2.4.3 Contiguity as a frame-based relation

Many cognitivists define metonymy as "a cognitive process that evokes a conceptual frame" (Panther/Radden 1999b: 9). Frames are intricate conceptual networks which Blank (1999: 173) describes as "static or dynamic mental representations of typical situations in life and their typical elements."[11] The concept *frame* is often taken in a rather loose sense, roughly coterminous with *schema*, *scene*, *scenario*, *Idealized Cognitive Model*, and *script* (cf. Blank 1999: 173; Panther/Radden 1999b: 9; Waltereit 1999: 234). The common denominator of such terms has been singled out by Tannen (1979: 138–139), who notes that the key concept at issue is Ross's (1975) notion of a "structure of expectations", which can be spelt out as follows:

> ... based on one's experience of the world in a given culture ... one organizes knowledge about the world and uses this knowledge to predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events, and experiences.

Two frame-based approaches in the broad sense of the term will be scrutinized in this section: Radden/Kövecses (1999) and Blank (1999). We will not examine Taylor's (1995) account of metonymy, since it is rather similar to Radden/Kövecses' theory. Radden/Kövecses and congenial approaches offer crucial insights into the nature of metonymy. At the same time, I do not fully conform to some of their views.

Idealized Cognitive Models represent the pivotal constructs in Radden/Kövecses' (1999: 21) definition of metonymy.

> Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model.

Idealized cognitive models are idealized conceptions of our world. The word *bachelor*, for example, is defined relative to an idealized model of our society which suggests that our society is monogamous, persons marry once they have reached a certain age, and marriage involves people of opposite sexes (cf. Lakoff 1987: 70).

Radden/Kövecses' account invites a number of objections. Take the semantic extension from 'wolf' to 'aggressive, cruel' in *Man is a wolf*. As already observed, *Man is a wolf* is usually considered a prototypical metaphor, rather than a metonymy. Still, there is an idealized cognitive model

linking wolves with cruelty, aggression, etc. – which according to Radden/Kövecses' account seems to entitle us to re-classify this and many similar prototypical metaphors as metonymies.

Conceivably, Radden/Kövecses do consider *Man is a wolf* a metonymy, treating this expression on a par with examples of what they call the DEFINING PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY metonymy. Examples of this metonymy include *Judas* (for 'treacherous') and *Cadillac* (for 'the best of'; Radden/Kövecses 1999: 35). Much as 'being best of' could be described as a salient property of Cadillacs – at least according to the authors – 'being aggressive' could be viewed as a salient property of wolves. (As the example *Cadillac* shows, the term *defining property* has to be taken with a grain of salt: "Being best of" is hardly a "defining" property of Cadillacs in the strict sense).

This construal of Radden/Kövecses' exposition prompts the following objection: Which mappings that are usually considered metaphorical *cannot* be recast as metonymies if we adopt such an approach? Is there any extension traditionally classified as metaphorical which *cannot* be explained in terms of Idealized Cognitive Models or similar notions? Since all metaphors have to be motivated in some way, we are hard pressed to come up with examples of metaphors that could *not* be motivated by identifying an appropriate Idealized Cognitive Model covering source and target sense. Consider metaphorical expressions such as *attack* (an argument), which are attributed to one of the prototypical cognitivist metaphorical concepts, viz. ARGUMENT IS WAR (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 4). Much as Judas is the prototype of a treacherous person (according to Radden/Kövecses 1999: 35), *attack* in war is the prototype of inimical or unfriendly actions directed against others, of which *attack* in argument is another relatively prominent type. Put differently, the two kinds of attack are related via a frame that consists of the general concept of *attack* plus the subconcepts *physical* and *verbal attack*. In Radden/Kövecses' (1999: 21) parlance, the mapping counts as a metonymy, because "one conceptual entity, the vehicle [here: physical attack], provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target [here: verbal attack], within the same idealized cognitive model [here: acting upon some entity in a destructive way]."

Radden/Kövecses' definition of metonymy is liable to obscure the very distinction it should serve to elucidate. Once we adopt their account, many expressions formerly pigeonholed as metaphorical can easily be reanalyzed as metonyms. The concept of metonymy is also extended in other ways. Following the authors, words and the concepts they express are part

of an Idealized Cognitive Model. The form of words and their conceptual content are therefore linked by a metonymic relationship: "[T]he form metonymically stands for the concept it [the word] denotes" (Radden/Kövecses 1999: 24). This putative metonymy is labeled WORDS STAND FOR THE CONCEPTS THEY EXPRESS. Yet, there is a crucial difference between using a *form* (e.g., "dollar") to denote money, and using a *concept* (e.g., *dollar*) to access another *concept*, such as *wealth*. Only the latter "transfer" is a metonymy in the ordinary sense of the word (cf. 2.2.2 for examples of typical metonymies). If metonymy is redefined along the lines of Radden/Kövecses, all literal language turns out to be metonymical. Such a radical departure from the familiar distinction between literal and figurative language is not desirable from the present writer's perspective. The authors seem to hold that it follows from adopting their definition of metonymy in terms of Idealized Cognitive Models (cf. Radden/Kövecses 1999: 20–55); but the central question to be asked is whether this definition is appropriate in the first place. Radden/Kövecses justify their definition by saying that it enables them to address issues crucial to theories of metonymy, including a number of central questions.

> (i) What are the ontological realms in which ICMs [Idealized Cognitive Models] and metonymic relationships may occur? ...
> (ii) What are the types of conceptual relationships that may give rise to metonymy? ...
> (iii) Are there any conceptual entities that can better direct attention to an intended target than others? ...
> (iv) Are there any principles that override the preferred default routes and yield 'non-default' cases of metonymy? ...
> (Radden/Kövecses 1999: 22–23)

It is true that these questions merit closer attention. However, they hardly suffice for motivating Radden/Kövecses' working definition of metonymy, since they could also be asked with respect to other definitions of the term. Of course, (i) has to be slightly modified if we adopt a definition which does not appeal to Idealized Cognitive Models (to the effect that this term has to be removed: '(i) What are the ontological realms in which metonymic relationships may occur?').

According to Radden/Kövecses (1999: 19), "[m]etonymy does not simply substitute one entity for another entity, but interrelates them to form a new, complex meaning." The metonymical expression *She's just a pretty face*, for example, is said to evoke the whole person, rather than simply the

face. The problem with this position emerges once we take into account the whole gamut of phenomena which the authors classify as metonymies. However we interpret Radden/Kövecses' reference to "complex meanings", their characterization of metonymy in terms of an 'interrelation of entities to form a new, complex meaning' is not applicable to the "literal" metonymies cited by the authors. Take the above example *dollar* (for a particular kind of 'money'), an instance of the putative "literal metonymy" WORDS STAND FOR THE CONCEPTS THEY EXPRESS. To speak of a 'new meaning' does not make sense in this case. Word forms (*dollar*) and meanings ('type of money') are different kinds of entities; they cannot combine to form complex meanings. Only two *meanings* can do so. The only way of avoiding these difficulties is to presuppose a very vague definition of *meaning*; this would enable us to claim that the combination of a word form and a meaning constitute a "new, complex meaning". Such a move, however, is undesirable, since it almost empties the notion of meaning of content. The authors' theory would thus be open to objections that have been leveled at Lakoff's (1987) semantic theory (cf. chapter 5; Leezenberg 2001: 138).

Another frame-based account of metonymy has been offered by Blank (1999). At the heart of Blank's proposal is the distinction between three types of conceptual contiguity which he considers relevant to metonymical transfer. The first type of contiguity is represented by "relations between concepts within a frame", the second by "relations between concepts and the superordinate frame", and the third by "relations between related frames" (Blank 1999: 174). Blank (1999: 174) cites the following examples of the first, second, and third type of contiguity, respectively:

(i) Latin *praeco* 'messenger' > Old Spanish *pregón*, Old Portuguese *pregão* 'message'
(ii) Old French *travail* 'pain' > Middle French 'work'; Middle English *travail* 'pain' > Modern English *travel* 'journey'
(iii) Old French *disner* 'to have the first meal of the day' > Modern French *dîner* 'to have lunch' > 'to have dinner.'

Considering the examples provided by Blank, the distinction between the first and the third form of contiguity is *ad hoc*. Why not claim that example (iii) illustrates another case of the first form of contiguity, viz. contiguity construed as a 'relation between concepts within a frame' rather than as a 'relation between related frames'? A suitable superordinate frame for (iii) would be MEAL/EATING. If we presuppose this frame, both 'to have the

first meal of the day' and 'to have lunch' (or 'to have dinner') are concepts within a single frame – rather than concepts belonging to different frames. Indeed, example (ii) shows that Blank – much like other cognitivists[12] and psychologists (cf. Barsalou 1992) – has a very broad conception of frames: A frame is anything that can be construed as a coherent "structure of expectations" in the sense outlined by Tannen (1979: 138–139; quoted above). As for example (ii), Blank seems to regard PAIN as the superordinate frame, of which *work* and *journey* form subconcepts. If *work* is part of the frame PAIN, *work* is construed as a comparatively typical example of painful – or perhaps unpleasant – experiences. This fits in with the idea that frames are "structures of expectations". We usually expect work to be a painful or unpleasant experience.

Blank fails to specify in precise terms what is to count as a frame. A glance at the psychological literature shows that it is in fact not clear what kinds of information should be incorporated into frames. What *is* clear, however, is that frames can be extremely complex structures (cf. Lenat/Guha 1989; Barsalou 1992). These facts do not bode well for attempts at positing frames as the key concept for defining metonymy. Pending in-depth studies that clarify the construct *frame* and allow us to delimit the scope of frames (cf. Barsalou 1992: 42–43), accounts of metonymy based on this notion rest on shaky ground. Since a wealth of information is contained in frames, it is likely that frames also incorporate the kind of information relevant for interpreting what are usually considered metaphors rather than metonyms.

An adequate theory of metonymy has to clarify the distinction between metonymy and metaphor. Blank's definition does not provide such a clarification. As it stands, Blank's (1999: 171–172) suggestion that metaphors are semantic changes due to similarities does not address the issue sufficiently. We have already observed that similarity is often more appropriately described as the result rather than the basis of metaphorical transfer. What Blank and other cognitivists would describe as *metonymic* mappings can give rise to similarity/analogy much as metaphors do. Tourangeau/Sternberg (1982: 219) refer to the very 'correlations in our experience' that are crucial to frames – and hence metonymy in Blank's sense – as giving rise to the perception of analogies between features. As long as no precise criterion of similarity is provided, nothing prevents us from recasting many classical metaphors as "metonyms", or indeed vice versa. Consider again Blank's own example of a frame-based metonym (Old French *travail* 'pain' > Middle French 'work'). What is categorized as

an instance of a relation between frame and subconcept on Blank's account can equally be analyzed as an instance of abstract *similarity*: Pain and work (in the sense of 'toil') are both typically considered unpleasant experiences.[13]

Conversely, given a frame-based account even synaesthetic metaphors – which have long been held to resist being "reduced to contiguity" (Taylor 1995: 139) – can be recast as metonymies. Synaesthetic metaphors (e.g., *loud color*) are arguably just one kind of mapping involving frames. The frame at issue is the frame "sensory modalities", the subconcepts involved are particular kinds of sensory modalities.

2.3 General problems with cognitivist analyses

It is one of the main claims put forward in this chapter that cognitive theories, while often containing illuminating analyses of particular metaphors and metonyms, do not sufficiently clarify the distinction between metaphor and metonymy. In this section we will look at some of the ways in which this lack of clear criteria is reflected in the literature. We will also point out some similarities between problems encountered with cognitivist analyses of metonymy and those that will be observed for Lakoff/Johnson's theory of metaphor.

A major problem is that the term *metonymy* is extended in unfamiliar ways, often by reference to the notion of metonymy as a conceptual phenomenon. That metonymy is a conceptual phenomenon is, in itself, not in dispute. A number of insightful discussions proceed on this assumption (e.g. those by Croft and Traugott/König discussed above). At times, however, the conceptual nature of metonymy is used to justify extensions of the notion that turn out to be problematic.

Consider Ungerer's (2000) account of what he calls "grabbing metonymies". The author's exposition capitalizes on two observations. First, "DESIRE is to be understood as an emotion"; second, "grabbing can be seen as a semi-volitional bodily movement, similar to the jumping up and down movements often accompanying emotions like JOY" (Ungerer 2000: 322). Drawing on "Lakoff and Kövecses' general metonymic principle that PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF AN EMOTION STAND FOR THE EMOTION" (Ungerer 2000: 322), the author deduces from this observation the metonymy GRABBING THE DESIRED OBJECT STANDS FOR DESIRE (cf. Ungerer 2000: 324).

Even if Ungerer's account is intriguing, there are a number of difficulties. Thus, rather than starting out from linguistic phenomena, which could (perhaps) be argued to license inferences to conceptual structures, Ungerer's point of departure seems to be his own postulation of a conceptual structure (GRABBING THE DESIRED OBJECT STANDS FOR DESIRE), which he then strives to locate in linguistic phenomena (cf. Ungerer 2000: 324). This strategy is also characteristic of Lakoff/Johnson's approach (cf. chapter 7).

According to Ungerer (2000), potential manifestations of "grabbing metonymies" include formula such as "Buy X", and "Go and get X". Ungerer even extends his account to conceptual metonymies that are not explicitly expressed in any form:

> The last, and at the same time, most radical option is to concede that often the GRABBING metonymy is not explicitly expressed at all, neither linguistically nor visually, but that it is to be regarded as an underlying, but nevertheless essential, conceptual component of the advert – the 'missing conceptual link' that explains why the picture of a chocolate may be sufficient to evoke the desire and even stimulate the action that leads to its acquisition and consumption. (Ungerer 2000: 324)

Even if there is some conceptual connection of the type outlined by Ungerer, the question arises why it should be labeled *metonymy*, rather than simply *association*, *conceptual link*, etc. A similar problem pervades much research in cognitive semantics, including not only theories of metonymy but also recent developments in the cognitive theory of metaphor (cf. chapter 8).

This is but one example where the idea that metonymy is a conceptual phenomenon leads to an extension of the term that seems unwarranted. A clearer account of the senses in which metonymy is a conceptual phenomenon is needed. The difficulties incurred by frameworks that dispense with detailed criteria for applying key concepts such as *conceptual* (*metonymy*) or the closely related notion *experiential* are particularly striking in Waltereit's explanation of the term *contiguity*:

> It seems less important to try to enumerate the possible types of contiguity than to acknowledge that contiguity is a relation of experiential 'togetherness', where experience is to be understood in the broadest sense. Given this assumption, contiguity can take virtually any form, provided speakers construe a relation between the entities involved and take the relation as communicatively relevant .... (Waltereit 1999: 234)

Waltereit's very broad conception of "experience" does not allow us to pinpoint the differences between metaphor and metonymy. What is "experience ... in the broadest sense"? Doesn't the production and interpretation of *metaphorical* expressions also depend on experience ("in the broadest sense")?

Rather than clarifying the essentially metaphorical notion of *contiguity*, Waltereit offers another metaphor ("experiential 'togetherness'") – which is essentially a translation of the term *contiguity*. To replace a vague and metaphorical term by another one which is equally vague and metaphorical does not amount to an explanation. Approaches which follow this strategy are in danger of pushing the problem to another level, a tendency which is particularly conspicuous in Lakoff/Johnson's works. As will be seen in the following chapters, the authors tend to employ key words without giving them much substance; they fail to define even concepts that are as crucial as *meaning*, and tend to evade, rather than clarify, central issues.

Waltereit's observation that "contiguity can take virtually any form" is very much to the point as far as uses of the term within cognitive linguistics are concerned: As shown above and in preceding sections, the term *contiguity*, and hence *metonymy*, can indeed "take virtually any form." It is this very fact which suggests that the distinction between metaphor and metonymy is not sufficiently precise. Evidence in favor of this view has already been provided in preceding sections: Examples of putative "metonymies" can also be analyzed as metaphors, and vice versa. For an even more telling example, consider Feyaerts (1999: 323), according to whom example (12) below is a *metonymy* for STUPID:

(12) *Er steht da wie der Ochse vor dem Scheunentor.*
'He stands there like the ox in front of the barn-door.'

An alternative account would be to claim that the idea of "an ox standing in front of the barn-door" and the concept of stupidity are *similar* in that both essentially involve a striking inability to respond appropriately to a situation. True, it is often a matter of speculation whether a transfer capitalizes on similarities, since any two things are similar to each other. In this case, however, it seems clear that the relationship intended between the person referred to in (12) and the ox standing in front of the barn-door is one of similarity: Feyaerts' example displays the pattern 'X is/does something *like* Y'. The word *like* explicitly indicates that a kind of similarity is highlighted, suggesting a metaphorical reading.

On close scrutiny, Feyaerts' putative metonymy exemplifies what may well be the most explicitly metaphorical – as opposed to metonymical – type of expression, viz. a simile. Similes make explicit that the relevant utterance revolves around a *similarity* between the entities/phenomena at issue. Thus, they are metaphorical in nature. Feyaerts' example is on a par with Aristotle's time-honored simile *Achilles leapt on the foe as a lion*:

> The simile is also a metaphor. The difference is but slight. When the poet says of Achilles that he
>
> Leapt on the foes as a lion
>
> this is a simile; when he says of him 'the lion leapt', it is a metaphor ... [Similes] are to be employed just as metaphors are employed, since they are really the same thing except for the difference mentioned. (*Rhetoric* 1406b)

One potential response to my interpretation might be to dismiss the concept of similarity as a criterion of metaphoricity, even in explicit cases such as the above. This is not Feyaerts' approach, however, who considers similarity to be the "decisive criterion for the distinction between metonymy and metaphor" (Feyaerts 1999: 320). In fact, Feyaerts (1999: 320) cites the following example from Goossens (1990) as an extension that is "mainly" metaphoric (cf. also Feyaerts 2000: 63): *"Oh dear", she giggled, "I'd quite forgotten."* The metaphoric interpretation of this sentence is brought out by a paraphrase involving the comparative construction "as if" ("to say something *as if* giggling"). Feyaerts clearly takes this paraphrase to indicate that the extension is metaphoric in nature – involving a comparison.

The phrase *as if* in Goossens' example has much the same function as *wie* ('like') in the above example (12). Hence, what Feyaerts (1999) classifies as a metonymy should by his own standards be counted as a metaphor.

Apparently, it is again the author's emphasis on the conceptual nature of metonymy – and consequent extension of the notion – that leads to these problems. According to Feyaerts, expressions such as the one discussed above or *Er kann nicht bis drei zählen* ('He cannot count to three') are particularly apt examples of metonymies. Representing "non-realistic" or "imaginative" contiguity relationships, they throw into relief the "conceptual status of a metonymic extension" (Feyaerts 1999: 321–322). Pace Feyaerts, such examples are clear instances of metaphors rather than metonymies. This has already been shown above for example (12). Similar observations apply to Feyarts' example 'He cannot count to three', which conveys the idea that someone is unable to perform the simplest intellectual tasks (cannot use his brain). A person who cannot count is obviously *simi-*

lar to someone who cannot perform simple intellectual tasks: Both lack intelligence. The extension at issue thus seems to be based on similarity. Again, I do not subscribe to the idea that the concept of similarity on its own is sufficient to offer a satisfactory account of metaphor. I have relied on it here, because Feyaerts himself considers it crucial to metaphor. On my account, Feyaerts' example is a clear case of metaphor rather than metonymy for other reasons: It falls under the concept of metaphor developed by Glucksberg/Keysar, and it does not qualify as a metonymy by my definition, which will be explained in the following section. To anticipate, persons who cannot count to three are prototypical members of the category of stupid persons, hence the expression clearly counts as a metaphor on Glucksberg/Keysar's view. Following Glucksberg/Keysar, metaphor vehicles are viewed as prototypical members of more general categories (in this case stupid persons).

At the very least, my reasoning shows that Feyaerts' account does not offer a clear distinction between metaphor and metonymy. The examples he considers clear cases of metonymies are arguably clear cases of metaphors. The problems encountered here parallel the ones we noted with respect to other approaches. For instance, Blank also emphasizes the conceptual nature of metonymy and captures metaphor in terms of similarity, yet some of his putative examples of metonymy can likewise be described in terms of similarity, and hence as metaphors. In many cases, then, emphasis on the conceptual nature of metonymy leads to an unwarranted extension of the concept of metonymy that renders it indistinguishable from metaphor.

It is not only the analyses of particular expressions as metonymies which are open to rivaling interpretations in terms of metaphor, or vice versa. In some cases, the very characterizations of metonymy found in the literature are highly similar to accounts of metaphor. Consider, once again, Radden/Kövecses' (1999: 19) statement that "[m]etonymy does not simply substitute one entity for another entity, but interrelates them to form a new, complex meaning." This characterization has also been applied to metaphors. The idea of metaphor creating novel, emergent meanings plays a pivotal role in interaction theories (e.g., Black 1981 [1955]; Wheelwright 1962; Hesse 1966; Miles 1967). Thus, Honeck (1980: 32), echoing ideas originally developed by Black (1981 [1955]), contends that "the metaphor creates the similarity and is therefore an organizational schema for developing new meanings."

In summary, recent cognitive approaches typically opt for a considerable extension of the concept of metonymy, which may yield valuable in-

sights into similarities between metonymies and related phenomena, but is unsatisfactory when it comes to the question how to distinguish metaphor and metonymy. The term *metonymy* now encompasses a wide range of very diverse phenomena from traditional metonymies to indirect speech acts (cf. Panther/Thornburg 1999: 335), or indeed language in general (cf. Radden/Kövecses 1999: 24). Metonymy is no longer necessarily part of non-literal language[14] – or even language (e.g., Radden/Kövecses 1999: 18; Ungerer 2000: 324). An approach to metonymy which ends up describing such diverse phenomena is not a theory of metonymy any more, since the original sense of the term has almost vanished. The insights uncovered by this type of research are not necessarily contributions to a theory of metonymy. The relevant studies throw light on different, typically broader concepts, such as frame-based phenomena or relations involving Idealized Cognitive Models.

2.4 An alternative approach

The problem of clearly teasing apart metaphor and metonymy remains unsolvable as long as the broad conceptions of metonymy are adopted that have been sketched in the preceding discussion. Recall, for example, Blank (1999), who characterizes a typical kind of metonymy as resting on a relationship between frame and subconcept. Both Blank's suggestion and Radden/Kövecses' discussion of the supposed *metonymy* DEFINING PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY (cf. 2.2.4.3) are in line with the spirit of a well-known definition of *metaphor* proposed by Glucksberg/Keysar (1990). Glucksberg/Keysar (1990) capitalize on insights from Brown (1958) and Barsalou (1983) (cf. also Glucksberg/Keysar 1993; Keysar/Glucksberg 1993; Glucksberg/Manfredi 1995; Glucksberg 2001). The gist of Glucksberg/Keysar's (1990) approach is that vehicle concepts in metaphors are used to represent a superordinate category which includes both the vehicle (literally construed) and the tenor. For example, in the metaphor *My job is a jail*, the vehicle (*jail*) names what Barsalou (1983) calls an *ad hoc category*, i.e., a category used for the nonce. The most likely interpretation of the metaphor is this: The *ad hoc* category at issue is the category of unpleasant and confining things.

> In this statement, the metaphor vehicle 'jail' can be viewed as a prototypical member of the class of things that are unpleasant, confining, are difficult to get out of, etc. The 'literal' jail exemplifies this more general category of

> situations, and also serves as the name for this category that currently has no name of its own. (Glucksberg/Manfredi 1995: 69)

This mechanism of employing the word *jail* metaphorically to refer to a *type* of thing is inextricably linked to the fact that "multiple classification" is a crucial feature of human thought in that we can always assign a thing or phenomenon to many different *ad hoc* categories (cf. Keysar/Glucksberg 1993: 647). *Jail*, for instance, can be assigned to the category of legal judgments or of buildings; when used metaphorically it can be assigned to a category comprising certain kinds of situations. By means of the metaphorical expression *My job is a jail*, jobs are assigned to the *ad hoc* category of unpleasant and confining things and hence seen in a certain light. Metaphors are therefore 'class-inclusion statements' – "the vehicle stands for a higher-level category that can include [the tenor]" (Keysar/Glucksberg 1993: 647).

Many examples that Blank is likely to assign to his second category of metonymies (cf. Blank 1999: 174) lend themselves to re-analysis in terms of Keysar/Glucksberg's model. Recall that Blank characterizes his second category of metonymical relations as links between a concept and its superordinate frame. Whether we speak of "[r]elations between concepts and the superordinate frame" (Blank 1999: 174) or of a relation between the vehicle concept and the superordinate *ad hoc* category is often merely a terminological matter. In both accounts, what is perceived as a relatively typical example of a phenomenon may come to designate the phenomenon as a whole. For example, Glucksberg/Keysar's (1990: 11) metaphor *My job is a jail*, where *jail* comes to denote unpleasant, confining situations in general, counts as a metonymy in Blank's model: Unpleasant, confining situations are the superordinate frame, which has *jail* as a prominent subconcept. The odds are that Keysar and Glucksberg would also go along with the details of Blank's account as far as its appeal to frames is concerned.[15] Even so, they arrive at the contrary conclusion. While Blank characterizes relations between concepts and their superordinate frame as metonymical, Keysar/Glucksberg regard many expressions that can be captured in these terms as metaphorical.[16]

Some of Radden/Kövecses' examples can likewise be reanalyzed in terms of Keysar/Glucksberg's model. This is already suggested by the label for an important type of mapping which Radden/Kövecses (1999: 35) classify as a *metonymy*: DEFINING PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY (e.g., *Judas* 'treacherous person'). Taking Keysar/Glucksberg's perspective, *Judas* is

seen as a prototypical member of the *ad hoc* category TREACHEROUS, UNRELIABLE, ETC. PERSON.

Glucksberg/Keysar's approach constitutes a viable alternative to frame-based accounts à la Blank and Radden/Kövecses. A promising way of distinguishing metaphor and metonymy seems to be to build on Glucksberg/Keysar's insights: Metaphors, as opposed to metonymies, typically trigger the construction of *ad hoc* categories.[17] The source concepts of metaphors are seen as prototypical members of a larger category. The interpretation of typical metonymies, on the other hand, depends on speakers' grasp of firmly established, or at least presupposed, relations between concepts (or more generally entities). Bredin (1984: 57) aptly characterizes metaphor as a process that *creates* a "relation between its objects"; in metonymy this relation is "presupposed". Bredin's characterization offers a good starting point for describing the differences between metaphor and metonymy in greater detail.

As for metaphorical extensions, it is not generally the case that metaphor really "creates" a relation between its objects, at least in the sense envisaged by the present writer. Some, but certainly not all, metaphors do create a relation between source and target concept, or source and target domain. Such metaphors tend to convey or reflect a substantial characterization of the phenomenon – or "target domain" – they relate to. Importantly, this characterization is only conveyed *by means of* metaphorical transfer, which creates a relation between source and target that is not independently given. Put differently, the relation between source and target concepts (or domains) is merely a matter of how we *construe* the phenomena referred to by these concepts. Examples of metaphors that create a relation between source and target concepts/domains are expressions usually subsumed under ARGUMENT IS WAR, such as *attack an argument*. This metaphor might be said to convey a particular perspective on how arguments are conducted – e.g., by refuting them in an aggressive, possibly unfair (etc.) manner. The precise interpretation of the metaphor is not at issue. What matters is rather that the relation between source and target concept is not present independently of metaphorical transfer. For there is no objective relation between physical aggression (physical attack) and arguments (verbal "attack"), the two concepts are rather related to each other *by* using the term *attack* (or similar terms) for both domains. In other words, the relation between source and target is constituted by metaphorical equation, which allows us to notice this relation (a similarity) in the first place.[18]

These prototypical metaphors should be kept distinct from less prototypical examples such as the instantiations of what cognitivists refer to as the metaphorical concepts HAPPY IS UP or SAD IS DOWN (e.g., *Her spirits **drooped***; cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 15). Here, source and target concepts (e.g., 'to hang or move downwards' and 'to become depressed', respectively) are related quite independently of metaphorical transfer: We strongly associate depression with drooping posture, because, as a matter of fact, people who are depressed tend to walk with drooping shoulders. The relation between the two phenomena is not simply the result of a particular way of construing depression. By contrast, the link between ARGUMENT and WAR, or physical aggression (*physical attack*) and putting forward arguments (*attack a claim*), is merely the result of a particular way of construing arguments. Source and target of metaphors like ARGUMENT IS WAR need not be related at all prior to metaphorical transfer.

The putative conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR can offer a particular perspective on and substantial characterization of the target domain ARGUMENT, because certain elements of WAR are transferred to ARGUMENT. By contrast, SAD IS DOWN does not involve such a transference of features. While arguments are war-like in certain respects (i.e., may exhibit certain features associated with warfare), SAD is *not* like DOWN in any respects (i.e., sadness does not exhibit certain features of drooping posture). Thus, a sentence such as *I am low today* does not offer a substantial characterization of sadness, it does not reflect a particular "perspective" on this phenomenon.

In general, the first type of metaphor described above is represented by mappings which cognitivists usually characterize as being based on experiential similarities, while the second type is represented by expressions which are usually classified as extensions based on experiential correlations (cf. chapter 6). We will see in chapter 6 that Lakoff/Johnson in some respects assimilate all kinds of metaphors to those metaphors which reflect a substantial characterization of the target domain. In other respects, they assimilate all kinds of metaphors to the second type discussed above, claiming that conceptual metaphors are generally based on so-called primary metaphors, which in turn emerge as a result of experiential correlations (cf. chapter 8).

Let us now turn to metonymy. How can one spell out the idea that metonymy builds on pre-given or presupposed relations? This idea can be expounded in rather different ways. A partial answer is that many metonymies involve dictionary knowledge (i.e., intralinguistic knowledge). Con-

trary to widespread assumptions in the cognitivist literature (e.g., Blank 1999), the "presupposed" relations that characterize metonymy are often intra-linguistic relations in the sense that they are part of a speaker's knowledge about language rather than about the world. For this reason, they are *not* typical relations holding within or between frames: Frames are "formed by an 'inductive generalization' of extra-linguistic [in the sense of 'encyclopedic'] knowledge" (Blank 1999: 173). Consider, for example, a classical metonymy such as *cuts* for 'scissors'. This metonymy presupposes the "semantic" knowledge that scissors are used to cut paper (etc.). If I do not know this much about scissors, I do not have a sufficient grasp of the meaning of the word *scissors*. What the metonymical mapping does *not* bring about is an extension of our way of viewing scissors. Cuts are not placed in an *ad hoc* category: They are *not* (metaphorically) viewed as a prototypical type of scissors. Another telling example of a typical metonymy is a German expression which is typically described as an instance of the more general type CONTAINER FOR CONTENTS: *Ein Glas trinken* ('to drink a glass'). This metonymy depends on the semantic knowledge that the usual function of glasses (in the sense of 'drinking vessel') is to contain liquids. Again, this much is part of our linguistic knowledge about the container word *glass*.

I do not wish to dispute that the distinction between dictionary knowledge and encyclopedic knowledge is fuzzy (cf. Jackendoff 1983: 139–140).[19] Still, such examples demonstrate the existence of typical metonyms which are based on knowledge that is more aptly characterized as dictionary knowledge (knowledge about language, about how we use words) than as encyclopedic knowledge (knowledge about the world). In fact, at least some cognitive accounts of metonymy do presuppose this distinction (cf. Blank 1999).

If it is indeed essential to metonymies that they build on presupposed relations (as the prototypical examples listed in 2.2.2 suggest), frame-based accounts cannot do justice to many typical metonymies. And indeed, as seen above, frame-based theories do not yield clear accounts of the distinction between metaphor and metonymy. Nevertheless, some observations in Radden/Kövecses' work provide important clues to a satisfactory model of metonymy. Radden/Kövecses suggest that "metonymic relationships should ... be represented by using an additive notation such as X PLUS Y" (Radden/Kövecses 1999: 19). This formula is designed to capture the fact that metonymies do "not simply substitute one entity for another entity", but rather link these two entities together. The authors illustrate this by citing

Warren's (1999: 128) succinct observation that a metonymy such as *I like Mozart* does not simply "refer to music", but to "music composed by Mozart". Similarly, "we do not refer to water in *The bathtub is running over*, but to the water in the bathtub". Note that Warren herself cites these examples as instances of what she considers a subtype of metonymy (referential metonymy). Warren considers referential metonymies to be "basically abbreviations". Though Warren herself restricts this insightful characterization to what she classifies as a subtype of metonymy, most (but not all) extensions that count as metonymies on my view could be described in these terms.

As Radden/Kövecses point out, their account is in the spirit of Dirven (1993: 14):

> In metonymy the two domains both remain intact, but they are seen to be in line, whereas in metaphor only one domain, viz. the target domain is kept, and the other domain, viz. the source domain disappears, so to speak.

I consider the basic intuition expressed in the passages from Dirven and Radden/Kövecses to be crucial for understanding metonymy and metaphor. The authors' characterizations of metonymy capture the essence of many metonyms. They need further elaboration, however, for the reasons pointed out in preceding sections. Most important, they do not suffice for drawing a neat distinction between metaphor and metonymy. As seen above, some examples of putative metonymies cited by scholars who champion this line of thought are arguably typical cases of metaphors.

Furthermore, Radden/Kövecses' formula "X PLUS Y" does not account for all prototypical metonymies. Take *brain(s)* for 'intelligence', as in *He has brains* ('he has intelligence'). The meaning 'intelligence' already presupposes the literal meaning of *brain(s)*, hence the formula X PLUS Y does not apply to this example: The non-literal sense 'having intelligence' is not the result of "adding" the meaning 'having a brain' to a concept.

Perhaps the relation between source and target meaning of metonymies can be captured in a different way, which still acknowledges Dirven's and Radden/Kövecses' intuitions that source and target are closely associated. It has to be conceded though, that my elaboration results in a conception of metonymy that is in some ways orthogonal to the authors' account.

The gist of my proposal is that with metaphors, source and target can be dissociated in the following way: Knowledge of the target concept does *not* imply knowledge of the source concept. This does not contradict the insight that metaphor provides a particular way of arriving at a given target sense

via a certain source sense. What matters is that source and target sense can be disconnected *in principle* – even if they are yoked together in the metaphorical expression at issue. Consider the metaphorical concept *jail* in *My job is a jail*. Following Keysar/Glucksberg (1993), *jail* can metaphorically refer to the *ad hoc* category of unpleasant, confining, etc. situations. Now it is clearly not necessary that someone familiar with the target concept ('unpleasant, confining, etc., situation') is familiar with the source concept *jail*. The same applies to other metaphors: The source meaning plays no constitutive role in the target meaning, at least once source and target meaning are considered apart from each other. Thus, knowing the source meaning of *pig* ('a swine') is hardly essential to one's grasp of the target concept 'dirty, gluttonous, mean, etc., being'. Matters are different in the case of metonymic transfer. With metonymies, knowing the source meaning is indispensable *in principle* for grasping the target meaning. In order to know the target meaning of German *Glas* ('container made of glass'), I have to know the source meaning ('glass as a substance'). Similarly, to know the target meaning of German *Leibchen* or its English counterpart *body* ('part of a dress which covers the body'), I have to be familiar with the source sense 'body'. In the case of metonymies as opposed to metaphors, source and target sense are inseparable in principle. Consider also frequently cited examples such as *The ham sandwich is waiting for his check* (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 35). In order to grasp the target meaning 'ham-sandwich eating customer' one has to know the meaning *ham sandwich*. The same applies to cases such as *do a Napoleon*. In order to understand the respective target meanings (such as 'posture associated with Napoleon'), the reader needs to be familiar with the source concept.

In general, then, speakers can be said to have a grasp of what I call a metonymy's target sense (e.g., 'scissors'), only if they know the source sense ('cuts'). So the principal question is whether a speaker can be said to have a grasp of the target sense *without* knowing the source sense. If so, the relevant extension is a metaphor rather than a metonymy. For instance, in the case of *jail* for 'unpleasant, confining situations', one can learn or grasp the target sense ('confining situations') without being acquainted with the source sense ('jail').

As already noted, this is not to deny that source and target senses of metaphors are interdependent for any particular metaphorical extension – in that we arrive at the target sense *via* the source sense. My argument rather turns on the semantic relationship between source and target sense, considered apart from any particular extension in which they are combined. A test

for establishing whether source and target are independent of each other might be the following: If an explanation of the target concept does not presuppose explicit or implicit reference to the source concept, the relevant extension should not be classified as a metonymy. Thus, if it is conceivable – at least in principle – that a language learner can acquire the target concept without having mastered the source concept, the relevant extension is not a metonymy.

Our criterion allows us to unambiguously assign apparently problematic examples cited in the literature to either the category of metaphor or the category of metonymy. It also leads us to re-assign phenomena that are often considered metonymies to other categories. Thus, implicatures do not count as metonymies on my account. An inference from temporal *while* to concessive *while*, for instance, does not count as a metonymy in my classificatory scheme, because the concept of concession is logically independent of the concept of time, and an explanation of the concept of concession does not evoke the concept of time. Examples of the putative metonymy DEFINING PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY are reclassified as metaphors on my account (cf. Radden/Kövecses' 1999 opposite view): *Cadillac* for 'the best of' is not a metonymy – we can easily grasp the meaning 'best of' without resorting to the notion of Cadillacs. Similarly, the following two putative examples of metonymies proposed by Blank (1999: 174) do not really qualify as metonymies: Old French *travail* 'pain' > Middle French 'work' and Middle English *travail* 'pain' > Modern English *travel* 'journey'. There is no essential connection between the target senses 'work' and 'journey', respectively, and the source sense 'pain'. Other intriguing examples are *up* for 'happy' or *down* for 'depressed'. Are these examples of metaphors based on metonymy? The answer is negative. Since the target concept 'depressed' or 'sad' is, in principle, independent of the source concept 'down', the target concept can be explained and understood without reference to the source concept. Cases like SAD IS DOWN are amenable to analysis in terms of Glucksberg/Keysar's concept of metaphor: People who walk with drooping shoulders are construed as paradigm examples of people who are unhappy, depressed, in difficulties, disappointed (etc.).

In light of the above examples, the boundary between metaphor and metonymy seems relatively clear-cut. This is not to deny that certain expressions can be analyzed as complexes of metaphors and metonymies. In this respect, I concur with cognitivists such as Goossens (1990) and Radden (2000). What is crucial from my perspective is that metonymic and metaphoric ingredients can be clearly distinguished from each other. Consider,

for example, the following two senses of *hand*: 'In reference to the person who does something with his hands; hence often denoting the person in relation to his action' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. hand*). The second sense is a combination of metonymy and metaphor. The metaphoric ingredient can be described as follows: Doing something with one's hands is construed as the prototype of action. The metonymic relation connects the concept *hand* with the concept 'person doing something *with his or her hands*'. The metaphoric and the metonymic conception combine to yield the sense cited above, but they remain clearly separable ingredients in the target sense.

The above example shows that metonymy can quite aptly be characterized as a conceptual phenomenon – in addition to a linguistic one: A metonymy is not necessarily tantamount to one particular sense of a word; rather one sense can display both metaphoric and metonymic (and even further) ingredients. Still, the two types of extensions can be clearly separated from each other. It may nevertheless be the case that there is a kind of continuum between metaphor and metonymy: In certain cases, it may be a matter of debate whether a source concept is or is not required for understanding a target concept. However, the advantage of my definition is that it is intersubjectively verifiable: To the extent that we share a common language, we will in most cases agree on whether or not a given (source) concept is necessary for grasping another (target) concept. Due to this common basis for determining whether a concept is required for understanding another concept, we are unlikely to disagree over how to classify prototypical examples. And since my account takes as its point of departure extensions that are traditionally considered typical metonymies and typical metaphors, expressions that count as typical metonymies on a traditional view will also be considered typical metonymies on my view. The same of course applies to metaphors. My approach thus has the advantage that examples which are commonly regarded as prototypical metaphors cannot be reanalyzed as metonymies, and vice versa. For example, Feyaerts' example *He stands there like an ox in front of the barn door* (cf. 2.3) is a typical metaphor, since grasp of the target concept 'stupid' or 'unable to act appropriately' clearly does not presuppose that we understand the source concept 'ox standing in front of the barn door'. This analysis is at odds with Feyaerts' account, but in line with traditional classifications. Similarly, *He is a Judas* (for 'he is treacherous') cannot be reanalyzed as a metonymy as in Radden/Kövecses' model: Speakers can be said to have a full grasp of the target concept *treachery* even if they do not know the concept *Judas*. This result is desirable, since expressions like *He is a Judas* are very similar to

time-honored examples of extensions that are traditionally classified as metaphors rather than as metonymies (e.g., *He is a wolf*; cf. Black 1981 [1955]).

In conjunction with Glucksberg/Keysar's theory of metaphor and the characterization of metonymy provided in the preceding sections (notably that metonymy does not depend on co-occurrence in discourse), the above suggestions are hoped to offer a tool for distinguishing metaphors and metonymies. Further research is needed on the relation between phenomena such as synecdoche or semantic generalization on the one hand, and metaphor and metonymy on the other.

We will close this discussion by reflecting on a crucial methodological difference between my own account and most cognitivist theories. I am adhering to the principle that one's analysis should proceed from and relate to linguistic expressions rather than general metaphorical and metonymical concepts. Put differently, the basic units of analysis and interpretation are expressions rather than superordinate concepts. This principle is at odds with much research in cognitive linguistics. However, cognitive accounts of metonymy often do not clearly distinguish between metaphor and metonymy precisely because their basic units of analysis are general metonymical concepts rather than metonymical expressions. For instance, *Judas* for 'treacherous' is classified as a metonymy by Radden/Kövecses (1999: 35), since it is supposed to be an instance of the metonymy CATEGORY FOR DEFINING PROPERTY. This formulation in terms of a superordinate concept – CATEGORY FOR DEFINING PROPERTY (OF THIS CATEGORY) – indeed suggests that the example is a metonymy. However, classifying *Judas* as a metonymy would entail ignoring that it has the *function* of a prototypical metaphor – an entity (Judas) is seen as a typical example of a superordinate *ad hoc* category (persons who betray others, are unreliable, etc.). In fact, given an analysis in terms of superordinate metaphorical or metonymical concepts, we could even re-describe the most prototypical metaphors as metonymies. For instance, much the same superordinate metonymy could be argued to explain the use of *pig* in the sense of 'gluttonous' (e.g. CATEGORY FOR TYPICAL PROPERTY OF CATEGORY MEMBERS).

The same methodological principle – that expressions are analyzed in terms of superordinate metaphoric or metonymic categories – accounts for Feyaerts' classification of typical metaphors as metonymies. Thus, Feyaerts regards the idiom *He stands there like an ox in front of the barn door* as an EFFECT FOR CAUSE metonymy of the following type: 'Stupidity shows up

in deviant behavior' (Feyaerts 1999: 321–324). As was seen in the preceding section, however, the example is in fact a clear case of a metaphor.

2.5 Summary

Most of the preceding sections have been devoted to prominent approaches to metonymy in cognitive linguistics. My selection of authors chosen for discussion has not been limited to fringe cognitivists. On the contrary, several authors discussed above have contributed to a volume that offers "a fair view of the state of the art in metonymic research" (Panther/Radden 1999b: 1).

There can be little doubt that cognitive analyses of metonymy are a treasure trove of fascinating examples and illuminating analyses of countless figurative expressions. Still, little progress has been made so far concerning the question how to delineate the difference between metaphor and metonymy. The phenomena explored by many cognitive linguists are no longer metonymies in the sense of figurative expressions that are clearly distinct from metaphors. What these scholars typically investigate is rather a class of phenomena of their own making. That the choice of the label *metonymy* for this novel category is not sufficiently motivated is brought home most forcefully by the fact that the definitions and accounts of supposed metonymies are sometimes deceptively similar to those found in major works on metaphor. Furthermore, supposedly typical examples of metonymies are arguably clear instances of metaphors.

A possible response to my objections is to concede that cognitivists simply opt for definitions of metonymy that are at odds with traditional conceptions. What kind of definition is chosen is simply a terminological issue, or so one might argue. This line of reasoning is not compelling, however. It prompts the question why the traditional terms *metaphor* and *metonymy* are employed in the first place. Why not opt for different terminology (e.g. frame-based extensions for "modern" metonymies)? Moreover, a minimal requirement for any conception of metonymy is that it allows us to distinguish between typical cases of metaphor and typical cases of metonymy. Most accounts covered in the preceding sections do not enable us to draw such a neat distinction.

To remedy these difficulties, I have suggested an alternative approach. My proposal is that with metaphors, as opposed to metonymies, knowledge of the target concept does *not* imply knowledge of the source concept. This

does not contradict the insight that metaphor provides a particular way of arriving at a given target sense via a certain source sense. What matters is that source and target sense can be disconnected *in principle* – even if they are linked together in the metaphorical expression at issue.

Some cognitivist theories of metonymy exhibit certain characteristic features of Lakoff/Johnson's line of reasoning. Two features deserve special mention: Most important, the terminology employed is often rather vague (e.g., *contiguity*, *conceptual* as opposed to *linguistic*). As a result, extensions of well-established concepts such as *metonymy* are often insufficiently motivated. We have seen that many cognitivist "metonyms" are no longer metonymical in the usual sense. Similarly, Lakoff/Johnson (1980) cite a great number of metaphors that are unlikely to be considered metaphorical by non-cognitivists (cf. Jackendoff/Aaron 1991; Murphy 1996; chapter 6 below).

Chapter 3
ARGUMENT IS WAR and Cognitive Linguistics

3.1 Introduction

> The book is the most original and valuable thing I've seen on the much-discussed topic of metaphor. ... I found the book extremely readable and well-argued. It maintains a high standard of precision ....
> (statement by James McCawley, printed on the jacket of the first paper-back edition of Lakoff/Johnson 1980)

This chapter is concerned with the question whether McCawley's assessment of Lakoff/Johnson (1980) is justified. In contrast to McCawley, what struck the present writer as the most conspicuous feature of Lakoff/Johnson's work was not so much its originality as the authors' insistence on cognitive linguistics having inaugurated a "shift in our understanding of reason [which] is of vast proportions" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 5). The introduction to Lakoff/Johnson (1980) is telling in this respect:

> **Within a week** we discovered that certain assumptions of contemporary philosophy and linguistics that have been taken for granted within the Western tradition since the Greeks precluded us from even raising the kind of issues we wanted to address. The problem was not one of extending or patching up some existing theory of meaning but of revising central assumptions in **the** Western philosophical tradition. In particular, this meant rejecting the **possibility of any objective or absolute truth** and a host of related assumptions. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: ix–x [emphasis mine])

In a later passage, however, the authors assert that "[i]t should be **obvious** ... that **there is nothing radically new in our account of truth** (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 181 [emphasis mine]), observing that their conception is in line with crucial insights from Wittgenstein's work and incorporates some findings associated with phenomenology. If Lakoff/Johnson's theory of truth 'obviously' contains "nothing radically new", why do the authors claim in the introduction that it is they who have discovered the near-complete failure of "the" Western tradition in philosophy of language, specifically its inadequate conception of truth?

Such contradictions are by no means uncommon in Lakoff/Johnson's writings. Many further examples will be discussed in this book, most of

them relating to Lakoff/Johnson's later publications. They suggest that McCawley's contention that Lakoff/Johnson (1980) is "well-argued" and "maintains a high standard of precision" has to be taken with a grain of salt. My chief objective in this chapter is to lend substance to this impression by pinpointing what I perceive as the most irritating features of Lakoff/Johnson's mode of presentation, taking Lakoff/Johnson (1980) as my main example. We will encounter similar deficiencies when discussing more recent publications by Lakoff/Johnson and some other cognitive linguists.

Section 3.2 examines Lakoff/Johnson's account of unfair strategies often characterizing supposedly scientific arguments. These tactics are enshrined in the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor, or so the authors claim. That Lakoff/Johnson's own work illustrates many of the unfair strategies targeted by the authors will emerge in two case studies that explore Lakoff/Johnson's thoughts on two non-cognitivist approaches to metaphor, viz. the *abstraction view* (cf. 3.2.1) and the *homonymy view* (cf. 3.2.2). Perhaps the most problematic feature of Lakoff/Johnson's exposition examined in this chapter is their tendency to evade the issue. Furthermore, the authors will be seen to ascribe implausible tenets to non-cognitivist scholars; their attributions are typically not supported by precise references or quotes. Several rhetorical strategies will also be identified. Section 3.2.3 is concerned with yet another feature of Lakoff/Johnson's work that merits special attention and that has often been noted with respect to the authors' theory of metaphor (e.g., Jäkel 1999; Drewer 2003): Many cardinal ideas familiar from their approach recall theories by other writers. As will be seen, however, the works of these scholars are frequently distorted.

3.2 ARGUMENT IS WAR in Lakoff/Johnson's works

According to Lakoff/Johnson, the shady practices often exploited in so-called rational discourse stem from the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR. The authors claim that due to the presence of this metaphor in our culture we both think of arguments in terms of war and perform arguments in a way which is in line with this metaphorical equation. Even supposedly rational arguments are viewed "in terms of WAR" and usually display certain "'irrational' and 'unfair' tactics that rational arguments in their ideal form are supposed to transcend" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 64). The first unfair strategy mentioned by the authors is "intimidation". Examples of in-

timidation provided by Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 64) include phrases such as "It is plausible to assume that", or "obviously". The second strategy is labeled "threat" and illustrated by examples such as "To say that would be to commit the Fallacy of ...". The third strategy is to resort to authorities. The fourth strategy – "belittling" – is illustrated, inter alia, by the sentence "His results cannot be quantified." Further strategies referred to by the authors include "challenging authority", "evading the issue" (illustrated by "But that is a matter of ..."), "bargaining", and "flattery" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 64).

As far back as 1980, then, ethical questions took center stage in the authors' publications. Little has changed since that time, witness Johnson (1993, 1996, 1998) and Lakoff (1992). Of particular interest to most readers will be the way in which Lakoff/Johnson themselves put into practice the precepts that can easily be distilled from their sketch of these unfair strategies.

Before venturing a detailed analysis of Lakoff/Johnson's mode of presentation, a general observation seems in order: I do not accept Lakoff/Johnson's claims that the above-mentioned practices are due to an ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor. A completely different account of this putative metaphorical concept will be given in chapter 7. Furthermore, not all examples of unfair strategies mentioned by the authors are compelling. A phrase such as "[i]t is plausible to assume that" is not a particularly apt example of "intimidation." The examples provided of argumentative "threatening" are not to the point either. Whether the phrase "[t]o say that would be to commit the Fallacy of ..." is part of an inimical "threat" or a justified assessment is wholly dependent on the *content* of the sentence introduced in this way.

How does Lakoff/Johnson's own approach fare with respect to unfair rhetoric? The two excerpts from Lakoff (1987: 241) cited below feature no less than five of the strategies targeted by Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 63–64): Appeal to "authority", "flattery", "intimidation", "evading the issue", "bargaining". The first excerpt is a citation indicating the impact of Putnam's ideas, which Lakoff considers experientialist in spirit. Noting that the "objectivist" Lewis acknowledges "the devastating nature" of Putnam's arguments against (metaphysical) realism or objectivism, Lakoff (1987: 241) cites the following "flattering" passage from Lewis (1984: 221):

> Hilary Putnam has devised a bomb that threatens to devastate the realist philosophy we know and love. He explains that he has learned to stop worrying

> and love the bomb. He welcomes the new order that it would bring. But we who still live in the target area do not agree. The bomb must be banned.

That Lakoff cites this particular passage, which does not contain any factual information, is perplexing in light of Lakoff/Johnson's criticism of flattery, the more so since quotes from other writers are a relative rarity in Lakoff/Johnson's works. Lakoff's quote comes tagged with a no less "flattering" (as well as "bargaining") tribute to Lewis himself:

> Lewis is a dyed-in-the-wool objectivist, **one of the world's finest philosophical logicians**, and a principal developer of model-theoretic semantics. If there is a way out, he will look for it. (Lakoff 1987: 241 [emphasis mine])

Lakoff has opted for a passage from Lewis (1984) which throws into relief the greatness of Putnam. Yet, isn't this "flattering" appraisal of Putnam by a celebrated "authority" in the field "intimidating" (cf. again Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 63–64)? Doesn't the same hold for Lakoff's subsequent comments on Lewis? Apart from flattery and appeal to authority, these passages illustrate another unfair strategy, viz. "evading the issue".

The same chapter by Lakoff (1987) also illustrates the rhetorical strategy of "belittling." Witness the following comment from Lakoff (1987: 243), which relates to Lewis:

> First, it seems rather farfetched that nature would conveniently provide such a neat, objectively correct sorting-out of properties along a linear naturalness scale. That is an extreme assumption for even the most rabid physicalists.

Lewis, two pages earlier characterized as "one of the world's finest philosophical logicians" (Lakoff 1987: 241), is now considered a person who tops even "the most rabid physicalists". The attribute *rabid* is certainly not a felicitous expression to describe the stance of a world-famous logician. Nevertheless, the term is also used in Lakoff/Johnson (1999) with reference to the approach taken by a philosopher often considered the greatest logician since Aristotle: "Frege's rabid antipsychologistic bent led him to deny any role in meaning for any aspect of the body or imagination" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 468).

Incidentally, this claim is at least highly misleading. Frege distinguishes between two ingredients of meaning (e.g., Frege 1969, 1993 [1892], 1993 [1918]; cf. also Dummett 1981: 2). The first is called *Beleuchtung* 'illumination' or *Färbung* 'coloring', translated as *tone* by Dummett (1981: 2).

Tone is "a matter of the association with a word or expression of certain 'ideas' (Vorstellungen), by which he [Frege] means mental images" (Dummett 1981: 85; cf. Frege 1969: 151–152). True, Frege focused on that aspect of the meaning of a word which is relevant to the truth or falsity of the sentence in which it occurs (*sense*), and which does not encompass images; he showed little interest in tone. This is natural, however, given his concern with logic; mental images associated with words have no bearing on the truth or falsity of the sentences in which these words occur (cf. chapter 5).

The above passage from Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 468) also illustrates another recurrent feature of the authors' exposition: Lakoff/Johnson seem to exploit the ambiguity of the word *meaning*. The term can of course be used as a synonym for Fregean *sense*, but then it is a matter of definition – rather than a philosophical "point" – that meaning does not involve the imagination. From this perspective, all that can be objectionable to Lakoff/Johnson (1999) is Frege's terminology. The fact remains that Frege was not unaware of ingredients of *meaning* (broadly construed) that go beyond *sense*. We will see that the strategy of inflating terminological issues and exploiting ambiguities is typical of Lakoff/Johnson's work in general.

It should be noted that the rhetorical strategies and polemical style examined in this chapter are also found in Lakoff/Johnson's most recent joint project. Johnson/Lakoff (2002) resort to various rhetorical strategies that will frequently be observed in this book, one of them being rhetorical repetition (e.g., Johnson/Lakoff 2002: 247: "You cannot hold onto traditional conceptions of meaning, thought, and language. You need to explain where meaning comes from ... You need to explain how ...").

Johnson/Lakoff (2002) is a response to Rakova's (2002) criticism of the cognitivist approach. Rather than rebutting Rakova's arguments, the authors resort to the familiar strategy of "belittling", which they have criticized as unfair in their earlier writings. Johnson/Lakoff (2002: 258) assert that "there is nothing substantive in Rakova's paper that we could find," concluding from this that 'there is no point' in providing "a full and careful response to everything in Rakova's paper" (Johnson/Lakoff 2002: 260).

Instead, Johnson/Lakoff attempt to "characterize the source of her [Rakova's] misreadings." In this connection, they resort to the following remarks:

> The question ... arises as to why someone so obviously accomplished – **a graduate of the University of Edinburgh and a faculty member in St. Petersburg – would write such a long paper based wholly on misread-**

> **ings**. The misreadings arise from her very accomplishments. Because she has successfully mastered ... the Western philosophical tradition ..., she naturally ... misreads our work – and will similarly misread a large body of the research in cognitive linguistics. (Johnson/Lakoff 2002: 258 [emphasis mine])

The above illustrates a strategy of forestalling objections that complements other more familiar tacks the authors frequently employ to this end, notably resorting to vague formulations that border on the vacuous (cf. the following chapters). Lakoff/Johnson seem to imply that Rakova's philosophical upbringing renders it impossible for her to voice significant objections to their theory. This is not the place to review the many intriguing points made in Rakova's paper. However, that Rakova does marshal forceful arguments against Lakoff/Johnson's approach can already be gleaned from the fact that she notes a blatant inconsistency in their account (cf. Rakova 2002: 37). It is therefore difficult to explain why Johnson/Lakoff assert that they could find "nothing substantive" in her paper. Significantly, Johnson/Lakoff (2002: 254–256) devote considerable space to refuting what seems like the weakest argument in an otherwise stimulating paper, rather than offering extensive discussions of the more forceful points made in her article.

Johnson/Lakoff's strategy of "belittling" Rakova's arguments is complemented by the authors' tendency towards unqualified self-assertion – another hallmark of Lakoff/Johnson's works. Thus, Johnson/Lakoff (2001: 251) characteristically talk of "mountains of evidence" in favor of their view, but fail to do justice to the considerable number of critical voices (cf. among many others Murphy 1996, 1997; McGlone 2001; Leezenberg 2001). In the words of McGlone (2001: 105), "the conceptual metaphor view has not fared well theoretically or empirically."

It is also interesting to note that Johnson/Lakoff (2002: 247) refer to Anglo-American analytic philosophy as a "house of cards." That one of the most widely respected philosophical movements is described in these terms needs no further comment. It might be worthwhile to point out, though, that the "house of cards" was spearheaded by Frege, who is generally considered the greatest logician after Aristotle. The authors' gloomy vision of the bankruptcy of Anglo-American analytic philosophy may be partially explained by the fact that Lakoff/Johnson's presentation of this philosophical movement has little in common with the ideas actually proposed by the respective philosophers (cf. chapter 4).

Many more examples of Lakoff/Johnson's unfair rhetorical strategies could be presented. However, focusing in greater detail on two case studies that illustrate Lakoff/Johnson's overall mode of exposition seems preferable to paying token attention to a host of unconnected instances of Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning.

3.2.1 Case study 1

One of the unfair gimmicks that according to Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 64) are legion in ordinary scientific disputes is "evading the issue." The details of Lakoff/Johnson's criticism are startling. Why sentence fragments like "The author does present some challenging facts, although ..." are supposed to typify this kind of rhetorical trick is not transparent (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 64). Lakoff/Johnson's own writings are replete with far better instances of "evading the issue."

For instance, the authors' critical remarks on the so-called "abstraction view of metaphor" offer a good example not only of their tendency to "evade the issue", but also of other characteristic features of their mode of exposition. Lakoff/Johnson's refusal of this view still figures importantly in their most recent work (cf. Johnson/Lakoff 2002). According to Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 107), the abstraction theory is advocated by scholars who believe that metaphorical expressions like *buttress* in *He buttressed his argument* can be explained in terms of a "single, very general, and abstract concept BUTTRESS, which is neutral between the BUILDING 'buttress' and the ARGUMENT 'buttress'." The uses of *buttress* in *He buttressed the wall* and in *He buttressed his argument* are seen as special cases of a single highly abstract concept (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 106–107).

According to the authors, in typical metaphors which conform to the type X is Y (like ARGUMENT IS WAR), the source (Y) is "more clearly delineated in our experience" than the target (X). Lakoff/Johnson call X the "defined concept", and Y the "defining concept". The authors observe that not all aspects of the defining concept are transferred to the defined concept. Illustrating this idea with the help of the metaphor IDEAS ARE FOOD, they note that while we use expressions such as *raw facts* or *half-baked ideas*, expressions such as *sautéed ideas* do not exist. Lakoff/Johnson attribute this kind of "asymmetry" to a more basic asymmetry between "less clearly delineated" and "more clearly delineated" concepts (i.e., target and source, respectively): "... **the less clearly delineated** (and **usually** less

concrete) concepts are partially understood in terms of the **more clearly delineated** (and **usually** more concrete) concepts, which are directly grounded in our experience" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 109 [my emphasis]). Following the authors, this asymmetry cannot be accounted for by theorists espousing the abstraction view, because such theorists are not able to elucidate why we usually construe (relatively) abstract concepts in terms of (relatively) concrete concepts.

With metaphor being essentially a conception of a "less clearly delineated" phenomenon in terms of a "more clearly delineated" one, the distinction between more vs. less "clearly delineated" concepts is integral to Lakoff/Johnson's framework. Still, the authors fail to 'clearly delineate' this notion, thus "evading the issue". All we can gather from the relevant passage quoted above is that "clearly delineated" is not tantamount to "abstract": "More clearly delineated" concepts are typically, but not invariably, more concrete (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 109). This reading is confirmed by Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 115), where some concepts are described as being "**either** abstract **or** not clearly delineated in our experience" [my emphasis].

At least in the case of entity metaphors like INFLATION IS AN ENTITY (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 26), we are caught in a dilemma: If "more clearly delineated" does not necessarily imply "concrete", *inflation* is surely more clearly "delineated" than (*physical*) *entity*. Why then should we construe inflation in terms of the "less clearly delineated" concept *physical entity*?

Let us now explore the general thrust of Lakoff/Johnson's argument. The principal flaw of the abstraction view is its incapacity to deal with the above-noted asymmetry between source and target: Source domains are "more clearly delineated" than target domains; moreover, not all elements of the source are transferred to the target. Lakoff/Johnson's repudiation of the abstraction view springs from their conviction that it "has no explanation for this asymmetry, since it cannot explain the tendency to understand the less concrete in terms of the more concrete" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 109). Yet, how can Lakoff/Johnson account for this tendency? The answer seems to be this: Lakoff/Johnson "explain" this tendency by *positing* it, i.e., by stating *that* our conceptual system largely functions via understanding one thing in terms of another. One might retort, however, that Lakoff/Johnson do have an explanation for this kind of metaphorical understanding, viz. the notion of experiential 'grounding'. Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 154–155) account of why we understand one thing in terms of an-

other is that the two "things" are either co-occurrent in our experience, or that we experience (non-inherent) similarities between them. However, abstraction theorists could likewise appeal to experiential co-occurrences and non-inherent similarities as the *motivating forces* involved in metaphorical transfer. Abstraction theorists might diverge from experientialists merely by claiming that the original (source) concept becomes more abstract in the process, developing a sense that covers both the original source and the target concept.

In apparently presupposing that abstraction theorists cannot acknowledge the importance of experiential co-occurrences and non-inherent similarities as potential triggers of metaphorical transfer, Lakoff/Johnson once again appear to be "unfair" (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 63–64). Why should the highly questionable objectivist maxim that similarities are invariably inherent in source and target (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 213) be wedded to the more plausible assumption that metaphorical transfer effects some kind of abstraction process? The absence of any quotes from writings of putative abstraction theorists arouses the suspicion that Lakoff/Johnson are assailing strawmen.

Lakoff/Johnson's train of thought is misleading for yet another reason. Recall that abstraction theorists are deemed to be incapable of explaining why some features of the defining concept or source domain (e.g., FOOD) do not figure in the defined concept or target domain (e.g. IDEAS). Crucially, Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 109) support this observation by citing the expressions *raw facts* and *half-baked ideas*, which are common metaphors, as opposed to *sautéed*, *broiled*, or *poached ideas*, which are not commonly used.

Lakoff/Johnson themselves do not explain this partiality of metaphorical transfer – other than by saying *that* metaphorical extension is partial (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 52–53; a substantial account of this partiality has been provided by Grady 1997). What is worse, the authors accuse the abstraction view of being incapable of dealing with a problem that *does not even arise* for this position. Abstraction theorists do not concern themselves with hypothetical conceptual entities like IDEAS ARE FOOD; they simply investigate the various specific metaphorical *expressions* which Lakoff/Johnson classify under the more general metaphorical concept IDEAS ARE FOOD. Hence, abstraction theorists would deal specifically with *raw* and *half-baked*, etc., i.e., with those expressions which do have a metaphorical meaning applicable to ideas. Since abstraction theorists do not posit a more general metaphorical concept like IDEAS ARE FOOD in the

first place, it is logically impossible for them to be puzzled by the question why we only use *part* of this putative concept (i.e., why we do not talk about *sautéed*, *broiled*, or *poached* ideas). Lakoff/Johnson thus advance as an argument the supposed incapacity of the abstraction view to deal with a problem which they fail to explain themselves, and which arises only within their own framework. A somewhat similar case will be dealt with in the following section.

3.2.2 Case study 2

This section is devoted to Lakoff/Johnson's discussion of the so-called homonymy view. Roughly, the homonymy view holds that the different uses of a word like *attack* in literal and metaphorical contexts constitute different concepts. The *strong* homonymy view assumes that the different literal and metaphorical senses of words (e.g. *attack* as applied to war and arguments, respectively) are entirely unrelated. The *weak* homonymy view holds that these senses may be related by similarity (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 107–111). Consider Lakoff/Johnson's verdict on the weak homonymy view.

> ... the claim [proposed by homonymy theorists] that such similarities [between concrete and abstract concepts] exist is highly questionable. For example, **what possible similarities** could there be that are shared by all of the concepts that are oriented UP? **What similarity could there** be between UP, on the one hand, and HAPPINESS, HEALTH, CONTROL, CONSCIOUSNESS, VIRTUE, RATIONALITY, MORE, etc., on the other? **What similarities** (which are not themselves metaphorical) **could there be** between a MIND and a BRITTLE OBJECT, or between IDEAS and FOOD? **What is there** that is not metaphorical about an instant of time in itself that gives it the front-back orientation that we saw in our discussion of the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor? (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 113 [emphasis mine])

"... what possible similarities could there be... What similarity could there be ... What similarities ... could there be ... What is there ...." This sequence is rhetorically effective, but Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning prompts a few questions. First, why do the authors refer to "the" weak and "the" strong homonymy view – without citing a single representative of the two versions of this theory? Second, why do they ascribe extremely implausible tenets (such as those cited above) to the supposed champions of the weak view? Third, why do they launch a lengthy investigation into the various "inade-

quacies" of the strong view, while conceding that this approach does not actually exist (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 110, 114)?

The answer to our first question seems obvious: Possibly, the weak and strong homonymy view as presented by Lakoff/Johnson do not exist. Our assumption will be confirmed once we tackle the remaining questions. As for the second question posed above, the overriding impression that the weak homonymy view is hopeless arises as a result of two puzzling moves on the part of Lakoff/Johnson. First, Lakoff/Johnson superimpose part of their own theory onto scholars who, *ex hypothesi*, do not advocate the conceptual metaphor view (this strategy is already familiar). *Ex hypothesi*, weak homonymy theorists do not posit general metaphorical concepts such as HEALTH IS UP, CONSCIOUS IS UP, etc. (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 106–107).[20] Rather, they investigate every single mapping *separately* which Lakoff/Johnson subsume under such concepts. Homonymy theorists are therefore not concerned with similarities between HEALTH and UP, or CONTROL and UP, etc., in the first place. What homonymy theorists are concerned with are similarities between the various meanings of particular *expressions*, such as the different meanings of *rose* when used in physical and non-physical contexts. For example, they might compare the meaning of *rose* in contexts like *His power rose*[21] to the meaning conveyed by *rose* in contexts relating to physical rising (e.g., *The level of the water rose*).

Proposing the extremely implausible tenet that there are preconceived similarities between UP and CONTROL makes sense only for scholars who adopt Lakoff/Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory – which is just what homonymy theorists by Lakoff/Johnson's hypothesis refuse to do. It is far *less* preposterous to suggest resemblances or analogies between *rose* in *his power rose* and in *the level of the water rose*.

Lakoff/Johnson resort to another strategy which casts an unjustly dark light on the weak homonymy view. The authors attribute to homonymy theorists the questionable assumption that one and the same similarity (or class of similarities) accounts for all the different mappings involving a putative source domain like UP (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 113). Why should this be the case? Given a vehicle X and several tenors W, Y and Z, there is no reason to suppose that one and the same similarity explains the mapping from X onto W, the mapping from X onto Y, and the mapping from X onto Z. There is presumably not a single theorist of metaphor who ever held such a view. The thrust of numerous accounts is precisely the opposite: Tenor and vehicle *interact* to form a new meaning, or "create" similarities (e.g., Black 1981 [1955], 1993 [1977]). Granting such a concep-

tion, it obviously depends on the kind of tenor (or target domain) which kind of new meaning is seen to arise, and what kinds of similarities are perceived.

To illustrate the above remarks with the help of examples cited by Lakoff/Johnson (1980), consider different mappings involving *fall*: *He fell asleep – He fell ill – He fell from power – His income fell.* These expressions are examples of various putative X IS DOWN metaphors (UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN; SICK IS DOWN; POWERLESS IS DOWN; LESS IS DOWN). I have chosen instantiations of putative X IS DOWN metaphors rather than X IS UP metaphors mentioned in the above passage from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 130), since the authors provide more convincing examples of metaphorical concepts of the type X IS DOWN (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 15–17).

There is no reason to believe that one and the same similarity can explain all the different mappings from physical falling to more abstract kinds of falling. Parenthetically, referring to similarity *tout court* may be misleading in this context. What are at issue are often rather analogies. Let us now consider the different extensions in turn.

Take the relationship between *fall asleep* and *fall down.* The putative metaphorical concept underlying *fall asleep* is UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN (cf. also Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 15). The analogy at work here seems to be that both the process of falling asleep and the process of falling down involve downward movement/position (in the case of *fall asleep* at least in stereotypical situations).

A different analogy seems to explain the relation between *fall ill* and *fall down.* The putative metaphorical concept underlying *fall ill* is SICK IS DOWN (cf. also Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 15). The analogy involved seems to be that in both cases the "falling" subject ends up in a downward position (a sick person is typically forced to stay in bed and hence to lie down).

Yet another similarity underlies the relationship between *fall from power* and *fall down.* Both *fall from power* and *fall down* imply a loss of control. Persons falling from power and persons falling down are no longer able to act according to their own intentions. *Fall from power* belongs to the metaphorical concept POWERLESS IS DOWN (cf. also Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 15).

Consider finally the relation between falling as applied to income (*His income fell*) and physical falling (in the sense of 'subside'[22]). The analogy here is that in both cases something diminishes. Expressions such as *His*

income fell can be counted as instances of the conceptual metaphor LESS IS DOWN (cf. also Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 15–16).

We have now reviewed a number of expressions belonging to different X IS DOWN metaphors (UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN, SICK IS DOWN, POWERLESS IS DOWN, LESS IS DOWN). A comparison of the above examples of different X IS DOWN metaphors shows that completely different analogies may underlie different extensions pertaining to a given source domain (here DOWN).

Let us finally tackle the third question posed above: What reason could there be for launching a lengthy investigation into the various shortcomings of the strong homonymy view, while conceding that it does not actually exist? Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 114) state that 'to their knowledge' no scholar explicitly subscribes to the strong homonymy view. Implicitly, however, all proponents of the weak position – whoever they may be – are inadvertently drawn to the strong view, or so Lakoff/Johnson contend. Lakoff/Johnson's reasons seem to be tenuous. They insist that actually all homonymy theorists favor the strong view on the following grounds: No scholar has so far offered a sufficiently "detailed" theory of similarity. Such a theory, however, is indispensable if the weak homonymy view is to be plausible, or so the authors contend (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 114).

Now, the questions such a theory of similarity is supposed to answer have been sketched in the passage quoted above from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 113). As we have just seen, these questions are irrelevant to the weak homonymy theory. Supplying the in-depth account of similarity envisaged by Lakoff/Johnson is therefore no precondition for espousing the weak homonymy view.

Matters are complicated by Lakoff/Johnson's claim that weak homonymy theorists restrict their attention to "inherent" similarities (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 114). No evidence is given by the authors to back up their contention. It is difficult to see why weak homonymy theorists should be committed to this stance. Even if there *should* be weak homonymy theorists who do hold that there are only "inherent" similarities, the decisive question is really whether a weak homonymy view which does *not* adopt this tenet could constitute a viable alternative to Lakoff/Johnson's approach. This possibility is overlooked by the authors.

Lakoff/Johnson's alternative to "inherent" similarities are "created" similarities. The idea that similarities can be created is originally due to Black (1981 [1955]; 1993 [1977]). Unfortunately, this insight is presented in such a way as to be self-refuting. Take, for instance, TIME IS A MOVING

OBJECT. This metaphor is mentioned in the very passage which outlines the problems to be solved by the in-depth account of similarity Lakoff/Johnson consider necessary (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 113). TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT is a structural metaphor which according to the authors is based on similarities *created* by the ontological[23] metaphor TIME IS AN OBJECT. Witness Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 214) on the experiential grounding of the metaphors TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT and TIME IS MONEY: The apparent resemblances between time on the one hand, and moving objects and money on the other, should not be considered "inherent" similarities; rather, "they are themselves created via ontological metaphors."

Lakoff/Johnson thus hold that time is metaphorically similar to a moving object on the score that it is metaphorically viewed as an object. This enables us to perceive similarities between time (construed as an object) and moving objects. If time is perceived as similar to *moving* objects in virtue of being a metaphorical object, the supposed resemblance between time and moving objects is the one that holds between *unspecified* objects (which constitute the source domain of TIME IS AN OBJECT) and *moving* objects.

Lakoff/Johnson's exposition is not compelling, since the term *similarity* is inapplicable in this case. It does not make sense to speak of a similarity between (unspecified) objects and moving objects on the score that both are objects. Comparisons generally relate to entities at the same level of specification. One cannot say, for instance, "a fruit is similar to a banana," because a banana *is* a (member of the category) fruit.

There is a further snag. Even if Lakoff/Johnson were correct to posit similarities between objects and moving objects, appeal to this notion is entirely devoid of explanatory power in such a case. If time is similar to a moving object in virtue of being an unspecified entity, then *any* other entity is also similar to a moving object. Lakoff/Johnson thus fail to explain why it should be *time* which is construed as moving – rather than *any other abstract entity*: According to Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 25), all abstract phenomena have to be viewed as physical objects or substances if we want to refer to them.

Lakoff/Johnson's proposal suffers from yet another shortcoming. If time is similar to a *moving* object in virtue of being a metaphorical object, it is also similar to any other object that comes to mind. As a result, Lakoff/Johnson's explanation could account for *all* potential metaphorical extensions featuring TIME as target and a source involving some physical object or other.

In summary, Lakoff/Johnson's criticism that the weak homonymy view neglects created similarities is doubly problematic. For one thing, there is no reason to assume that scholars espousing this theory cannot acknowledge the importance of created similarities. For another, Lakoff/Johnson's own account of created similarities does not carry conviction.

It might be worthwhile to have a closer look at two further arguments that are supposed to undermine the weak homonymy view. The first revolves around the well-known 'directionality' of metaphorical transfer: Relatively abstract concepts are "structured" in terms of relatively concrete concepts (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 112). According to Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 107), homonymy theorists assume that the abstract concept cannot be based on the more concrete concept. No evidence is given in support of Lakoff/Johnson's attribution. Why should weak homonymy theorists deny that certain concepts are basic and that abstract concepts are ultimately derived from concrete ones? For example, they might well hold that the figurative sense of *buttress* is the result of metaphorical extension from *buttress* in its concrete sense. Weak homonymy theorists might simply maintain that this process has led to the emergence of two distinct, but related, concepts, which involve two different mental representations.

The above considerations lend support to my suggestion that the weak homonymy view as sketched by Lakoff/Johnson does not exist. This is probably the reason why no references are given. Lakoff/Johnson's phrasing is particularly inappropriate when the neuter pronoun *it* is continually used to refer to the weak homonymy position: "The weak homonymy position would deny that ... It claims only that ... It would deny, for example, that ... It would simply claim that ... Similarly, it would say that ..." (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 112).

Finally, Lakoff/Johnson argue that the weak homonymy position – as opposed to cognitive metaphorology – lacks "predictive power," because it cannot specify what kinds of metaphors are possible. Experientialism, on the other hand, can do so by explaining how metaphors are based on experiential correlations. Lakoff/Johnson again preserve silence on the question why homonymy theorists should close their eyes to the fact that the semantic extension which gives rise to the emergence of a novel concept may be grounded in experiential correlations; no evidence is cited.

Lakoff/Johnson's account has tremendous implications for Western thought, or so the authors suggest (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 213–214). Their argument is deemed to prove – in conjunction with the "detailed arguments" against the abstraction position and the view that metaphors build

on inherent resemblances – that the objectivist approach is fundamentally misguided. The objectivist approach encapsulates nothing less than Western philosophy. Lakoff/Johnson justify this sweeping conclusion as follows: First, objectivist theories of conventional metaphor are necessarily either abstraction theories or homonymy theories. Second, an objectivist theory always makes appeal to "preexisting inherent similarities" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 213).

This line of reasoning is hardly compelling. As already observed, there is no reason for objectivists to embrace the untenable versions of the abstraction or homonymy view attributed to them by the authors. Furthermore, Lakoff/Johnson fail to explain why putative objectivists should be oblivious to the fact that metaphors need *not* be grounded in inherent similarities. The case of Goodman (1972c: 440), who by Lakoff/Johnson's standards counts as an objectivist (cf. chapter 4), shows that this assumption is mistaken.

A final note on Lakoff/Johnson's line of reasoning seems in order: In a later section, the authors themselves grant that objectivists need not espouse the idea of inherent properties or inherent similarities. Thus, while Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 213) maintain that the objectivist account necessarily appeals to the notion of "preexisting similarities" and "inherent properties", Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 217) concede that objectivists may well acknowledge the importance of interactional (i.e. non-inherent) properties. This is a typical example of contradictory assertions in Lakoff/Johnson's works (for further discussion of the authors' reasoning, cf. 4.5.2).

Further objections could be brought to bear against Lakoff/Johnson's exposition. It may be preferable, however, to turn to another hallmark of Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning which likewise testifies to the impact of ARGUMENT IS WAR on their thinking. The following section focuses on how Lakoff/Johnson tend to distort important insights from other scholars. Lakoff/Johnson sometimes advocate these ideas without naming the relevant theorists.

3.2.3 Relationship to earlier theories

Lakoff/Johnson's approach has never existed in a vacuum, as the authors remind us in their acknowledgments section (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: xi). Their work grew out of existing approaches to language and thought, even though it transcends familiar frameworks in occasionally strange ways.

Cases in point are Lakoff/Johnson's peculiar versions firstly of Black's hypothesis that metaphors may create similarities, secondly of Rosch's idea that attributes are a matter of our interaction with the environment, and thirdly of Wittgenstein's conception of meaning as based on understanding. These three scholars have been singled out because their tenets are integral to cognitivism. Let us attend to them in turn.

Lakoff/Johnson's postulation of similarity-creating metaphors is reminiscent of Black (1981 [1955]: 72; 1993 [1977]: 35–37), even if their discussion of the topic is self-refuting (cf. 3.2.2). All that remains to be said is that Lakoff/Johnson devote a whole chapter to "The creation of similarity" (heading of Lakoff/Johnson 1980: chapter 22) without mentioning the scholar who introduced this fundamental "cognitivist" tenet. Black does not even feature in the bibliography or acknowledgements section. Yet, the authors are well aware of the existence of Black's theory of metaphor. Black's account is covered in Johnson (1981b), along with other theories that are cognitivist in spirit.

Turning to Rosch's work, let us briefly compare Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and Rosch (1978). A similar paper (Rosch 1977) constitutes one of the few items in Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) bibliography.

> People successfully interact in their physical and cultural environments. They are constantly interacting with the real world.
>
> Human categorization is constrained by reality, since it is characterized in terms of natural dimensions of experience that are constantly tested through physical and cultural interaction.
> ...
> The experientialist theory varies from classical objective realism in the following basic way: Human concepts do not correspond to inherent properties of things but only to interactional properties. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 181)
>
> What attributes *will* be perceived given the ability to perceive them is undoubtedly determined by many factors having to do with the functional needs of the knower interacting with the physical and social environment. One influence on how attributes will be defined by humans is clearly the category system already existent in the culture at a given time. (Rosch 1978: 29 [emphasis original])

Lakoff/Johnson (1980: xi) pay homage to Rosch in their introduction. Indeed, there seems to be little difference between Rosch's (1978: 29) 'interaction with the physical and social environment' and Lakoff/Johnson's

(1980: 181) 'interaction in their physical and cultural environments'. And yet, Lakoff/Johnson's version completely distorts Rosch's insights. Consider Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 214):

> The view that IDEAS ARE OBJECTS is a projection of entity status upon mental phenomena via an ontological metaphor. The view that THE MIND IS A CONTAINER is a projection of entity status with in-out orientation onto our cognitive faculty. These are not *inherent objective properties* of ideas and of the mind. They are *interactional properties*, and they reflect the way in which we *conceive* of mental phenomena by virtue of metaphor. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 214 [emphasis original])

In other words, the feature "entity" is described as an example of an "interactional property". Interactional properties are properties that "emerge from our interactions with one another and with the world" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 119).

The crucial result of Rosch's thinking on interactional attributes is that the attributes of entities – and hence also our concepts – are largely a function of speakers' interaction with their natural and cultural environment. What is at issue, then, is the relation between perception/conceptualization on the one hand and (inter-)action on the other. The theoretical separation between these two areas of human life is vital to Rosch's account (cf. Rosch 1977, 1978).

Given this division between the two domains, the process of understanding ideas in terms of objects (IDEAS ARE OBJECTS) is not a way of *interacting* with ideas, but – at best[24] – of *conceptualizing* ideas (cf. also the last sentence quoted from Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 214). It is, for instance, impossible to "interact" with an idea in terms of an entity *in advance of* having conceptualized it as an entity.

To the extent that it makes sense to speak of an interaction with ideas, this interaction *consists in* our *conceptualizing* ideas as entities (i.e., it is tantamount to it) – which makes nonsense of Rosch's original idea of a relationship of dependence, with deeply rooted patterns of interaction *triggering* specific modes of conceptualization. The explanatory power of interactional properties thus vanishes, much as the explanatory power of the notion of similarity-creating metaphors does on Lakoff/Johnson's elaboration.

A final example of how Lakoff/Johnson distort key insights from other thinkers concerns the relationship between meaning and understanding: "For us, meaning depends on understanding. A sentence can't mean any-

thing to you unless you understand it" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 184). This is a commonplace which does not throw light on philosophical accounts of meaning. In its original form, the idea of the inextricable relationship between meaning and understanding underlies much of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, notably the *Philosophical Investigations* (for a succinct introduction to this topic see Baker/Hacker 1980: 664–683; Glock 1996: 373).

The philosophy of Dummett might be another potential source (cf. Dummett 1981: 92). However, Lakoff/Johnson seem to have Wittgenstein in mind. Two pages earlier, Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 182) refer to Wittgenstein's later philosophy, specifically his criticism of the picture theory of meaning. This theory neglects the relation between meaning and understanding (cf. Glock 1996: 373).

3.3 Summary

The preceding sections have illustrated that compelling arguments in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) are not infrequently conspicuous by their absence. Lakoff/Johnson make ample use of the unfair strategies which they hold are encapsulated in the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor. The authors do not refrain from what they call "evading the issue", "belittling", "bargaining", or "flattery", to mention but some of the strategies employed. Lakoff/Johnson's exposition is permeated with rhetoric. Notably rhetorical repetition is a prominent feature of Lakoff/Johnson's style which will be encountered elsewhere in this book.

Particularly striking is the scarcity of references to scholars who have developed "cognitivist" frameworks prior to Lakoff/Johnson (1980). How to explain the lack of pertinent acknowledgements? Consider Lakoff/Johnson (1980: xi): "We cannot adequately acknowledge all of the traditions and people to whom we are indebted. All we can do is to list some of them and hope that the rest will know who they are ...". This statement might be compared with the following complaint from Jackendoff (1992): "Lakoff (1990) deals with almost exactly the same facts as Jackendoff (1983) ... without attribution; his 'Invariance Hypothesis' appears quite close in its specifics to the Thematic Relations Hypothesis" (Jackendoff 1992: 177). I take it that further comment is unnecessary. Many aspects of ARGUMENT IS WAR in Lakoff/Johnson's writings deserve articles to themselves.

Chapter 4
Early cognitivists and the myth of objectivism

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Lakoff/Johnson's relationship to philosophy, identifying predecessors of cognitivist thought with respect to metaphorology and broader philosophical concerns. At the heart of my account is a close analysis of key sections of Lakoff/Johnson (1980) which explore what the authors call the "myth of objectivism" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 195) and which purport to sketch the authors' own general philosophical assumptions concerning truth, objectivity, and meaning.[25] Chapters 5 and 6 complement this discussion, analyzing the semantic theory presented in Lakoff (1987) and the cognitive approach to metaphor, respectively. As for the latter, Jäkel (1999) points out that quite a number of philosophers and linguists have anticipated core ideas commonly associated with Lakoff/Johnson. Jäkel (1999: 23) draws the following conclusion from his findings: "Maybe this will lessen the originality of the cognitive approach a little." It is one of my principal goals to pinpoint parallels between Lakoff/Johnson's writings and publications by other theorists.

The structure of the present chapter is as follows. Section 4.2 will be devoted to pre-echoes of cognitivist metaphorology in twentieth century "objectivist" philosophy. Many ideas familiar from Lakoff/Johnson's work on metaphor have been anticipated by the alleged objectivist Goodman. The remaining sections focus on Lakoff/Johnson's criticism of more general philosophical assumptions that are attributed to objectivism. Leezenberg's (2001: 136–137) claim that objectivism is nonexistent may initially seem surprising. Yet there is considerable evidence supporting his assessment, which will be given throughout the present chapter. Section 4.3 examines the two central notions that make up the phrase "the myth of objectivism". Lakoff/Johnson employ the term *myth* in contradictory ways. The authors' account of myths is inextricably linked to their theory of objectivity, which likewise turns out to be inconsistent. No less problematic than Lakoff/Johnson's treatment of myths is their use of the label *objectivism*. Section 4.4 centers on Lakoff/Johnson's theory of truth. While Lakoff/Johnson's principal claims concerning truth recall earlier theories by philosophers such as Putnam and Goodman, their own argument for the

cognitivist view fails to carry conviction. A closer look at suggestions put forward in a subsection of chapter 24 from Lakoff/Johnson (1980) brings out in greater detail certain parallels between Lakoff/Johnson's general view of truth and that of Putnam; it also highlights the indistinctness of Lakoff/Johnson's contentions. Section 4.5 contains further "close readings." We will analyze several subsections of chapter 26 from Lakoff/Johnson (1980). These summaries and criticisms of extended stretches of Lakoff/Johnson's writings are designed to bring out more clearly than general discussions the extent to which the authors' theory is flawed. Of particular interest is the question whether the label *objectivism* actually applies to the three major philosophical movements Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 195) identify as objectivist, viz. the "descendants of the logical positivists", the Fregean tradition, and the tradition of Husserl. Lakoff/Johnson's classifications prove to be based on tenuous grounds. Two tenets that are seen as essential to objectivism will be scrutinized in sections 4.5.2 ("meaning is objective") and 4.5.3 ("meaning is disembodied"). Once again, Lakoff/Johnson's proposals turn out to be almost invariably vague; the authors fail to do justice to opposing views; their presentation of objectivist tenets is at times patently mistaken. The subsequent two sections deal with recent publications in cognitivist philosophy. The main emphasis of section 4.6 will be on Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) exposition of analytic philosophy, which presents the objectivist movement criticized most extensively in Lakoff/Johnson's writings. Many features that were noted with respect to Lakoff/Johnson (1980) are also found in Lakoff/Johnson (1999). Especially the vagueness of Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) account and the high incidence of mistaken claims recall Lakoff/Johnson's earlier works, as does the authors' tendency to resort to rhetoric. Section 4.7 pinpoints parallels between Lakoff/Johnson's approach to philosophical issues and that of other prominent cognitivists.

4.2 Pre-echoes of Lakoff/Johnson's theory of metaphor

In order to assess Lakoff/Johnson's contentions concerning objectivism, we should have a look at some key ingredients of the philosophy championed by supposedly prototypical "objectivists." Two scholars will figure prominently in this discussion, because their doctrines display important similarities to Lakoff/Johnson's own approach: Goodman and Putnam. These two scholars are implicitly classified as objectivists, being portrayed as philoso-

phers who subscribe to chief assumptions associated with analytic philosophy. The cardinal doctrines Lakoff/Johnson attribute to analytic philosophers are easily recognized as principal objectivist ideas (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 98, 443–444; Lakoff/Johnson 1980: chapters 25 to 26; Johnson 1987).

The present section will point out some similarities between Goodman's theory of metaphor and Lakoff/Johnson's own account. More general similarities between Goodman's and Putnam's philosophical views on the one hand and the cognitivist approach on the other will take center stage in subsequent sections.

Quite a few scholars have put forward what Jäkel (1999) calls "forgotten contributions to the cognitive theory of metaphor." Apart from Goodman, major proponents of accounts that are in some sense reminiscent of Lakoff/Johnson's theory include Black and Beardsley. That Lakoff/Johnson (1980) do not pay tribute to these scholars is all the more puzzling since Johnson (1981b) does contain a discussion of these theorists.[26]

The introduction to Lakoff/Johnson (1980) highlights Lakoff/Johnson's thoughts on the import of their project, specifically its relation to objectivist (Anglo-American) theories of meaning.

> Mark had found that most traditional philosophical views permit metaphor little, if any, role in understanding our world and ourselves. George had **discovered linguistic evidence showing that metaphor is pervasive in everyday language and thought** – evidence that did not fit **any contemporary** Anglo-American theory of meaning within either **linguistics or philosophy**. Metaphor has traditionally been **viewed in both fields as a matter of peripheral interest**. We shared the intuition that it is, instead, a matter of central concern, perhaps the key to giving an adequate account of understanding. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: ix [emphasis mine])

Johnson (1981b: 43) himself cites Goodman's (1968: 80) claim that metaphor "permeates all discourse, ordinary and special". In other words, Lakoff/Johnson's contention is misleading that the evidence for the pervasiveness of metaphor in ordinary language and cognition is at odds with all approaches to meaning developed within contemporary Anglo-American philosophy. Note that Goodman (1978b [1975]: 7–8) does view metaphor, and language in general, as a cognitive instrument – what he would call a 'way of worldmaking' (cf. the title of Goodman 1978a). Goodman (1968) even shares the very conception of metaphor that distinguishes Lakoff/Johnson's framework from many others. His approach differs from those of

contemporary theorists such as Black and Beardsley in accepting conventionalized metaphors as full-blooded metaphors (cf. also Leezenberg 2001: 91).

Not even Aristotle was oblivious to the omnipresence of metaphor in everyday language (cf. Leezenberg 2001: 39). According to Aristotle, 'everybody uses metaphors, current and familiar terms in conversation' (*Rhetoric* 1404b). Still, Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 119–122) regard Aristotle as the father of a firmly established traditional theory of metaphor which denies that metaphor is part of everyday language.

Let us now return to the commonalities between Lakoff/Johnson's account and that of Goodman. Lakoff/Johnson (1981 [1980]), unlike Lakoff/Johnson (1980), do mention Goodman in a footnote designed to dispel potential charges to the effect that even the details of their own program are to some extent prefigured in Goodman (1968). They cite Goodman's contention that metaphors bring about a transfer of the following type:

> [A] label along with others constituting a scheme is in effect detached from the home realm of that scheme and applied for the sorting and organizing of an alien realm. Partly by thus carrying with it a reorientation of a whole network of labels does a metaphor give clues for its development and elaboration. (Goodman 1968: 72)

Consider Lakoff/Johnson's comments on this passage:

> Here Goodman comes down squarely on the side of those who view metaphor as a matter of language (that is, 'labels') rather than as a matter of thought. We are at odds with Goodman on this, as well as other matters. For example, Goodman does not seem to regard most everyday conventional language as metaphorical. Nor, presumably, would he go along with our experientialist account of truth, in which truth is secondary to understanding ... (Lakoff/Johnson 1981 [1980]: 324)

Even if Lakoff/Johnson's claims were true, the fact remains that Goodman's account has significant affinities with Lakoff/Johnson's own. Such commonalities should have been mentioned in Lakoff/Johnson's major works (notably Lakoff/Johnson 1980). Lakoff/Johnson's response prompts further objections. The authors' contention is speculative at best that Goodman does not believe that the bulk of conventional language is metaphorical. In light of Goodman's (1968: 80) observations concerning the omnipresence of metaphor in ordinary discourse there is ample reason to doubt Lakoff/Johnson's statement. The remaining assertions are even more problematic. For example, it is misleading to present Goodman as a theorist

who views metaphor as merely a matter of language. We have already seen that metaphors for Goodman are one of the various "ways of worldmaking" (cf. Goodman 1978b [1975]: 7–8). The claim that *labels* are a matter of language is disputable, at least if we accept Lakoff/Johnson's binary opposition between 'matters of language' and 'matters of thought' (cf. 4.5.2). Labels in the sense of Goodman do constitute a matter of thought. According to Goodman (1978b [1975]: 6), their function is to 'impose structure' and 'conceptualize'. Especially metaphorical labels serve this purpose; they effect a "sorting and organizing of an alien realm" (cf. Goodman 1968: 72). Goodman's account anticipates Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) conception of metaphors as ways of organizing and conceptualizing our experience, which presents the bedrock assumption of their approach. Finally, Lakoff/Johnson (1981 [1980]: 324) are mistaken in supposing that Goodman would not "go along with [their] ... experientialist account of truth, in which truth is secondary to understanding". Goodman (1978b [1975]: 17–22) does precisely hold the views Lakoff/Johnson present him as repudiating.

4.3 Objectivism, objectivity, and myths

Objectivism primarily designates a body of philosophical doctrines. The related notion of objectivity plays a crucial role in Lakoff/Johnson's discussion of objectivism and in their outline of an alternative experientialist approach. Before embarking on a close analysis of those chapters of Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and subsequent works that set out the fallacies of objectivist thought, a number of preliminary observations are in order. Lakoff/Johnson's phrase "the myth of objectivism" raises three questions that will be discussed in this section: "How to construe the term *myth*?", "What is objectivism?", and "How do these terms relate to the concept of objectivity"?

As for the first question posed above, Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 185–186) contend that they do not use "the term 'myth' in any derogatory way." The authors seem to hold that myths are not "really" true – we just 'take them as truths'. Different cultures may have different myths. Such myths may be considered true by members of one society, but false by members of another. It seems to follow that experientialism is not "really" true and objectivism not "really" false: Both experientialism and objectivism are referred to as myths by the authors (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 185–186). This posi-

tion is in conflict with Lakoff/Johnson's far stronger thesis that the "*entire objectivist program is based on erroneous assumptions*" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 214 [emphasis original]). Lakoff (1988: 122–126) similarly describes objectivism as a theory which is patently false.

What is Lakoff/Johnson's motivation for emphasizing – at least sometimes – that they do not employ the term *myth* in a negative sense? Why do they occasionally contend that it is impossible to argue against myths? The reason seems to be this: Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 198) discard the idea of objective truth. If there is no objective truth, attempts to demonstrate that the objectivist myth is false are doomed from the start. To see whether our interpretation of Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning is correct, we will scrutinize the experientialist conception of objectivity in greater detail. This will enable us to assess Lakoff's (1987: 265) claim that experientialism is a major advance in contemporary philosophy on the score that it offers a novel theory of objectivity. Following Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 226–227),

> [t]ruth is always relative to understanding, which is based on a nonuniversal conceptual system. But this does not preclude satisfying the legitimate concerns about knowledge and impartiality that have motivated the myth of objectivism for centuries. Objectivity is still possible, but it takes on a new meaning.

The authors do not specify this "new meaning" of the term *objectivity*, they merely state what objectivity "involves":

> Objectivity still involves rising above individual bias, whether in matters of knowledge or value. But where objectivity is reasonable, it does not require an absolute, universally valid point of view. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 227)

The wording of this passage and the absence of a precise definition recalls parallel statements from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 227) and Lakoff (1987: 292).[27] Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 227) contention is less than enlightening for those who are curious to know how one can be objective in Lakoff/Johnson's sense. What constitutes "rising above individual bias", given that objectivity in the non-experientialist sense is unattainable? (Surely, Lakoff/Johnson would not want to urge that "rising above individual bias" is following the crowd?)

In a later publication, Lakoff (1987) does afford some clues as to how we should construe "experientialist" objectivity. His proposal is not very helpful, however.[28] Lakoff/Johnson's account of objectivity raises further questions. For example, what is meant by 'reasonable objectivity' (cf. La-

koff/Johnson 1980: 227)? Should we perhaps oppose 'reasonable objectivity' to 'unreasonable objectivity'? And if so, what is 'unreasonable objectivity'?

The authors maintain that objectivity is always dependent on one's culture and one's conceptual scheme. Therefore, objectivity may be unattainable in cases where conceptual systems do not square with each other (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 227).

Thus, on the one hand, objectivity is deemed to be "still possible" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 227), on the other hand "[r]easonable objectivity may be impossible" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 227). How to solve this near-contradiction? A close look at Lakoff/Johnson's exposition merely compounds our perplexities: If reasonable objectivity "does not require an absolute, universally valid point of view", why is it claimed that "[r]easonable objectivity may be impossible when there are conflicting conceptual systems or conflicting cultural values" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 227)?

To summarize, Lakoff/Johnson's vacillation concerning how to construe the notion of *myth* is mirrored in their closely related account of objectivity, which is no less incoherent. In both cases central notions are not defined.

Let us now turn to the second question raised above: What precisely is objectivism? Objectivism is held to encompass "all of the standard positions" in Western philosophy (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 197; cf. also Lakoff/Johnson 1980: x). Lakoff/Johnson prefer the term *objectivism* to the one common in philosophical writings (*realism* or *metaphysical realism*; cf. Putnam 1983f: 272). However, Lakoff (1988: 122) contends that his label *objectivism* can be equated with Putnam's metaphysical realism. Metaphysical realists believe in the possibility of providing a unique correct description of the world; they assume that the world is made up of mind-independent entities (cf. Putnam 1981).

Lakoff (1987: 265) considers experientialism an advanced strand of internal realism as developed by Putnam (1981). *Internal* realists discard pivotal tenets of *metaphysical* realism, notably the assumption that objects exist apart from conceptual systems. Much as experientialism, internal realism jettisons the idea of an absolute, mind-independent truth (cf. Putnam 1981).

The term *metaphysical realism* is already employed in Putnam (1978d [1977]), which lays out the rudiments of internal realism. Lakoff's comments on the provenance of the label *objectivism* are intriguing:

> It is indicative of their pervasiveness and invisibility that the collection of philosophical views that we [Putnam and Lakoff/Johnson] are referring to had no well-established name; **we had to make up names for them** [names such as *objectivism*]. (Lakoff 1988: 122–123 [emphasis mine])

Pace Lakoff, *objectivism* is not a name made up by Lakoff/Johnson. The term is already found in Husserl's work (cf. Putnam 1987: 8). Putnam himself occasionally uses Husserl's label *objectivism* for *metaphysical realism* (cf. Conant 1990: xliv). *Objectivism* in this sense encompasses some of the main features of Lakoff/Johnson's *objectivism*, notably the belief in 'intrinsic' properties – properties which entities have in themselves – and the idea that the "fundamental science" illuminates the intrinsic properties of things (cf. Putnam 1987: 8, 13; Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 186–187).

Despite the above similarities between Lakoff/Johnson's objectivism and Putnam's metaphysical realism/objectivism, these terms should not be equated along the lines of Lakoff (1988: 122). Lakoff/Johnson's objectivism turns out to encompass a far greater range of views than Putnam's objectivism. It is even questionable whether any scholar embraces the majority of positions that Lakoff/Johnson attribute to objectivism (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198). Lakoff/Johnson (1980) typically eschew references to particular "objectivist" scholars; instead they often use the term "the objectivist" (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198–199, 206, 208, 212, 215). This is inappropriate in light of the disclaimer preceding Lakoff/Johnson's account of objectivism: "Not all objectivists hold all of the following positions, but it is common for objectivists to hold most of them in some form or other" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198). Much the same strategy is adopted in Lakoff/Johnson (1999) (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 22). Note also the evasiveness of the authors' phrasing, which is also evident in a highly similar formulation found in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 196).

The impression that objectivism in Lakoff/Johnson's sense does not exist is increased by Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) tendency to replace references of the form "according to *name*" by the phrase "(according to) the myth of objectivism" (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 204 (twice); 205, 210, 215). In Lakoff/Johnson (1999), the authors advert to locutions such as "the Western philosophical tradition" (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 119) or "the traditional theory" (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 119); they also vaguely refer to "mainstream" views (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 21, 441, 443).

The idea, then, that in arguing against objectivism Lakoff/Johnson are attacking "all of the standard positions" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 197) is based on tenuous grounds. This can be seen even more clearly once we call

to mind the work of supposed objectivists like Putnam (1978d [1977]; 1981) and Goodman. The latter has called attention to the most imposing difficulties with metaphysical realism in several publications (e.g., Goodman 1972b [1960]; 1978a).

There are quite a few commonalities between Lakoff/Johnson's approach and Goodman (1972b [1960]; 1978b [1975]). Goodman shares Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 180) conviction that there cannot be "any definitive account of reality" and prefers to talk of "truths" rather than "truth" *simpliciter* – these truths "differ for different worlds" (Goodman 1978b [1975]: 17). Another idea which anticipates Lakoff/Johnson's framework is the notion of *relative reality*, which stems from Goodman's commitment to the creative potential of human cognition: *Symbols* – a term which includes what Lakoff/Johnson refer to as concepts – can shape reality. Goodman is exercised with different conceptual systems as contributing to different views of reality, i.e. different "worlds" (cf. Goodman (1978b [1975]: 1–20). We have seen in 4.2 that Goodman assigns a prominent role to metaphor in creating such a view.

Putnam and Goodman are not the first philosophers to jettison metaphysical realism ("objectivism"). Kant also qualifies as an internal realist (cf. Putnam 1983f: 272). Other thinkers who discard metaphysical realism are Peirce, Cassirer, and Dummett (cf. Cassirer 1925; Goodman 1978b [1975]: 1; Putnam 1983f: 272; Dummett 1979, 1991).

4.4 Lakoff/Johnson's theory of truth

4.4.1 General considerations

Lakoff/Johnson reject the idea that truth is "objective" or "absolute", which they believe is a key tenet that pervades Western philosophy. They do allow for the existence of "truths", but emphasize the fact that "truth is always relative to a conceptual system that is defined in large part by metaphor" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 159; cf. also Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 180).

Thus, the hypothesis that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical is Lakoff/Johnson's central argument for their anti-objectivist stance, specifically their dismissal of the idea of objective truth. Let us grant for the sake of argument that metaphorical concepts are part and parcel of human cognition. Still, it does not automatically follow that *on these grounds* truth is invariably relative, i.e., that there can be no "definitive account of reality" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 180).

The fallacy in Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning can be traced to their failure to appreciate the limitations of the idea that metaphor is basically viewing one thing in terms of another (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 5). 'Understanding one thing in terms of another' by itself does not amount to understanding it in any specific way. Hence, 'viewing one thing as another' by itself does not constitute a particular insight into the phenomenon to be conceptualized (cf. Blackburn 1984: 177–179).

To see this more clearly, we should consider two similar metaphorical expressions that can be traced to different source domains. Metaphorical expressions from different source domains may come to encapsulate roughly the same conception of the target, expressing the same sense. Compare example (1) (from Blackburn 1984: 173) with the roughly equivalent example (2):

(1) Bert is a gorilla.
(2) Bert is a rough guy.

The expressions in (1) and (2) exploit disparate source domains: A certain type of animal (GORILLA) vs. a certain feature of cloth or other surfaces (COARSENESS).

Suppose that *gorilla* is conventionally interpreted as 'insensitive guy'.[29] In that case the contribution of *gorilla* and *rough guy* to the truth value of sentences like (1) or (2) is the same: *Gorilla* and *rough guy* are identical in Fregean sense. No matter which of the two source concepts GORILLA and COARSENESS is chosen by a language community, the conception of the target arrived at is roughly the same: Both concepts convey the idea of INSENSITIVITY. This is all that matters for a truth-conditional account of meaning along the lines of putative objectivists like Frege. When used in its metaphorical sense, *gorilla* can be replaced in all relevant contexts by *rough guy* without change of truth value. Thus, when used figuratively, *Bert is a gorilla* and *Bert is rough* are true in the same contexts. Therefore, the mere fact that different languages conventionally employ different source domains for expressing certain target senses does not by itself indicate the impossibility of objective truth and objective truth-conditions (cf. Lakoff/ Johnson 1980: 159, 198). The omnipresence of conventional metaphors and the observation that a phenomenon may be expressed by means of different source concepts does not invalidate the objectivist position.

The move to reject the truth-functional equivalence of *gorilla* and *rough guy*, which seems to be the tenor of Lakoff/Johnson (1980: chapters 23, 24)

and Lakoff (1987: 295), amounts to little more than changing the terms of the discussion. The reason is this: Putative objectivists like Davidson concede that there is a further sense of "truth", a sense in which *rough guy* and *gorilla* are definitely not equivalent, even when used metaphorically. Davidson (1984g [1978]: 257) notes that the feelings, ideas, or thoughts evoked by metaphors might in some sense be said to be true or false. Supposed objectivists thus need not ignore the various associations pertaining to the original source concepts that are conveyed even by conventional metaphors. *Gorilla* transports different connotations than *rough*. In some sense of *true*, the thought *Bert is a gorilla* (or the image of Bert as a gorilla) might be true, while the thought *Bert is rough* might be false. But this kind of truth is a matter of thoughts rather than sentences. Let us call it "experientialist truth".

A theory which promises to invalidate objectivism should not simply supersede the objectivist conception of truth with an experientialist sense. In that case, objectivists and experientialists are talking about different things (different senses of truth) – which blocks from the start any attempt to argue that objectivists are mistaken in believing in absolute truth. Objectivists may even concur that "experientialist truth" is relative to conceptual systems, that is, to conceptual systems in the experientialist sense. Davidson seems close to adopting this position in the passage referred to above, though he would not frame it in this way, since he has a different idea of what constitutes a conceptual system or conceptual scheme. Davidson (1984e [1974]) discards relativity to conceptual schemes in *his* sense.

In summary, Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning rests on a tacit re-definition of truth. Instead of giving compelling counterarguments against objectivism, Lakoff/Johnson change the topic. The correct way of impugning objectivism would be to show that the *objectivist* conception of truth is relative to conceptual systems. This is a far more complicated task than pointing out that different languages have different systems of metaphors – a task which has been tackled by philosophers such as Putnam (1978d [1977]) and Goodman (1978a). While Lakoff/Johnson's contentions recall insights familiar from contemporary philosophy, the authors do not furnish the arguments that have motivated theorists to take an anti-objectivist stance. Instead, we are offered invalid arguments – if any – designed to lead to the same conclusions.

4.4.2 The experientialist account of truth: A close reading

This section offers a more detailed analysis of Lakoff/Johnson's theory of truth, focusing on a subsection of chapter 24 from Lakoff/Johnson (1980), entitled "The nature of the experientialist account of truth" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 179).

> *We understand a statement as being true in a given situation when our understanding of the statement fits our understanding of the situation closely enough for our purposes.* (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 179 [emphasis original])

Lakoff (1987: 293) and Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 106) take much the same tack, replacing the term *fit* by *accord.* The authors' formulation is once again evasive. A statement is held to be true when there is a fit between situational understanding and understanding of the sentence. These two kinds of understanding have to accord "closely enough". Yet, how are we to construe this phrase? Under which conditions is there a 'close enough' fit? And what precisely is meant by the phrase "for our purposes" in the above passage? Finally, Lakoff/Johnson do not clarify the notion of *fit* or *accord*, merely pushing the problem to a different level. Lakoff (1987: 293) does note that a clear explanation of the phrase *accord with* is urgently needed. Unfortunately, he fails to supply one; the same is true for Lakoff/Johnson (1999).

Lakoff/Johnson's approach is a kind of cognitivist correspondence theory of truth (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 180; Lakoff 1987: 293). Ordinary correspondence theories cast truth as a correspondence of statements to the world (cf. Solomon 1983: 176; Vision 1988). Lakoff/Johnson are opposed to certain types of correspondence theories. Their main target are objectivist accounts of truth which hold that "a statement has an objective meaning, which specifies the conditions under which it is true" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 180). What are Lakoff/Johnson's reasons for discarding this conception of truth? Three major points of criticism are mentioned in the section under discussion (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 179–181).[30]

First, objectivist correspondence theories of truth are criticized for failing to take into account that truth depends on understanding. Lakoff/Johnson's own experientialist approach is a special type of correspondence theory, which explains "what it means to **understand a statement as true or false** in a certain situation" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 180 [my emphasis in boldface]).

Putnam is one of those philosophers who share Lakoff/Johnson's commitment to a type of correspondence theory which differs significantly from the one familiar from metaphysical realists (cf. Putnam 1978b: 4). Similar to Lakoff/Johnson, Putnam (1978b) observes that we need an account of how sentences are understood[31] – a requirement which theories of truth à la Tarski do not meet (cf. also Putnam 1983c: 166). Tarski's work needs supplementation, which is what Putnam attempts to provide.

Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 180) connect a correspondence theory of truth to a theory of understanding focusing on speakers' "interaction" with their environment. This line of thinking is familiar from Putnam. Recall, however, that Lakoff/Johnson's conception of interaction is self-refuting (cf. 3.2.3). A comparison of the relevant passages brings out the parallels between Putnam and Lakoff/Johnson.

> Such a **correspondence**, in my view, is part of an explanatory theory of the speakers' **interaction** with their environment. (Putnam 1978d [1977]: 129 [emphasis mine])

> Any **correspondence** between what we say and some state of affairs in the world is always mediated by our understanding of the statement and of the state of affairs. Of course, our understanding of the situation results from our **interaction** with the situation itself. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 180 [emphasis mine])

Let us now turn to the second crucial characteristic that according to Lakoff/Johnson distinguishes their own theory of truth from that championed by objectivists (or "classical realists"). Experientialism is claimed to deviate from the objectivist approach in maintaining that "The physical world is what it is. Cultures are what they are. People are what they are" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 181). For reasons that need not concern us here, Lakoff/Johnson hold that these statements are in conflict with the objectivist idea of absolute truth.

However, a "theory" which maintains that the "physical world is what it is" does not deserve the title. What we would like to know is precisely '*what* the physical world is'. One possible stance (*phenomenalism*) would be to postulate that physical things are simply "bundles of sensations" (Putnam 1975b: 19). Lakoff/Johnson again evade the issue. What precisely is the stance of non-realists (here: phenomenalists) concerning the nature of physical reality? What kinds of philosophical arguments can be advanced in favor of the existence of material objects (e.g., tables) as opposed to

"bundles of sensations"? For an answer one should look to Putnam (1975b). Lakoff/Johnson's proposals are at best programmatic – though it is open to doubt whether stating that external reality, cultures, and people "are what they are" does amount to a substantial program. Even if fleshed out as sympathetically as possible, Lakoff/Johnson's program is not a contribution to philosophy: Philosophy does not consist in *stating* that one is inclined to adopt a position, but in *arguing* for it.

There is yet another reason why Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 181) believe to have offered a theory of truth that goes beyond realism: Their approach does not merely take into consideration "physical reality", but also "cultural and personal reality". Now, the view that only physical facts are real is closely associated with the philosopher Quine (e.g., Quine 1975; cf. Putnam 1983c: 164–165). However, Quine's suggestions are unacceptable to both Putnam (1975d) and Goodman (1978b [1975]: 4). Thus, Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) move to improve on traditional realism has been anticipated by the very philosophers Lakoff/Johnson (1999) seem to assign to the category of objectivists.

4.5 "The myth of objectivism": A close reading

The following sections present close readings of statements put forward by Lakoff/Johnson in several subsections of chapter 26 from Lakoff/Johnson (1980). It is hoped that such an in-depth analysis which covers larger stretches of Lakoff/Johnson's line of reasoning allows us to indicate the extent to which the authors' exposition is permeated with difficulties. Section 4.5.1 will largely be devoted to the question whether the major philosophical movements Lakoff/Johnson consider to be objectivist in orientation actually do deserve that title. The subsequent sections will be devoted to central tenets attributed to objectivists, viz. "meaning is objective" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198) and "meaning is disembodied" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 199).

4.5.1 Lakoff/Johnson's challenge to objectivism

The ensuing discussion centers on claims proposed in a subsection from Lakoff/Johnson (1980), entitled "Our challenge to the myth of objectivism"

(cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 195). We will be concerned with major philosophers and philosophical movements that are claimed to be objectivists.

We have already found some evidence that Lakoff/Johnson are mistaken in assuming that Western philosophy is inextricably linked to the objectivist idea of absolute truth, which they describe as "the cornerstone" of Western thought (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 195). Indeed, a far cry from clinging to a conception of truth as "absolute and unconditional", many philosophers have adopted a verificationist theory of truth, or have dispensed with the notion of truth altogether (cf. Putnam 1978b: 1).

Thus, many Western philosophers do not really qualify as objectivists in this sense. It might be worthwhile to have a closer look at the philosophers and philosophical movements Lakoff/Johnson single out as objectivist in the section under scrutiny. One of the key figures in Western thought is Kant, whose work integrates insights from rationalism and empiricism (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 195). Lakoff/Johnson consider Kant to be an objectivist, even though he discards a bedrock assumption of objectivism, viz. that reality consists of "distinct objects" having "inherent properties" (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 195, 210).

> What makes Kant an objectivist is his claim that, relative to the kinds of things that all human beings can experience through their senses (his empiricist legacy), we can have **universally valid knowledge** and **universally valid moral laws** by the use of our universal reason (his rationalist legacy). (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 195 [emphasis mine])

Lakoff/Johnson's assessment does not agree with Putnam (1983f: 272), who counts Kant among those thinkers who "reject metaphysical realism", and hence objectivism (cf. also Geeraerts 1993).[32] What is more, Kant seems to be a "predecessor of the cognitive theory of metaphor" (Jäkel 1999: 12–14).

Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 195) reasons for classifying Kant as an objectivist are not compelling. Why should there be no "universally valid moral laws"? Why is experientialism at odds with the belief in some kind of universal ethics? Lakoff (1987) comes close to contradicting Lakoff/Johnson (1980) on this score: "Conceptual relativism of the sort that appears to exist does not rule out universal ethical standards of some sort – at least as far as I can determine" (Lakoff 1987: 337). This is in conflict with Lakoff/Johnson's apparent assumption that there are no universal moral laws – or should we conclude that "ethical standards of some sort" are not moral laws ("of some sort")?

Moreover, Lakoff/Johnson do not seem to assume that judgments like "[o]bjectivist metaphysics ... is a false theory" (Lakoff 1988: 124) are relative to a particular culture, and thus not "universally valid". If we go by Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 195) account, the presupposition underlying their arguments appears to be Kantian in nature: In some sense, it *is* possible to have "universally valid knowledge".

One of the greatest Western philosophers thus turns out to be experientialist rather than objectivist in outlook, which casts further doubt on the supposition that experientialism is in conflict with Western philosophy (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: x). Let us now turn to those philosophical movements which are supposed to represent objectivism, and hence the metaphysical realist belief in an absolute truth, in *present-day* philosophy. Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 195) mention the following philosophical traditions as examples of present-day objectivism: "The descendants of the logical positivists, the Fregean tradition, [and] the tradition of Husserl."

Neither of these traditions is clearly objectivist in orientation. Take, for example, the philosophers that Lakoff/Johnson might portray as present-day logical positivists. It is not entirely clear which scholars are on target, but Lakoff/Johnson's characterization of logical positivists as objectivists is open to doubt. Putnam (1978a: 18) considers positivism a "version of idealism", rather than metaphysical realism ("objectivism").

What about the allegedly objectivist tradition of Husserl? Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 181–182) themselves contradict this classification by paying tribute to the phenomenological tradition as an essentially experientialist movement. The phenomenological tradition is in large measure the tradition pioneered by Husserl, who coined the term *phenomenology* (cf. Ayer 1982: 214–216). Lakoff/Johnson thus put forward conflicting statements about the phenomenological movement. On the one hand, they claim that objectivism, i.e., the metaphysical realist belief in an absolute and unconditional truth, is still alive in Husserl's tradition (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 195). On the other hand, they assert that the experientialist account of truth – Lakoff/Johnson's main claim to fame (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: ix–x) – builds on cardinal ideas developed by thinkers associated with the phenomenological movement (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 181–182).

A few remarks on the third supposedly objectivist movement in present-day philosophy, "the Fregean tradition", will conclude this section. The authors seem to use the phrase "the Fregean tradition" synonymously with "analytic philosophy" (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 440–441, 444). Lakoff/Johnson's dismissal of the Fregean school of thought as objectivist is rash.

Some scholars such as Putnam (1994: 322) even cast doubt on Frege's status as an objectivist. The label *objectivist* seems even more inapposite for other key thinkers in analytical philosophy. According to Putnam (1983e), Quine does not qualify as an objectivist. Neither does Davidson (cf. Davidson 1986: 309; Rorty 1986: 335; Putnam 1994: 315; Genova 1999: 168).

The case of Putnam and Wittgenstein, who are also leading analytic philosophers, throws into relief a striking feature of Lakoff/Johnson's approach: Certain across-the-board generalizations found in their books can be shown to be mistaken even on the basis of their own contentions. Witness Lakoff/Johnson's (1999: 468) wholesale rejection of analytic philosophy:

> The entire programs of both analytic and post-structuralist philosophy left out, and are fundamentally inconsistent with, everything that second-generation cognitive science has discovered about the mind, meaning, and language. (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 468)

In a similar vein, Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 256) assert that their stance is incompatible with all strands of analytic philosophy. It is instructive to compare Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) devastating criticism of analytic philosophy to Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 181–182) tribute to Wittgenstein as a pioneering experientialist thinker. Wittgenstein is counted as an analytic philosopher even by Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 449) themselves. Similarly at odds with the above passages from Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 256, 468) is the sustained praise the analytical philosopher Putnam draws from Lakoff (1987) and Lakoff (1988) as a prominent champion of experientialist thought. Putnam qualifies as an experientialist philosopher at least since Putnam (1981) (cf. Lakoff 1988). To some extent even Lakoff/Johnson (1999) throw into relief Putnam's merits on this score (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 101) – their tacit assessment of Putnam as an objectivist notwithstanding.

These preliminary observations must suffice for the present. The following sections will be concerned with various objectivist tenets that Lakoff/Johnson (1980) primarily trace to analytical philosophers such as Frege and Davidson. Another section (4.6) will be devoted to the authors' exposition of analytical philosophy as sketched in their later work (Lakoff/Johnson 1999).

Let us take stock. None of the three philosophical traditions mentioned in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 195) should be counted as objectivist. All of them are seriously misrepresented. Once again, Lakoff/Johnson's exposition

provokes the question whether the kind of objectivism the authors attempt to "challenge" actually exists.

4.5.2 "Meaning is objective" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198)

We will now proceed with our close reading of chapter 26 from Lakoff/Johnson (1980), examining what the authors regard as chief objectivist doctrines. The following discussion will be concerned with the objectivist idea that the concept of meaning should not be a subjective notion. This position is explored in a section bearing the title "meaning is objective" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198); some further discussion is found in another section, entitled "What an objectivist account of understanding would be like" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 206). The authors offer the following explanation of this alleged objectivist belief:

> The objectivist characterizes meaning purely in terms of conditions of objective truth or falsity. On the objectivist view, the conventions of the language assign to each sentence an *objective meaning*, which determines objective truth conditions .... Given the objectivist account of meaning, a person **understands the objective meaning** of a sentence if he understands the **conditions under which it would be true or false**. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198 [my emphasis in boldface])

Lakoff/Johnson find fault with objectivist semantics, according to which understanding a sentence is conceived as understanding its truth conditions. On closer scrutiny, three related ideas seem to be on target, corresponding to the following three interpretations of Lakoff/Johnson's claims: Firstly, the objectivist conception of understanding in general is misguided (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198). Secondly, Lakoff/Johnson object to the assumption that *all* aspects of sentence understanding are captured in speakers' grasp of truth conditions (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 199, 203). Thirdly, the authors reject the idea that understanding can be explained in terms of grasping *objective* truth conditions (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198, 206). Let us scrutinize these assumptions in turn.

First of all, why should understanding a sentence *not* be construed in terms of (objective) truth conditions? Lakoff/Johnson merely hint at a potential argument for jettisoning this conception of understanding, noting that objectivists presuppose that humans can "have access" to objective truth conditions (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198). Lakoff/Johnson seem to hold

that this view is mistaken, but they do not adequately address the question why humans do not have access to truth conditions. Putnam (1978c) is likewise opposed to theories that equate understanding and grasp of truth conditions; he also shares Lakoff/Johnson's view that humans need not have access to objective truth conditions (cf. Putnam 1978c: 100–111).

Putnam's exposition comes down to a denial of the time-honored assumption that truth is fundamental to semantics in the sense of being "prior to meaning" (Putnam 1978c: 110–111). Incidentally, Lakoff/Johnson (1980: x) consider it one of their principal achievements to have developed an approach to meaning "in which human experience and understanding, rather than objective truth" take center stage. While Lakoff/Johnson (1980) merely imply that people do not "have access" to objective truth conditions, Putnam (1978c) offers arguments for this position. According to Putnam, the *extension* of a natural kind term such as *gold* is fixed by criteria of application which are not known to ordinary speakers. They are known at best to scientists, but even experts may apply incorrect criteria (this complication is irrelevant to the present context). In Lakoff/Johnson's parlance, ordinary speakers do not "have access" to the truth conditions of sentences like *This is gold* – they do not know under which conditions the sentence is true. The criteria for deciding whether some material is gold are *not* part of the meaning of *gold,* or so Putnam (1978c: 114) argues: Even if scientific progress leads us to adopt different criteria, this does not result in a change in the meaning of the word. Putnam thus divorces understanding meanings from knowledge of truth conditions. We *understand* sentences like *This is gold* or *This is a tiger* once we are familiar with the relevant stereotypes, which are 'standardized or idealized beliefs associated with terms' such as the belief that a tiger usually has blackish transverse stripes (Putnam 1978c: 115–116). Yet, being able to understand the sentence *This is a tiger* does not suffice for knowing its truth conditions.

Let us now turn to the second interpretation of Lakoff/Johnson's arguments against the objectivist notion of understanding. Why should objectivists assume that grasp of truth conditions explains *all* aspects of understanding? Lakoff/Johnson's phrasing merits close scrutiny. The authors sometimes talk about understanding the *objective meaning* of a sentence. The term *objective meaning* is Lakoff/Johnson's synonym for Fregean *sense*, which they characterize as being independent of understanding (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 198, 202).

Lakoff/Johnson are correct in pointing out that at least some putative objectivists construe understanding the sense of a sentence as understand-

ing its truth conditions. Such an account correlates with the idea that the senses of individual words consist in their contribution to the truth value of possible sentences containing these words (cf. Dummett 1981: 2). However, Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 199) charge that "the objectivist notion of understanding is limited to understanding conditions of truth or falsity" is controvertible – particularly so in the absence of quotes which could support this view. Lakoff/Johnson's contention is either false or tautologous. It is tautologous if "objectivist notion of understanding" is construed as coterminous with 'objectivist notion of *understanding the objective meaning* or *sense* of a sentence'.[33] In that case, Lakoff/Johnson once again evade the issue by confining the controversy to terminological matters: There is no reason why objectivists should not employ a concept of understanding that suits their purposes (such as their interest in logic).

Lakoff/Johnson's assumption is mistaken if we construe the authors as implying that objectivists deny the existence of a further kind of understanding *in addition to* what is captured by understanding the sense ("objective meaning") of expressions. Take the case of Frege, whom Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 198) regard as one of the foremost objectivists. Frege distinguishes between two ingredients of meaning, one of them is typically translated as *tone*. Understanding tone does go beyond understanding truth conditions, since tone is not truth-conditional (cf. 3.2). The "objectivist" Davidson (1984g [1978]: 257) seems to take a similar line.

Let us finally scrutinize the third interpretation of Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning adumbrated above. Why should we discard the notion of *objective* truth conditions? Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 198) appear to hold that there are no "conditions of objective truth and falsity". Lakoff/Johnson's formulation leaves ample room for interpretation, which is not surprising in light of their previously mentioned failure to define *objectivity*. How to cash the term *objective* in "conditions of objective truth and falsity"? Lakoff/Johnson do not provide any quotes which could clarify and substantiate their claims. The position that there are objective truth conditions seems compatible with Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 227) own stance that 'objectivity is possible' despite the relativity of truth. However these difficulties are assessed, Lakoff/Johnson do not offer compelling arguments for their view and fail to mention those philosophers who have anticipated the cognitivist position, notably Goodman (1972b [1960]; 1978b [1975]) and Putnam (1978d [1977]).

Thus, Lakoff/Johnson's charges against the objectivist doctrine that "meaning is objective" do not carry conviction. However, this tenet does

seem to run into difficulties once we turn to metaphors, because metaphors are usually intended to convey an idea which is obviously at odds with the literal "objective" meaning of the respective expressions. One might therefore argue that the meanings of metaphors are not objective, at least given that one accepts the notion of *metaphorical meanings* in the first place (cf. 4.5.3). For example, *John is a wolf* does not usually convey the idea that John is an animal. The content transported by such metaphors is thus evidently distinct from their literal or "objective" meaning. However, supposed objectivists have found a way of circumventing these difficulties with the help of Grice's theory of meaning and speech act theory (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 206–209). We will not expatiate on the difficulties faced by the objectivist theory of metaphor, nor on the solutions that have been suggested to overcome these problems. What is interesting for our exposition of experientialism is rather the fact that Lakoff/Johnson do not provide succinct arguments against the objectivist solution. Rather, the objectivist framework is presented as misguided on the grounds that it is incompatible with all aspects of Lakoff/Johnson's own approach (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 209). Specifically, the objectivist position is deemed to have "four automatic consequences" that do not square with experientialism: Firstly, it does not make sense for objectivists to talk of metaphorical concepts. Secondly, objectivists are committed to the view that metaphor is situated in the realm of language. Third, it does not make sense for objectivists to talk of literal metaphors. Fourth, the objectivist account of metaphors can only appeal to inherent similarities as the basis of figurative extension. Let us consider these alleged objectivist doctrines in turn.

The first implication of the objectivist approach deserves particular attention. Consider Lakoff/Johnson's explanation:

> ***By definition**, there can be no such thing as a metaphorical concept or metaphorical meaning*. Meanings are **objective** and specify conditions of **objective** truth. They are **by definition** ways of characterizing the world as it is or might be. Conditions of **objective** truth simply do not provide ways of viewing one thing in terms of another. Hence, **objective** meanings cannot be metaphorical. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 209 [my emphasis in boldface])

Once again, Lakoff/Johnson repeat the term *objective* that seems crucial to their exposition, rather than elucidating how it should be taken. In Lakoff/Johnson (1999), the above statement from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 209) that objectivists reject the idea of metaphorical meanings recurs in the form of a doctrine attributed to analytic philosophy: "All meaning is literal" (La-

koff/Johnson 1999: 444). Putative objectivists might object to Lakoff/Johnson's exposition on the grounds that Lakoff/Johnson's view – meaning can be metaphorical – does not lend itself to straightforward comparison with their own objectivist approach. For one thing, Lakoff/Johnson do not clarify how cognitivists – as opposed to objectivists – construe the term *meaning*. For another, Lakoff/Johnson opt for different definitions of literalness and metaphoricity. This is emphasized in the very passage from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 209) quoted above (cf. Lakoff/Johnson's phrasing "[b]y definition ... by definition").

If we go along with Lakoff/Johnson in counting conventional metaphors as full-blown metaphors, we are likely to deny that all meaning is literal. After all, conventional metaphors pervade our everyday language, they have developed a certain specifiable meaning, which in some sense can be described as metaphorical (i.e. a meaning conveyed by a metaphor). On the other hand, if we take the objectivist stance that conventional metaphors do not really deserve the title "metaphor", having become part of literal language, we might be inclined to accept the claim that all meaning is literal.[34] Which definition of metaphoricity is favored – whether conventional metaphors are regarded as real metaphors or not – depends on which criteria are chosen as essential to metaphoricity. There are good reasons for settling on the objectivist conception (cf. Blackburn 1984: 172–179; Davidson 1984g [1978], 1993). These arguments are not mentioned by Lakoff/Johnson. Fully conventionalized metaphors as discussed in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) differ significantly from the metaphors analyzed in "objectivist" works. The metaphors supposed objectivists regard as true metaphors are open to various construals; at least in principle, they can be spelt out in infinitely many different ways. By contrast, the interpretation of most metaphors cited in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) is fixed: The (formerly) metaphoric interpretation has "hardened into a convention" (Blackburn 1984: 172; cf. also Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 54). From an objectivist perspective, the bulk of "metaphors" analyzed in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) can therefore be argued to have lost their metaphoricity.[35]

If Lakoff/Johnson's objections are to represent more than a terminological skirmish, the authors should give an in-depth criticism of various arguments against positing metaphorical meanings (e.g., Davidson 1984g [1978], 1993). As it stands, Lakoff/Johnson's exposition does not cut very deep. Their refusal to offer necessary definitions and arguments in favor of their conception of metaphor recalls their persistent strategy of evading the issue.

The second putative consequence of the objectivist position outlined by Lakoff/Johnson also deserves closer scrutiny: For objectivists, metaphor is necessarily a "matter of language", because objectivists reject the idea of metaphor being a "matter of meaning" (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 209). The usual contrast invoked by Lakoff/Johnson is between metaphor as a "matter of language" and metaphor as "a matter of thought" (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 153). Lakoff/Johnson in fact consider the idea of metaphor being situated in the realm of thought their primary claim to fame. Hence, Lakoff/Johnson's conclusion (for objectivists, metaphor is merely "a matter of language") implies that for objectivists metaphor is *not* a matter of thought.

The authors' reasoning is hardly compelling. Why should we infer that metaphor is situated in the domain of language – rather than thought – from the claim that metaphor is not "a matter of meaning"? Lakoff/Johnson seem to conflate meaning and thought; their exposition suggests that the only alternative to being "a matter of meaning" is being "a matter of language." There is another possibility, however. Thus, the putative objectivist Davidson disputes the view that there are metaphorical meanings, while granting the cognitive value of metaphors (cf. Davidson 1984g [1978]).[36] For Davidson, metaphor is a matter of thought, even though it is not a matter of meaning.

Lakoff/Johnson's line of reasoning is therefore mistaken. This is confirmed by a closer look at the passage which is designed to elaborate on the authors' contentions. Lakoff/Johnson present objectivists as holding that metaphors merely offer a means of *talking* about a certain Fregean sense or *objective meaning*:[37]

> A metaphor, on the objectivist view, can at best give us an indirect way of *talking* about some **objective meaning** M' by using the language that would be used literally to talk about some other **objective meaning M**, which is usually false in a blatant way. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 209 [my emphasis in boldface])

This passage provokes several objections. First, it is open to debate whether Lakoff/Johnson have actually demonstrated that metaphors in their sense offer more than a means of talking about something. This issue will be discussed at length in chapter 6. Second, we do not usually talk about meanings, but rather about entities or phenomena. The metaphor *He is a wolf*, for example, is not used to talk about the meaning of the word *wolf*, or about the meaning of any other word. Rather, the metaphor is used to talk about a certain person. As in many other cases, Lakoff/Johnson's phrasing,

which makes ample use of key terms such as *objective* (*meaning*), is infelicitous (cf. also chapter 6; appendix).

Another "automatic consequence" which according to Lakoff/Johnson follows from objectivism is that "a literal metaphor is a contradiction in terms, and literal language cannot be metaphorical" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 209). The authors themselves seem to be aware of the fact that it is a matter of definition whether we allow reference to literal or conventional metaphors. Again, we might ask why objectivists should not be allowed to opt for a definition of metaphor which deviates from Lakoff/Johnson's notion. Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) refutation of objectivist theories of metaphor once again amounts to saying that objectivists are mistaken "because" they are concerned with a (partially) different subject matter. Note also that several writers who are surely not objectivists have criticized Lakoff/Johnson's highly confusing use of the term *literal metaphor* (e.g., Jäkel 1996: 44–5). If anything, then, it is Lakoff/Johnson's own terminology which is misleading.

Finally, the fourth "automatic consequence" of the objectivist position concerns the import of metaphor for human understanding. Following Lakoff/Johnson, the objectivist position does not allow for experiential similarities as the basis of metaphorical transfer. All that can be claimed on an objectivist view is that metaphor serves as a cognitive instrument by enabling us to notice "objective similarities", i.e. similarities that are due to "inherent properties" of entities (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 209).

It is Black (1981 [1955]: 71–72), rather than Lakoff/Johnson, who should be credited with the seminal insight that metaphors can create similarities which are not objective or inherent in objects. Osgood (1966: 312) also argues that the similarities at issue do not reside in inherent features of things. The very idea of "inherent properties" has long become problematic (cf. Putnam 1983e: 206–207).

Since the putative objectivist Putnam,[38] for example, rejects the idea that properties are "inherent" in things, Lakoff/Johnson are mistaken in holding that objectivists are necessarily committed to this assumption. Indeed, why should objectivists dispute the possibility that metaphors may involve interactional (rather than inherent) properties and hence similarities which reflect the way we respond to and interact with objects? Lakoff/Johnson do not cite a single scholar who subscribes to this view. Intriguingly, in a later chapter the authors do allow for the possibility that objectivists may concur with experientialist assumptions concerning the importance of interactional (i.e., non-inherent) properties. However, the authors

argue that objectivists would neglect this finding, regarding it as irrelevant to the objectivist approach. It is highly questionable whether any "objectivist" would take this line, not merely because Lakoff/Johnson do not refer to any real objectivists in the relevant section, but also because their phrasing is characteristically hazy: Objectivists "could say simply that ... the objectivist is concerned not with how people *understand* something as being true but rather with what it means for something to *actually be true*" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 217 [emphasis original]). What precisely is meant by something being 'actually true'? Aren't Lakoff/Johnson also concerned with something being 'actually true' when they assert, for example, that objectivist views are false?

Following Lakoff/Johnson, this imagined response by objectivists reflects their commitment to a conception of truth as "absolute" and a conception of meaning as "objective". This assessment is hardly compelling. For one thing, the "objectivist" Putnam and numerous other Western philosophers do not view truth as absolute (cf. 4.5.1). For another, Lakoff/Johnson's exposition of the alleged doctrine "meaning is objective" is fraught with difficulties.

This is in fact the gist of the present section: None of Lakoff/Johnson's contentions relating to the tenet that meaning is objective are convincing. The authors' line of reasoning is typically vague, their criticism of objectivists does not do justice to these philosophers, and some of Lakoff/Johnson's ideas recall insights that are closely associated with the analytical philosophers Putnam and Goodman.

4.5.3 "Meaning is disembodied" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 199)

The belief that "meaning is objective" is inextricably linked to another objectivist doctrine, "Meaning is disembodied", which is explained in the following passage:

> In the objectivist view, **objective meaning is not meaning *to* anyone**. Expressions in a natural language can be said to have objective meaning only if that **meaning is independent of anything human beings do, either in speaking or in acting**. That is, meaning must be disembodied. Frege, for example, distinguishes the 'sense' (*Sinn*), the objective meaning for a sign, from the 'idea' ... (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 199 [my emphasis in boldface])

Holding that "meaning is disembodied" amounts to saying that "meaning is independent of use" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 201) and that "meaning is objective". According to Lakoff/Johnson, the objectivist belief that meaning is objective and hence independent of use implies that meaning does not involve any subjective features. A further implication is that meaning is context-independent as well as independent of both cultural factors and one's "mode of understanding" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 201–202). The authors mention Davidson as a proponent of this mistaken objectivist view, adducing a quote from Davidson (1984g [1978]) in support of their attribution.

Lakoff/Johnson are mistaken in assuming that Davidson considers meaning to be "independent of use" in the sense outlined in the passages quoted and referred to above. Quite the opposite. Passages from Davidson's writings which conflict with Lakoff/Johnson's assessment come pat:

> There can be nothing wrong, of course, with the methodological maxim that when baffling problems about meanings, reference, synonymy, and so on arise, we should remember that these concepts ... abstract away from the social transactions and setting which give them what content they have. (Davidson 1984c [1974]: 143)

Davidson (1984f [1977]: 224–225) conceives of sentence meaning in terms of "the roles of the sentences in the language" (i.e., their use). Evnine (1991: 74) confirms that Davidson does not ignore the dependence of meaning on use (cf. also Putnam 1983b: 82).

Let us now have a closer look at the quote from Davidson (1984g [1978]) which Lakoff/Johnson offer in support of their (mis)attribution. Davidson's paper bears the title "what metaphors mean".

> Literal meaning and literal truth conditions can be assigned to words and sentences apart from **particular** contexts of use. (Davidson 1984g [1978]: 247 [emphasis mine])

Davidson does not contend that word meaning and sentence meaning are independent of use broadly construed (i.e., in the sense of Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 199). Rather, Davidson asserts that what kind of meaning linguistic items have does not depend on how they are used in a specific context. No matter how they are used – even when they are *used* metaphorically, words and sentences retain their literal meanings. Davidson thus rejects the supposition that words and sentences when used figuratively have metaphorical *meanings* in the respective contexts. He does not deny that words can acquire a new meaning based on such metaphorical uses, if the use crystal-

lizes into a rigidly fixed convention. Such conventional expressions, however, are not really genuine metaphors any more – or so Davidson argues: Metaphors whose interpretation is rigidly fixed are "dead"; they have lost their metaphoricity (cf. Davidson 1984g [1978]: 252; Davidson 1993).

Davidson's account is not at odds with his commitment to the idea that the meaning of expressions is related to their use. What he attacks is rather the following view: There are on the one hand special contexts which warrant the assignment of *literal* meanings to expressions, and on the other, specific contexts which warrant the assignment of *metaphorical* meanings to expressions.

The gist of Davidson's suggestion is outlined in the paragraph immediately preceding the one cited by Lakoff/Johnson: "I depend on the distinction between what words mean and what they are used to do. I think metaphor belongs exclusively to the domain of use" (Davidson 1984g [1978]: 247). Davidson adheres to the well-known separation of meaning and use. Teasing apart meaning and use in this way does not in the least imply their independence of each other.

Another paper by Davidson enables us to pinpoint a comparable misconstrual of contemporary philosophy on the part of Lakoff/Johnson. Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 202) maintain that objectivist theories of meaning are all necessarily building-block theories. This statement should be compared to Davidson (1984f [1977]: 219–220), who observes that building-block theories have long been discarded in Western philosophy. This is yet another example of how Lakoff/Johnson distort the theories of supposedly objectivist philosophers.

4.6 Lakoff/Johnson (1999) on the Fregean tradition

This section examines in greater detail Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) account of analytic philosophy. Focusing on Lakoff/Johnson's latest major work allows us to determine whether there have been significant changes in their overall line of reasoning and mode of exposition since Lakoff/Johnson (1980). Recall that the authors seem to regard analytic philosophers in general as proponents of the "objectivist" Fregean tradition (cf. 4.5.1; Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 440–441, 444). Of particular interest is Lakoff/Johnson's account of a major strand of analytic philosophy, which they call *formalist philosophy*. Quite a number of formalist philosophers are mentioned in Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 444): Frege, Russell, Carnap, the Vi-

enna Circle in general, Quine, Goodman, Davidson, Putnam, Kripke, Montague, and Lewis. These philosophers are claimed to espouse what the authors call "the central tenets of analytic philosophy", labeled A1 to A8.

We will discuss these eight tenets in turn. All of them are unpalatable to Lakoff/Johnson (1999). My main focus will be on one particular assumption, which is supposed to lie at the heart of objectivism (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 196, 200), viz. the correspondence theory of truth. Some general remarks on the remaining tenets are indispensable, however. My criticism primarily concerns the way the various assumptions are expounded, at least in those cases where the authors do attempt to give some explanation. For reasons of space, my objections will mainly be illustrated by some brief remarks on Davidson's work, whom the authors consider a champion of all ideas listed in Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 443–444) as key doctrines of analytic philosohy.

A general weakness of Lakoff/Johnson's account is their refusal to provide references and quotes for most authors criticized – which renders it difficult to verify or falsify Lakoff/Johnson's attributions. In this respect, many central sections of Lakoff/Johnson (1999) hardly differ from Lakoff/Johnson (1980). Difficulties are compounded by the characteristic vagueness of the authors' formulations. Take tenet A5, which states that "[a]ll meaning is literal". We have already seen that Lakoff/Johnson's blunt statement of A5 falls far short of a satisfactory delineation of potential theoretical differences between experientialism and objectivism, among other things because key terms such as *meaning* remain undefined (cf. 4.5.2).

Let us now take a glance at individual tenets in turn. The first of them is formulated as follows: "A1. To analyze language is to analyze thought" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 443). The first objection prompted by A1 once again concerns the vagueness of Lakoff/Johnson's formulation. Why do analytical philosophers adopt A1? What precisely is the underlying relationship between language and thought which leads to A1, and which Lakoff/Johnson find objectionable?

There are a couple of different conceptions of the relationship between language and thought that have been advanced in the philosophical literature. First, there is the idea that "thinking can be reduced to linguistic activity" (Davidson 2001b [1982]: 100). Second, there is the thesis espoused by Davidson, among others, that thought depends on language (e.g., Davidson 2001b [1982]). Third, there is the general strategy of exploring thought via an analysis of language, which is indeed a hallmark of analytical philoso-

phy: Language takes precedence over thought "in the order of explanation" (Dummett 1991: 3).

Dummett (1991: 3) has marshaled substantial considerations in favor of A1 construed along the lines of the third possible interpretation. His arguments are not mentioned, let alone refuted, by Lakoff/Johnson (1999).

Which of the above three positions Lakoff/Johnson reject is not entirely transparent. The odds are that their main target is the first view sketched above, since A1 is traced to what Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 442) call the "Thought As Language metaphor". Lakoff/Johnson's (1999: 443) idea seems to be that this metaphor is taken literally by analytical philosophers. The "Thought As Language metaphor" encompasses submetaphors such as "Thinking Is Linguistic Activity (Speaking Or Writing)", "Simple Ideas Are Words", and "Complex Ideas Are Sentences" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 244). According to Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 442), the tenet that "analysis of language is analysis of thought" *follows* from the Thought As Language metaphor. It is the idea that thinking *is* speaking, enshrined in the Thought As Language metaphor, which has led analytical philosophers to endorse A1 – or so Lakoff/Johnson believe.

Davidson, whom the authors claim to be committed to A1, explicitly rejects the supposition that thought is reducible to language: "I don't, for example, believe that thinking can be reduced to linguistic activity. ... Nor do I see any reason to maintain that what we can't say we can't think. My thesis is not, then, that each thought depends for its existence on the existence of a sentence that expresses that thought" (Davidson 2001b [1982]: 100).

Davidson thus repudiates what Lakoff/Johnson view as a metaphor, viz. the assumption that thinking is tantamount to linguistic activity. He does not promote A1 *if construed in this way*: If he does not accept the premise (the Thought As Language metaphor), he will not accept what Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 442) present as the consequence of adopting this very premise. At the very least, Lakoff/Johnson's presentation of the line of reasoning underpinning A1 is mistaken. These facts are obscured by the authors' refusal to present A1 in sufficient detail.

While Davidson does not champion A1 if we presuppose what in light of Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 442) is the most likely construal of this tenet, he does espouse A1 if construed along the lines of the second possible interpretation mentioned above: Thought depends on language. The intricate line of reasoning which led Davidson to adopt this view stands in sharp contrast with Lakoff/Johnson's (1999: 442) rather crude presentation.

Davidson has put forward several considerations in support of the assumption that we cannot have thoughts unless we are in command of language. His central argument proceeds in two steps. First, he shows that "in order to have a belief [which Davidson regards as the central type of thought], it is necessary to have the concept of belief." Second, he shows that "in order to have the concept of belief one must have language" (Davidson 2001b [1982]: 103). An adequate presentation presupposes a detailed account of a considerable part of Davidson's philosophy, which cannot be given here. Readers are referred to Davidson's papers (e.g., Davidson 1984d [1975], 2001b [1982], 1991b).

The second tenet attributed to formalist philosophers (A2) poses similar problems. It stipulates that "[l]inguistic meaning is mind-independent, objective, and publicly accessible" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 443). Wittgenstein (*Philosophical Investigations* §§ 243–315) has offered arguments for the view that language is necessarily public; these arguments are common currency in analytic philosophy. Wittgenstein's account turns on the insight that language is essentially normative. Linguistic activity conforms to norms in that speakers generally intend to use words correctly. This seems entirely natural, since humans can be said to have a particular concept only if they know what is to count as *correctly* applying the concept. Crucially, to have a conception of correct application involves having a conception of *in*correct application.

These considerations raise the question of how linguistic norms – and hence erroneous as well as correct uses of linguistic items – are possible. According to a theory often attributed to Wittgenstein (cf. Pears 1988: chapter 14) and to some extent shared by Davidson, the possibility of committing mistakes depends on one or both of two factors: Other humans, who can correct one's judgments, and a shared environment. Our words have a particular content because in the most basic situations for language learning it is possible to relate them to external objects which are perceived by more than one speaker.

If we were on our own, *thinking* that we are correctly using linguistic items would be indistinguishable from *being* correct (cf. *Philosophical Investigations* §§ 258) – which makes nonsense of the idea of correctness. The fact that the reference of words relating to external objects is intersubjectively accessible enables speakers to test their applications of words to objects in the environment. Language learners can check their own judgments (application of concepts to external objects) by comparing them to those of other humans (cf. Kripke 1982: 3, 79, 89; Malcolm 1986: chapter

9). Other humans – having the same object in view – can agree or disagree in their applications. In the absence of other humans who can correct one's applications of concepts to phenomena, there is no room for error, and hence no room for *correct* use of linguistic items.

It is in this sense, among others, that language is public, or so Wittgenstein and certain other analytic philosophers would claim. Davidson concurs with Wittgenstein to a considerable extent: "[U]nless a language is shared, there is no way to distinguish between using the language correctly and using it incorrectly; only communication with another can supply an objective check" (Davidson 1991b: 157).

I do not wish to imply that arguments against non-public or "private" languages are unassailable. The point is rather that Lakoff/Johnson do not discuss the reasoning behind Wittgenstein's and Davidson's stance, let alone offer counterarguments.

The remaining aspects of tenet A2 as expounded by Lakoff/Johnson (1999: chapter 21) are no less problematic. How are we to construe the contention that meaning is "objective"? Given Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 201–202) explanation, we have already shown that this doctrine is not shared by Davidson (cf. 4.5.2). If "objectivity" in this context implies the absence of "any significant role played by human bodies, brains, and minds" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 443), Lakoff/Johnson are again mistaken in attributing the tenet that linguistic meaning is objective to Davidson. In setting great store by shared reactions to stimuli as a precondition of language, and in emphasizing the role of interpretation in his account of meaning, Davidson does acknowledge the importance of human bodies and minds (cf. Davidson 1984b [1973], 1991b; de Caro 1999a). Incidentally, for Davidson meaning *is* objective, but objectivity takes on a sense that seems entirely compatible with Lakoff/Johnson's approach. Objectivity is conceived as "the awareness of the possibility of being wrong" (Davidson 1999: 194) which underlies language and thought.

Lakoff/Johnson again exploit ambiguities (different senses of *objective*): The kind of objectivity Lakoff/Johnson seem to dismiss is not the one actually posited by analytical philosophers like Davidson. Recall that Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 227) themselves attempt to save the idea of objectivity, but fail to give a genuine elucidation of their conception. In the case at hand the authors do not clarify whether "objective" is to be construed as a synonym of "mind-independent", nor do they explain the latter term in sufficient detail.

If Lakoff/Johnson's account is to be an accurate presentation of analytical philosophers' position, "mind-independence" of meanings should be cashed as follows: Meaning is not reducible to mental representations, which are internal to a human being (cf. Putnam 1981: chapter 1; Blackburn 1984: chapters 2 to 3; Pears 1988). The latter position does *not* imply that the meanings of lexemes in natural languages are mind-independent *in the sense* that they exist independently of the workings of human minds. Yet, Lakoff/Johnson appear to attribute such a stance to analytical philosophers in a passage summarizing Lakoff/Johnson's own position, which is held to contrast with the objectivist view:

> Words [...] conventionally express concepts, which **reside in human minds** and which ... get their meaning via their embodiment. Each of us ... forms conceptual categories of embodied perceptions, actions, and other experiences. That is, we conceptualize the world through our embodied experiences and the shaping provided by the **structures of our bodies and brains**. (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 442–443 [emphasis mine])

It is open to question whether analytic philosophers were inclined to take issue with Lakoff/Johnson's position if spelt out properly. The catch is that Lakoff/Johnson's claim that concepts "reside in human minds" is a metaphor in need of elucidation. In a sense, meanings and concepts do not reside in human minds. Part of the reason for disputing this idea can be gathered from the above discussion of arguments against private languages, as well as from Putnam (1981: chapter 1). However, few (if any) analytical philosophers promote the view that meanings are mind-independent in the sense that the 'structure of human brains' plays no role in their acquisition (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 442–443). Lakoff/Johnson themselves do not give pertinent citations corroborating their tacit attributions. The authors' presentation again seems to capitalize on the ambiguity of central terms, in this case *mind-independence*: In one sense analytical philosophers do advocate the view that meanings are mind-independent, but not in the sense Lakoff/Johnson try to undermine.

True, languages and meanings can in a sense be regarded as abstract and "mind-independent" objects along the lines of Lewis (1975), but this is just a convenient theoretical decision concerning the way actual languages are *described.* The term *abstract language* is merely a theoretical concept which enables us to describe real languages; abstract languages should not be identified with real languages (cf. Davidson 2001c [1992]: 108). Davidson clearly distinguishes these different senses of the word *language* (cf. Davidson 2001c [1992]: 110). There is no reason to suppose that someone

who resorts to a *description* of language in terms of abstract objects must deny the fact that human bodies and minds play a crucial role in the emergence of real languages (and the meanings expressed in real languages).

The following passage from Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 442) sheds further light on their account of mind-independence and objectivity. To grasp its main thrust, we should keep in mind that Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 442) are concerned with two "folk theories" of meaning as center-pieces of analytic philosophy. The first one says that "words pick out things in the world". It is called THE NAMING FOLK THEORY. The second folk theory says that *Learning the meanings of words is learning to name things correctly.* Lakoff/Johnson label this theory THE MEANING FOLK THEORY. These folk theories are believed to form the basis of what the authors dismiss as an erroneous objectivist conception of meaning. Following the authors, these two folk theories can be combined with the Thought as Language metaphor (which treats concepts as linguistic symbols), yielding a view in which "concepts (represented by linguistic symbols) are seen as picking out things in the world and thus assigning meaning to words." Lakoff/Johnson assert that the conception of meaning resulting from this view is characteristic of analytic philosophy:

> This makes all meaning **mind-independent, objective, and publicly accessible**. **Since** the words of a language have an **objective existence** and are **publicly accessible**, and **since** entities in the world have a **mind-independent, objective, and publicly accessible existence**, **it follows** that meaning (the relation between the two) has a **mind-independent, objective, and publicly accessible existence**. (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 442 [emphasis mine])

Davidson's view is more subtle than Lakoff/Johnson's sketch suggests. Davidson does *not* describe words and meaning – characterized by Lakoff/Johnson as "the relation" between words and entities in the world – as "objective" and "mind-independent". On the contrary, he regards them as *constructs*: "Words and one or another way of connecting them with objects are constructs we need to implement the theory" (Davidson 1984f [1977]: 225). Constructs are by their nature neither mind-independent nor objective (at least "objective" in the intuitive sense; as already noted, it is not transparent how Lakoff/Johnson use the term).

Contrary to Lakoff/Johnson's assumptions, the "formal philosopher" Davidson does not take as his all-important point of departure "the naming folk theory", which encapsulates the belief that words "pick out" real-world

objects. Witness Davidson (1984f [1977]: 225): "Reference ... plays no essential role in explaining the relation between language and reality." Davidson (1984f [1977]: 220) even contends that "words have no function save as they play a role in sentences."

A close look at Lakoff/Johnson's account reveals that the authors resort to characteristic strategies that will frequently be encountered in our discussion. A combination of causal constructions and rhetorical repetitions creates a semblance of coherence, which on close inspection turns out to be absent from Lakoff/Johnson's exposition. The repetitive phrases and causal constructions are emphasized in the above quote from Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 442).

It is not immediately obvious why the fact that *words* have an "objective existence" as symbols, and the fact that *external objects* are mind-independent and objective, should imply that *meaning* is objective and mind-independent (cf. the above passage from Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 442). At least sometimes, Lakoff (1987) himself seems to subscribe to the view that meanings can be captured in terms of mental images, which are subjective (cf. chapter 5). Meanings might therefore be considered subjective, even though external objects are mind-independent and objective. Granted, in a certain sense the objectivity of meanings may indeed follow from the objectivity of external objects, but Lakoff/Johnson's exposition does not show why.

Let us now turn to the third assumption Lakoff/Johnson attribute to analytical philosophers (A3), which states that "[t]he meaning of a linguistic expression is given by what it can correspond to in the world" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 443). To show that Davidson has a more complex conception of meaning, it suffices to contrast Lakoff/Johnson's attribution with Davidson's statement that "the meaning (interpretation) of a sentence is given by assigning the sentence a semantic location in the patterns of sentences that comprises the language" (Davidson 1984f [1977]: 225).

The fourth tenet discussed by the authors will be commented on in detail below; the problems raised by the fifth one have already been pointed out. That Davidson is not committed to the sixth assumption mentioned by the authors ("meaning is disembodied") emerges from 4.5.3.

Let us therefore turn to the doctrine Lakoff/Johnson refer to as A7, which is Cartesian in spirit: "We can, just by thinking about our own ideas and the operations of our own minds, with care and rigor, come to understand the mind accurately and with absolute certainty" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 444). A7 seems to be a rephrasing of an assumption criticized in an

earlier chapter: "The mind can know its own ideas with absolute certainty" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 392). According to Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 397), analytical philosophers tend to hold that this knowledge is acquired through *introspection*.

A7 does not reflect the stance of analytic philosophy in general. Numerous thinkers, including Davidson, "reject Cartesianism about our mental states and hold that the contents of our mental states depend, at least in part, upon social and environmental factors" (Ludlow 1999: 159). This anti-Cartesian stance is often called *externalism*. For theorists like Putnam, who is also supposed to adhere to A7 (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 444), adopting an externalist position implies rejecting the Cartesian idea of self-knowledge acquired solely through introspection (cf. Ludlow 1999: 159).

Externalism thus seems to be in conflict with A7. Externalists like Putnam believe that "thinking about our own ideas and the operations of our own minds" does *not* suffice for grasping "the mind accurately and with absolute certainty" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 444).

Davidson has advanced arguments for the view that there is no conflict between externalism and self-knowledge (Davidson 1984h, 1987, 1989a, 1989b). Contrary to Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 397), these arguments differ considerably from those of Descartes (cf. Ludlow 1999). Not even Davidson advocates A7 in the sense of Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 44), since he does not grant humans "absolute certainty" as concerns their self-knowledge (cf. Davidson 1987: 441).

Tenet A8 is another example of Lakoff/Johnson's pervasive strategy of repeating, rather than adequately explaining, their contentions:[39]

> A8. Since philosophical reflection is sufficient, no empirical study of language or thought is necessary. Only training in philosophical analysis via self-reflection is sufficient to answer philosophical questions, especially questions about the nature of meaning and truth. No empirical study is necessary; nor could it add anything. (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 443–444)

The first assertion is incomplete and could be dispensed with. It prompts two questions: "Sufficient for what?" and "Necessary for what?" It is only in the following sentences that Lakoff/Johnson supply the missing information.

Why should analytic philosophers hold that "empirical study ... could not add anything"? Lakoff/Johnson's parlance is vague. If Lakoff/Johnson are to be construed as saying that empirical studies do not yield a *philoso-*

phical analysis of meaning, then A8 is almost truistic: Only philosophical analyses can 'add something' to philosophical accounts of meaning.

It may be true that empirical research in general can contribute to solving philosophical questions. Some theorists such as Quine (1960) assume that "epistemology itself must be informed by the psychological and neurobiological data that bear upon how in fact we represent and model the world" (Churchland/Sejnowski 1999: 133). Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 444) are therefore mistaken in implicitly attributing A8 to Quine.

The final tenet to be expounded is A4, which relates to the so-called correspondence theory of truth: "A sentence is true if the words fit the state of affairs in the world" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 443). Lakoff/Johnson object to the "objectivist" version of this theory, which considers truth "a matter of correspondence between symbols and a mind-, brain-, and body-independent world" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 99). Objectivists are claimed to conceptualize truth as independent of human understanding (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 184). Since Lakoff (1988: 122) uses the term *objectivism* synonymously with *metaphysical realism*, we can make the above more precise by saying that Lakoff/Johnson repudiate the metaphysical realist's idea of truth. Metaphysical realists define truth "in terms of a single, antecedently-singled-out, relation of correspondence" (Putnam 1983f: 277).

Why should analytical philosophers subscribe to A4? Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) answer is characteristically brief. They claim that the correspondence theory "follows immediately" from the Thought As Language metaphor combined with the two folk theories that "words pick out things in the world" and that "learning the meanings of words is learning to name things correctly" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 442):

> **If** words get their meaning by picking out things in the world, **then** sentences express propositions about the world in itself and those propositions are true just in case the words fit the world. **Because of this**, analytic philosophy winds up with a truth-conditional theory of meaning ... **As a consequence**, all meaning is literal, objective, and disembodied. (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 443 [emphasis mine])

As can be gleaned from the last sentence, Lakoff/Johnson's account purports to explain not only why analytical philosophers advocate A4, but also why they subscribe to some other tenets cited above, viz. that "meaning is objective" (A2), that meaning is always "literal" (A5), and that it is "disembodied" (A6).

That Lakoff/Johnson's sketch of the arguments underpinning the objectivist stance is mistaken once again emerges from a closer look at Davidson's theory. As already observed, Davidson neither accepts the Thought As Language metaphor, nor does his philosophy proceed from the assumption that expressions "pick out" real-world objects. The second folk theory referred to by the authors is formulated too vaguely to allow discussion. Lakoff/Johnson's presentation does not capture Davidson's position for yet another reason: Davidson does not believe that sentences relate to an unconceptualized reality[40] (cf. Davidson 1984e [1974]: 198). It is open to doubt whether Lakoff/Johnson's presentation is true of even one of the philosophers cited by Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 444) as champions of the tenets under scrutiny. The authors provide no evidence in favor of their account.[41]

Let us finally focus on tenet A4 as such. Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 444) cite ten philosophers and one philosophical movement as advocates of A4: Frege, Russell, Carnap, the Vienna Circle in general, Quine, Goodman, Davidson, Putnam, Kripke, Montague, and Lewis. Lakoff/Johnson's attribution is not true of the Vienna Circle *tout court* and definitely false or highly misleading for at least seven of the analytical philosophers on target.

A look at Frege (1993 [1918]) confirms that not even the founding father of "the Fregean tradition" adopted a correspondence theory of truth. In fact, Frege considered truth to be indefinable (cf. also Dummett 1981: 442–443). Similar observations apply to other leading exponents of the "Fregean tradition" mentioned by Lakoff/Johnson. Thus, Neurath – a member of the Vienna Circle – subscribed to the *coherence* rather than the *correspondence* theory (cf. Neurath 1932–33, 1934; Ayer 1982: 124–125; Vision 1988: 90). Hempel, another principal member of the Vienna Circle, also rejected the idea of correspondence (cf. Hempel 1935: 51; Walker 1989: 172). Hence, it is mistaken to claim that the Vienna Circle in general embraced A4, the more so since its leading exponent, Carnap, does not qualify as a correspondence theorist either. Carnap espoused a *coherence* theory of truth for a time – rather than a *correspondence* theory (cf. Carnap 1932–33; Ayer 1982: 124–125; Vision 1988: 90).

What about the philosophers Quine, Goodman, Davidson, Putnam, and Kripke, who are also supposed to espouse A4? Quine does not adopt A4, at least not the metaphysical realist ("objectivist") version of A4 which is unpalatable to Lakoff/Johnson. As Quine (1981: 39) observes, "it is idle to say that true sentences are sentences that fit the facts, or match the world; also pernicious, in creating an illusion of explanation" (cf. also Quine 1981:

21–22, 316; Putnam 1983e: 223; Davidson 1990: 298). This much can already be gathered from Lakoff/Johnson's own account, given some chapters earlier. Following Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 101), the insight that the correspondence theory "is in serious trouble on all fronts" is to a considerable extent due to Quine.

That Putnam dismisses the kind of correspondence theory Lakoff/Johnson consider untenable likewise follows from Lakoff/Johnson's (1999: 101) own account given in an earlier chapter. Note that Lakoff/Johnson do not refer to philosophical views held by Putnam prior to his publications on internal realism.

Similarly, Goodman does not adopt A4, contending instead that "truth cannot be defined or tested by agreement [of statements] with 'the world'" (Goodman 1978b [1975]: 17; cf. also Goodman 1978a: 94). That Goodman does not accept the view that "[a] sentence is true if the words fit the state of affairs in the world" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 443) is also reflected in his rejection of references to "the world". Goodman himself tends to put "the world" in quotation marks (e.g., Goodman 1978b [1975]: 4, 17).

Even a supposedly typical "objectivist" such as Davidson (1990) explicitly repudiates A4; even in his earlier writings Davidson does not advance a correspondence theory of the type Lakoff/Johnson are opposed to, i.e., the metaphysical realist's idea of truth (cf. Davidson 1984c [1974]: 151–153; Putnam 1983f: 81–82, 277).

Finally, Kripke is not a correspondence theorist either. That Kripke is opposed to correspondence theories of truth emerges from his approving review of Wittgenstein's position on this theme (cf. Kripke 1982: 78–79).

The conclusions to be drawn from the considerations raised in this section tie in with those familiar from earlier sections. The scarcity of relevant citations, the vagueness of Lakoff/Johnson's contentions, and the sketchiness of their exposition of experientialist and objectivist arguments is equally apparent in Lakoff/Johnson (1999) as in Lakoff/Johnson (1980). At least a great number of the authors' claims are either inaccurate or clearly false.

4.7 Experientialist philosophy by other cognitivists

The present section throws into relief some parallels between Lakoff/Johnson's approach to philosophical issues and the one adopted in recent works by other cognitivists. Various contributions to experientialist

philosophy will be scrutinized. We will also examine an important contemporary review of Lakoff (1987). The account given below is based on Haser (2003).

Detailed references to particular philosophers are relatively rare not only in Lakoff/Johnson's works, but also in publications by some other experientialists. Rather than referring to particular authors, cognitivists often use general labels, especially the highly problematic term *objectivism* (e.g., Sweetser 1999: 142; Geeraerts 1999: 169; Sinha 1999: 228; Harder 1999: 201). In some cases, references *are* provided, yet the authors do not take into consideration key statements contained in the publications they quote. Sinha's account of the "objectivist" Frege is a case in point:

> In Frege's philosophy of language (Frege 1892), and in the Objectivist tradition which he initiated, sense is defined as that which permits *true* reference, or **correspondence**, between expressions and extra-linguistic 'states of affairs.' The logical development of this approach, in some interpretations of formal semantics, leads to the counter-intuitive conclusion that **the reference of a linguistic expression is not the state(s) of affairs to which it corresponds, but a *truth-value***. This peculiar and highly abstract conception of reference is part of the price paid by formal semantics for excluding human speakers and their psychological processes from its frame of reference. (Sinha 1999: 238 [my emphasis in boldface])

We have already noted in the preceding section that Frege did not espouse a correspondence theory of truth. Sinha is also mistaken in holding that Frege considers states of affairs to be "extra-linguistic". For Frege "[f]acts, as true thoughts, ... belong, not to the realm of reference, but to that of sense" (Dummett 1981:442).

Contrary to Sinha's assumptions, the equation of the reference of sentences with truth-values is not a "logical development of this [Frege's] approach, in some interpretations of formal semantics", but already present in Frege's own theory. This much transpires from the very article referred to by Sinha, viz. Frege (1892): "We are therefore driven into accepting the *truth value* of a sentence as constituting its reference" (Frege 1993 [1892]: 29 [emphasis original]).

The emphasis on "true" in Sinha's explanation of Fregean sense is unwarranted ("sense is defined as that which permits *true* reference"). What is true reference? And what, for that matter, is "false" reference? What Sinha may have in mind here are utterances such as *Look, this is Bill Clinton!*, where the speaker erroneously believes himself to be referring to Clinton, while actually the person in front of him is Clinton's double. There seems

to be no reason to deny that this sentence or its constituents have a sense. Hence, if "sense is [indeed] defined as that which permits *true* reference", it is equally defined as 'that which permits *false* reference' (if there is such a thing). The emphasis on "true" is not only otiose, but also out of keeping with Frege's parlance. According to Frege, the reference of sentences may not only be "the True", but *also* "the False". This much again transpires from the very paper referred to by Sinha:

> We are therefore driven into accepting the *truth value* of a sentence as constituting its reference. By the truth value of a sentence I understand the circumstance that it is true or false. There are no further truth values. For brevity I call the one the True, the other the False. (Frege 1993 [1892]: 29 [emphasis original])

Sinha's use of the phrase "true reference" does not do justice to Frege's conception for yet another reason. "True" does not serve as a *modification* of reference; rather, Frege (1993 [1892]) *equates* the reference of sentences with "the True".

The treatment of philosophical topics, then, is not always satisfactory. This impression is confirmed by the passage cited below from Harder (1999), which makes no mention of influential arguments by thinkers such as Wittgenstein[42] to the effect that solipsism is incoherent. Solipsism is the stance which is opposed to what Harder calls 'objectivism about the world'.

> The overall ontological position that is presupposed in the following is **realism, which is sometimes called objectivism;** but it should be added that there is an important difference between being an objectivist about the world and being an objectivist about meaning. An **objectivist about the world** ... believes that the world exists independently of his perception and understanding ... An objectivist about meaning believes that word meaning can be translated into mind-independent 'objective' categories – which is a different matter. I have no way of proving realism about the world, **since I cannot escape from my own cognitive universe**, but this does not prevent me from saying that this is what I believe, any more than lack of access to direct experience of **other people's pain** would prevent me from saying that I believe other people also feel pain. (Harder 1999: 201 [emphasis mine])

The very example chosen by Harder, the concept of *pain* or *bodily sensation* in general, was analyzed by Wittgenstein in his arguments against the possibility of so-called private languages (cf. *Philosophical Investigations* §§ 243–315). Following Wittgenstein, discriminating references even to a

supposedly "private" phenomenon such as pain are impossible for a solipsist who rejects "objectivism about the world". Taking his lead in part from Wittgenstein, Davidson (1991b: 160) has urged that "[k]nowledge of our own minds and of the minds of others are mutually dependent." Having thoughts and having knowledge about one's own thoughts is possible only on the basis of knowledge of other minds: "Third person knowledge – knowledge of other minds – is ... conceptually basic." Davidson (1991a: 191) holds that "such knowledge is impossible without knowledge of a shared world of objects in a shared time and space." Thus, the picture that emerges from Harder's exposition in the above passage – primacy of what Harder calls "my own cognitive universe" over knowledge about others and the world – has been shelved by leading analytic philosophers. In subsequent sections, Harder himself comes close to the doctrine prevalent in much of analytic philosophy, emphasizing, for example, the "functional grounding of cognitive phenomena in human interaction" (Harder 1999: 204).

The previously cited landmark papers by Davidson are designed to undermine skepticism about the reality of the world. Davidson (1991a, 1991b) would not deny one of Harder's (1999: 201) central observations: The assumption that 'the world exists independently of one's perception and understanding' is not susceptible of proof. Such proofs are unnecessary, however: Skepticism is in a non-trivial sense unintelligible (cf. Davidson 1991a, 1991b). Davidson shows that the case against skepticism and *for* 'objectivism about the world' can be advanced in a more satisfying way than by merely affirming one's intuitions along the lines of Harder (1999: 201) ("but this does not prevent me from saying that this is what I believe"). Harder's exposition recalls Lakoff/Johnson's account as outlined in this chapter, which frequently does not go beyond the programmatic.

Geeraerts (1999) raises similar objections. The author regards the philosophy of Feyerabend as a version of internal realism:

> There is, in fact, a particular conception of the philosophy of science that embodies such an internal-realistic view, viz. the paradigmatic theory of science as represented by Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, and Paul Feyerabend. (Geeraerts 1999: 168)

Feyerabend's thinking is at odds with Putnam's outlook. It is therefore misleading to advert to the by now well-established term coined by Putnam and closely associated with Putnam's theory (*internal realism*) in this context. The main trouble is that Feyerabend's position – as opposed to Put-

nam's internal realism – is not a version of realism in the first place, whether internal or external (cf. Putnam 1978a: 22–30). What Putnam calls "realism" in science is incompatible with a stance – such as Feyerabend's and to some extent Kuhn's – that jettisons

> the belief in any describable world of unobservable things [e.g., electrons], and [accepts] ... in its place the belief that all the 'unobservable things' (and, possibly, the observable things as well) spoken of in any generation's scientific theories, including our own, are *mere* theoretical conveniences, destined to be replaced and supplanted by quite different and unrelated theoretical constructions in the future. (Putnam 1978a: 29 [emphasis original])

Nothing much hinges on whether or not we take the term *internal realism* to refer more generally to the stance advocated by cognitive linguists, or specifically to Putnam's position.[43] Thus, Lakoff (1987: 262) approvingly expounds Putnam's thoughts about reality: Given a certain conceptual scheme, it would be correct to claim that a chair is a collection of molecules. Lakoff, then, does not share Feyerabend's view. He rejects the idea that unobservable things such as molecules or electrons are 'mere theoretical conveniences' (cf. the above quote from Putnam 1978a).

A shortcoming of recent publications in cognitive linguistics that emerges from the foregoing discussion is the overly liberal use of labels such as *internal realism* and, above all, *objectivism*. There is another tendency observable in numerous publications that recalls Lakoff/Johnson's treatment of non-cognitivist scholars: Some authors display a penchant for investing basic tenets of cognitive linguistics with a uniqueness they do not possess. For instance, Sweetser (1999: 133) does not acknowledge the writings of major philosophers heralding a genuinely experientialist style of thinking:

> All of the last two decades of work in cognitive linguistics has radically changed our understanding of semantics. What has emerged is a semantics which is attempting to be cognitively realistic – it takes seriously the need for semantic categories to be humanly accessible and learnable, and for them to be processed against the kinds of frameworks genuinely involved in the process of understanding. As a result, there is now a community of semanticists who no longer think that meaning is a set of binary features, corresponding to objective truth-conditional relationships between form and real world.

Philosophers such as Kant, Peirce, Putnam, Dummett, and Goodman have waged sustained campaigns against such dogmas well before the heyday of cognitive linguistics (cf. Goodman 1978a; Dummett 1979; Putnam 1983f: 272).

Sinha's (1999: 242) appraisal of cognitive linguists' attack on Fodor's "Language of Thought" hypothesis presents another example of how congenial research by non-experientialists may be relegated to the sidelines, or not acknowledged at all. Sinha does not mention the formidable battery of counterarguments to Fodor's hypothesis from camps other than cognitive linguistics – notably Wittgenstein-inspired philosophy and connectionism (cf. Marras 1973; Churchland 1980; Schiffer 1987; Thornton 1998).

> If these results **of cognitive linguistic research** are well known, and the consequent empirical defeat of the Classical-Symbolic 'Language of Thought' hypothesis is self-evident, why, you might ask, harp on about what **many cognitive linguists** must regard as old news? (Sinha 1999: 242 [emphasis mine])

Let us now concentrate on some examples of cognitivist philosophy. Their intrinsic interest notwithstanding, some of the philosophical arguments offered by cognitive linguists have affinities with Lakoff/Johnson's line of reasoning as expounded above and in the preceding chapter. Consider, for example, Geeraerts' (1999) discussion of internal realism. Internal realism revolves around a conception of knowledge as a "construction" relative to a conceptual scheme. On a meta-level, this assumption might prove a boomerang, or so Geeraerts (1999) argues.

> In our case, questions about the objectivity of semantics arise. ... If it does not only deal with the way in which the speakers of a language construct interpretations for the expressions they encounter, but if semantics itself imposes interpretations on its subject matter, what claims to objectivity can it make? It's like the Liar's Paradox, is it not? If you are Cretan and claim that all Cretans are liars, you undermine your own statement. In the same way, if you claim **that all human knowledge is a non-objectivist construction**, you inevitably **undermine your own position, to the extent that you suggest that your own general statement is something of a construction**. (Geeraerts 1999: 169 [emphasis mine])

On close scrutiny, Geeraerts misstates the thrust of internal realism. If the analogy with the Liar's Paradox is granted, Geeraerts' statement that internal realists 'undermine their own position' should be interpreted as follows:

Internal realists are forced to admit the falsity or non-objectivity of their position. Geeraerts is not explicit here. What looks like an explication of *undermine* turns out to be little more than a vague restatement of the assumption Geeraerts tries to refute, which is also formulated rather vaguely. These are the basic steps in his argument:

(i) Geeraerts' point of departure, i.e., the position which he tries to refute, is the claim that "all human knowledge is a non-objectivist construction."
(ii) What follows from this position, according to Geeraerts, is that "you inevitably undermine your own position."
(iii) This claim is explicated as follows: "undermine ... to the extent that you suggest that your own general statement is something of a construction."

Note in particular the vague modification "something of" in "something of a construction". What is the problem with a statement being "something of a construction"? How precisely should we construe Geeraerts' contention that "all human knowledge is a non-objectivist construction"?

According to Geeraerts, the assumption (i) that "all knowledge is a non-objectivist construction" implies that this statement is itself "non-objectivist". This implication, i.e., (ii) and (iii) above, is a logical truth. Assumption (i) itself is a statement expressing knowledge; and *all* knowledge is a non-objectivist construction according to (i); hence this is also true for (i). The problem with Geeraerts' reasoning is this: Statements (ii) and (iii) are no more explicit than (i) itself. Unfortunately, the interpretation of assumption (i) is not clear. Avoiding the question what is entailed by his reference to a "non-objectivist" construction, Geeraerts moves almost imperceptibly from "non-objectivist" (in [i]) to 'not objective', which is implicitly contained in (ii) and (iii): (ii) and (iii) boil down to Geeraerts' claim in the first sentence from the above excerpt ("questions about the objectivity of semantics arise"). Such an equation of "non-objectivist" (or internal realist) and 'not objective' does not jibe with Putnam's exposition of the theme or that of congenial thinkers (cf. Putnam 1983e: 225–226; Putnam 1988: 109). For Putnam, the fact that something is a "construction" does not imply that it is "subjective".

It might have been worthwhile to discuss in greater detail the problem of objectivity in Putnam's works (e.g., Putnam 1981: chapter 6; Putnam 1988: 109–116). Goodman and Putnam have offered arguments for the view that

there are "many right versions of the world" (Putnam 1983d: 179), that "rightness is relative to medium and message" as well as to "task and technique" (Putnam 1983e: 226). This philosophical stance is already expressed in the title of Goodman (1978a), "Ways of worldmaking". Putnam (1988: 115–116) gives a neat summary of Goodman's and his own position:

> ... the suggestion which constitutes the essence of 'internal realism' is that truth does not transcend use. Different statements – in some cases, even statements that are 'incompatible' from the standpoint of classical logic and classical semantics – can be true in the same situation because the words – in some cases, the logical words themselves, are used differently.

Geeraerts' (1999: 169) analogy to the Liar's Paradox is halting: Being a construction neither implies falsity nor subjectivity. The author's reasoning is thus not compelling. In its elusiveness Geeraerts' exposition of the problem of objectivity has affinities with Lakoff/Johnson's account of the same subject.

Let us now turn to a different example of cognitivist philosophy, viz. Sinha's (1999) comments on the notion of reference:

> The primordial 'pointing outwards' of reference implies a world whose *existence* is prior to any questions of the adequacy of our concepts. As Mill might put it, the existence of the 'thing itself' is presupposed by whatever beliefs we might wish to communicate about it. However, and here is where I perhaps want to take the argument a step further than Mill, this 'thing itself' only becomes a 'thing signified' by virtue of being referred to. (Sinha 1999: 234 [emphasis original])

Sinha's elucidation of the notion of *signification* strikes me as near-tautologous. Given Sinha's (1999: 234) near-equation of reference and signification ("[r]eference is irreducibly intentional, it involves the relationship of 'aboutness' [Searle 1983] which I call 'signifying'"), the last sentence quoted above can be paraphrased as follows: "... this 'thing itself' only becomes a 'thing referred to' by virtue of being referred to." What Sinha may have in mind, even though his formulation is elusive, is the insight that it is our concepts which bring about a "carving up" of the world into distinct entities (cf. Dummett 1981: 179).

The above passage exemplifies the elusiveness characteristic of cognitivist philosophy. Sinha's (1999) thoughts on the intersubjectivity of reference prompt similar objections. His reasoning illustrates another typical feature already noted with respect to Lakoff/Johnson's account: References

to philosophers who have proposed "experientialist" ideas are frequently not provided.

> The act of referring is *intersubjective* in its fundamental structure: I refer to something *for you*, in such a way that *you can share* my reference. (Sinha 1999: 234 [emphasis original])

Sinha's exposition does not cut very deep. Why could I not 'refer to something *solely for my own purposes*'? Sinha regards *intersubjective* attention (non-linguistic reference) to objects as crucial to language acquisition. He does not explain why it should be impossible for a language to be developed on the basis of merely subjective attention to objects. Sinha's (1999: 237) assumption is no doubt highly plausible that "[t]he construction of joint reference in infancy is ... a fundamental precondition for being able to signify semantic content in language." What needs to be shown, however, is that language *cannot* be acquired on an individualistic basis. A mere description of how children develop the ability to share attention with other humans does not amount to the philosophical argument Sinha claims to have provided (cf. Sinha 1999: 236–237). Wittgenstein does offer such an argument. The putative objectivist Davidson has developed this line of thinking somewhat further. Davidson attempts to demonstrate that determinate reference presupposes the presence of at least two speakers. Speech *depends* on a "triangle" relating two speakers to each other and to a shared environment (cf. Davidson 1991a).

Even though his principal ideas recall Davidson's proposals, Sinha makes no reference to the philosopher. On a more specific level, what Sinha describes as the "sharing of Figure-Ground articulation" crucial to intersubjective reference has its counterpart in Davidson's observation that "[w]ithout this sharing of reactions to common stimuli, thought and speech would have no particular content – that is, no content at all" (Davidson 1991b: 160; cf. also Evnine 1991).

The vagueness of experientialist doctrines is reflected in certain *reviews* of publications on cognitive semantics. It is particularly instructive to examine how much has come across to other congenial linguists. A striking example is Casad's (1992) review of Lakoff (1987):

> Lakoff devotes a considerable part of his time to placing the whole of cognitive linguistics in context, showing the common ground on which both the objectivist position and the experimentalist [sic] position stand. Lakoff labels the common ground BASIC REALISM and characterizes it in the following terms. Both the world external to human beings and human exis-

> lowing terms. Both the world external to human beings and human existence itself has a real existence. Within this existential sphere, there is some kind of a link between a multitude of varieties of reality and human conceptual systems. Whatever truth is, it is more than a matter of mere internal coherence to a given situation or system. We need to maintain some kind of a commitment to the stability of knowledge in the external world and we also reject the idea that all possible alternatives are equally valid, i.e. life in general is not random. (Casad 1992: 309–310)

The tenets Casad sets out to review as part of the "experimentalist" (i.e., experientialist) position can ultimately be traced to Putnam (1981). More precisely, Casad summarizes Lakoff's interpretation of Putnam's theory (cf. Lakoff 1987: 158, 261–266). The central difficulty with the above account is that Casad's phrasing is not transparent. To pinpoint a substantial philosophical position on the basis of his vague formulations is difficult.

How can we interpret the assertion that "we ... reject the idea that all possible alternatives are equally valid"? Which alternatives are meant? How does the indistinct idea that "life in general is not random" connect with this stance?

Casad's exposition raises further questions. How are we to construe the claim that "human existence itself has a real existence"? What would it mean to say that "existence" has only an "unreal" existence? In what sense can one predicate something of itself ('existence having an existence')? Furthermore, what is meant by "real" in this context ("human existence itself has a real existence") – especially given that there is, *ex hypothesi*, a "multitude of varieties of reality"?

Concerning the latter conception, what is a "multitude of varieties of reality"? How is a "multitude of varieties of reality" (where only one reality is posited) to be distinguished from a "multitude of realities"? If cognitive linguists have no answer to this question, the previously noted experientialist commitment to the "real existence" of "human existence" rests on even shakier grounds, with the term *real* in danger of being entirely drained of content.

The numerous hedges Casad resorts to are difficult to overlook. Pending clarification of how to interpret "life", "in general", and "random" in this context, it does not cut any theoretical ice to say that "life in general is not random". Similar observations apply to the idea that "there is **some kind of** a link between a multitude of varieties of reality and human conceptual systems" [emphasis added]. How to construe "link" in this connection, and what is meant by "conceptual system"? By the same token, it is not really

informative to assert that "[w]e need to maintain **some kind of** a commitment to the stability of knowledge in the external world" [emphasis added].

What is most striking about Casad's exposition is that he conflates the two most well-known types of truth theories. These two types of accounts, usually labeled *correspondence* and *coherence theories of truth*, are discussed in the chapter by Lakoff (1987) which is summarized in the above passage from Casad (1992). Correspondence theorists hold truth to be a correspondence of statements to a situation or the world, while coherence theorists define truth as an "internal" coherence of statements within an overall system of beliefs (cf. Solomon 1983: 176; Vision 1988; Walker 1989). Thus, the term *coherence* goes with the terms *internal* and *system* (*of beliefs*), but not with "... to a situation". On the other hand, the term *correspondence* goes with the term *situation*, but not with *internal* and *system* (*of beliefs*).

With this in mind, let us recall Casad (1992: 309–310): "Whatever truth is, it is more than a matter of mere internal coherence to a given situation or system." Casad seems to confuse coherence and correspondence theories, remixing the terms commonly used with reference to these two accounts.

It is not Casad (1992), however, who is the target of my charges. His mode of exposition reflects the difficulties faced even by sympathetic researchers attempting to distil a coherent line of reasoning from Lakoff's claims. Of particular interest in this context are the relevant sections from Lakoff (1987) that are surveyed in Casad's review. Consider the following observations in Lakoff (1987):

> Internal realism is a form of realism. What makes it a form of realism is:
> - a commitment to the existence of a **real** world external to human beings
> - a link between conceptual schemes and the world via **real** human experience; experience is not purely internal, but is constrained at every instant by the **real** world of which we are an inextricable part
> - a concept of truth that is based not only on internal coherence and 'rational acceptability,' but, most important, on coherence with our constant **real** experience
> - a commitment to the possibility of **real** human knowledge of the world
>
> What makes it 'internal' is that it does not take an external perspective that stands outside of **reality**. Rather, it focuses on the way that we make sense of **reality** by functioning within it. The internalist perspective acknowledges the contribution of our conceptual schemes to our understanding of our **real** experiences in a **real** world. (Lakoff 1987: 263 [emphasis mine])

Why this incessant repetition of the word *real*? The term is often dispensable and at times downright misleading. The phrase "real human knowledge", for example, has an air of tautology – not unlike Casad's reference to the existence of human existence: What is "unreal" knowledge? More seriously, helpful hints may be taken back or at least clouded by subsequent formulations emphasizing the word *real*. Consider Lakoff's assertion that experientialists hold that there exists a "real world external to human beings" (Lakoff 1987: 263; quoted above). This formulation allows us to identify a crucial difference between experientialism and idealism, a movement which is opposed to both experientialism and objectivism (cf. Lakoff 1988: 123). What idealism discards is the notion of a reality *independent* of ("external to") consciousness.[44] The sense of "real" at issue for experientialists can thus be glossed as "external to human beings", which is admittedly still rather vague. Yet, even this modest clarification of the term *real* is obscured once we emphasize the "reality" of experiences (cf. Lakoff's repeated reference to "real (human) experience"). The reason is this: Even for idealists our experiences are real, even though the "outside world" is not real *in the sense of* existing independently of consciousness. For example, "it is the contention of Berkeleyan idealists that the sentence 'x is real' or 'x exists', where x stands for a thing and not for a person, is equivalent to 'x is perceived' ..." (Ayer 1990 [1936]: 151).

The emphasis on "real" experiences is therefore far off the mark. There is no need for experientialism to defend the reality of our experiences against idealism. The constant repetition of the word *real* may be rhetorically effective (cf. particularly "our real experiences in a real world"), but it clouds the issue. Rhetoric takes precedence over argumentative accuracy.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has been concerned with Lakoff/Johnson's own exposition of philosophical topics on the one hand, and their presentation of objectivist ideas on the other. Lakoff/Johnson's own account is deficient in several ways. Their tenets often remain too vague to allow verification or falsification. A case in point is the experientialist account of objectivity, which Lakoff (1987: 265) considers a major contribution to contemporary philosophy. In other cases, Lakoff/Johnson's exposition is incoherent. Examples include Lakoff/Johnson's use of the term *myth* and their remarks on the possibility of objectivity. Another problem with Lakoff/Johnson's the-

ory is the absence of compelling arguments. Cardinal doctrines proposed by Lakoff/Johnson recall ideas put forward by analytical philosophers like Goodman and Putnam. In contrast to these theorists, Lakoff/Johnson put forward inconclusive arguments, or none at all, to bolster up their assumptions. Putnam and Goodman go unmentioned in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and are even criticized as part of the objectivist tradition in Lakoff/Johnson (1999).

My work leads me to deduce that Lakoff/Johnson's criticism of objectivism leaves as much to be desired as their own contribution to philosophy. Precise references and quotes are rarely given. Lakoff/Johnson's classification of major philosophical movements like the phenomenological tradition as objectivist is disputable. Lakoff/Johnson put forward contradictory claims concerning the merits of the Fregean tradition. Perhaps the most striking example of this inconsistency has been given in 4.5.1: While Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 256; 468) hold that their approach is "fundamentally at odds with analytic philosophy in any form, 'naturalized' or not", Lakoff (1987: 265) considers experientialism a refined "version of internal realism" as advanced by the analytical philosopher Putnam.

The various shortcomings noted with respect to Lakoff/Johnson (1980) have not been rectified in Lakoff/Johnson (1999). Quite to the contrary. The inadequacy of Lakoff/Johnson's presentation of rivaling theories emerges fully in Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) sketch of major doctrines the authors attribute to analytical philosophy. Their exposition is permeated with inaccuracies and mistakes. One example has brought home my point most forcefully: 10 philosophers and one philosophical movement (the Vienna Circle) are cited as endorsing, among other things, the objectivist correspondence theory of truth. Lakoff/Johnson's attribution is false or highly misleading for at least seven of these philosophers; furthermore, it does not apply to the Vienna Circle *tout court*. Lakoff/Johnson themselves implicitly contradict two of these attributions in a different chapter.

Writings by other cognitivists often exhibit certain similarities with Lakoff/Johnson's account. Most important, philosophical proposals by cognitivists are frequently vague or do not go beyond programmatic statements. In some cases, the philosophical works criticized are misrepresented.

Chapter 5
Cognitive semantics: The theoretical framework

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has largely been concerned with Lakoff/Johnson's general philosophical framework, with special emphasis on their relationship to influential philosophers and their account of the objectivist tradition. This chapter will focus on the experientialist theory of meaning in particular. The central characteristics of cognitive semantics emerge most clearly once we situate the movement in a larger tradition of philosophical thinking. This necessitates a brief recapitulation of two important tendencies in the philosophy of language that date back to ancient times.

If we are to trust standard accounts, Plato was the first exponent of what came to be known as philosophical *realism*. Traditionally opposed to nominalism, realism has been characterized as the "view ... that there must be something which unifies the different occasions on which a word is correctly used" (Dilman 1998: 124). In both the Platonic version of realism and its Aristotelian alternative, this task is performed by *universals*, which are conceived as *essences* common to all things of the same kind (hence the label *essentialism*). For classification, essences are frequently captured in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions (cf. Dilman 1978: 41; Givón 1986: 77). To give an example, a realist account of the category *game* makes appeal to a set of properties shared by all games. It is these common features which are believed to *justify* the application of a *single* term (*game*) to *different* entities (cf. Dilman 1981: 166).

A nominalist account runs as follows: All that the members of the category *game* have in common is a label. There seems to be no "objective justification" for our use of general terms (Bambrough 1960: 217); classification seems to be arbitrary (cf. also Dilman 1998: 124).

Granting for the sake of argument the psychological reality of necessary and sufficient conditions or *essences*, the question arises as to how they are mentally represented. John Locke has proposed a much disputed answer: The properties putatively shared by all members of a category are "contained in" an *abstract idea*, which constitutes the meaning of a general term (such as *horse*, *man*, *house*). Ideas are construed as images[45] or "go-between[s] ... between the one general name and the many particulars to-

wards which ... [they guide] the mind and to which ... [they apply]" (Dilman 1998: 149). Thus, on Locke's conception images play a major part in categorization. Representing the "mental counterpart" of the things we perceive, they enable us to categorize and so identify phenomena in the first place. 'Abstract ideas'

> are what enable us to classify things, to identify them as of this or that kind, and to name them. They are the *meanings* of the words we use to name them. When we use words correctly, *i.e.* in their meaning, it is these essences that guide us; and they can do so because we can form ideas of them – because they are mirrored in our minds. (Dilman 1998: 126 [emphasis original])

Locke's proposals to this effect in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Book III, chapter II) date back to Aristotle (*De Interpretatione* 16[a]3; cf. Blackburn 1984: 40–41). Though largely discarded in contemporary philosophy (cf. Blackburn 1984: 40), Locke's conception is still *en vogue* in certain schools of linguistic semantics, notably cognitive semantics. Lakoff (1987) attempts to capture the meaning of words like *cat* in terms of mental images (cf. 5.3). Images still play a major role in Lakoff/Johnson (1999). For example, the authors espouse the view that certain meanings are 'fundamentally imagistic' (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 79).

As we have seen, in Locke's work the idea of mental images and *essences* (roughly corresponding to necessary and sufficient conditions) are inextricably linked. Wittgenstein has advanced a devastating critique both of essentialism and of the popular appeal to mental images in semantics. The *locus classicus* of his exposition of the former topic is *Philosophical Investigations* (§§ 65–71). Wittgenstein's principal challenge is typically construed as a denial of the view that entities are grouped together in a certain category if and only if they share a common essence (which may be spelt out in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions for classification). According to Wittgenstein, category members may be united by no more than a number of crisscrossing similarities, comparable to the various resemblances displayed by different members of a family.

Wittgenstein's attack on mental-image theories of meaning and his remarks on family resemblances are related. Taking to heart his observations on family resemblances affords a new perspective on the presumed utility of mental images for semantics. More precisely, Wittgenstein's analysis of family resemblance concepts is designed to undermine our trust in abstractions as sources of meaning and understanding, with images representing

one particular kind of abstraction on target. If necessary and sufficient conditions are impossible to specify for some categories (or psychologically implausible to posit), the familiar move of invoking mental images to explain categorization loses much of its original attraction. Why should we posit general images (or other kinds of "ideas", or entities representing meanings) which cover and justify all applications of a term, if their central properties are difficult or impossible to spell out (cf. Kober 1996: 127–128)?

I will show that the conception of meaning displayed in Lakoff/Johnson's works runs counter to the overall drift of Wittgenstein's ideas. The cognitivist approach might initially give the impression of jettisoning those age-old dogmas Wittgenstein is concerned to combat. Yet, the very fallacies attacked by Wittgenstein sneak in through the back door. Both the position that mental images are central to semantics and the postulation of metaphorical concepts are, in some respects, "Platonic" conceptions in thin disguise. This is not to claim that cognitivists have adopted a Platonic *metaphysics*. It is rather the almost irresistible idea that something more fundamental than "mere" practice must be underlying our use of words which has been resuscitated in cognitive linguistics – in a way which repeats time-worn (mis)conceptions.

This chapter will be concerned with mental images and so-called "preconceptual structures", which are crucial to the cognitivist approach to meaning. The problems posed by metaphorical concepts will be developed in chapters 6 and 7. In chapter 7, family resemblances will play a major role in my refutation of Lakoff/Johnson's account of metaphor.

A note on terminology: Unless indicated otherwise, *concept/category* and *meaning* will be used interchangeably. What is called a *category* or *concept* from a purely cognitive point of view may correspond to a certain *meaning* (or at any rate, can usually be transformed into one if the need arises in a particular language). Precise definitions of these terms are notoriously difficult to come up with, but fortunately dispensable in the present context.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. Section 5.2 centers on the relation between family resemblances and mental images in Wittgenstein's philosophy. I will sketch Wittgenstein's arguments against assigning images a central function in semantics. The main emphasis of section 5.3 is on what might be called the Platonic thrust of experientialist semantics, reflected in the central role assigned to mental images. The arguments advanced by Wittgenstein against mental images as fundamental to semantics

can be marshaled as general objections to Lakoff's (1987) theory of meaning. Two examples will illustrate that Lakoff's account of meaning and truth does not carry conviction even if we adopt a psychological rather than a philosophical perspective. Section 5.4 will be devoted to the notion of *direct understanding*, which turns out to be incapable of forming the backbone of cognitive semantics as envisaged in Lakoff (1987). The concept of *direct understanding* is inextricably linked to the more general idea of *meaningfulness*, another key term in Lakoff's account of meaning. Section 5.5 examines the relationship between *meaningfulness* and *meaning*, which Lakoff (1987) fails to clarify. Several passages will be scrutinized which exemplify Lakoff's conflation of these two notions.

5.2 Family resemblances and mental images

The idea of family resemblances has left its stamp on linguistic and psychological work on categorization. References to the concept by linguists usually focus on a few paragraphs in the *Philosophical Investigations*. The present inquiry will also draw on other texts by Wittgenstein which bring out the central thrust of his argument. In *The Blue Book*, Wittgenstein's exposition of the subject is embedded in the context of a more general criticism of the endemic tendency in philosophical semantics to account for meaning in terms of abstractions, notably mental images. Wittgenstein's main target is a "craving for generality" (*The Blue and Brown Books*: 17) which results from certain long-standing misconceptions about the workings of language and categorization. Two tendencies are singled out as particularly problematic.

The first tendency is a widespread preoccupation with properties putatively shared by all objects or phenomena designated by a term. According to Wittgenstein, attempts to pinpoint such characteristics are often bound to fail – at least if the features are to be distinctive of a certain category, i.e., not only necessary but also sufficient for classification. The category *game* serves to illustrate Wittgenstein's proposals: Games are comparable to a family, with the individual games connected by "family likenesses". This analogy between categories and families, explored in detail in *Philosophical Investigations* (§§ 65–71), turns on the fact that family members typically resemble each other with respect to various "crisscrossing" similarities: Certain members have the same eyes, others the same chin, or forehead, etc. Similar observations can be made with respect to the individual

members of the category *game*. Some (but not all) games are amusing; some involve winning and losing; some games require particular skills ... On close inspection, we are hard pressed to specify shared characteristics which would enable us to identify the different kinds of activities commonly called games.

The second deep-rooted assumption Wittgenstein tries to undermine is the belief "that the man who has learnt to understand a general term, say, the term 'leaf', has thereby come to possess a kind of general picture of a leaf, as opposed to pictures of particular leaves" (*The Blue and Brown Books*: 18). A person who is to be taught the meaning of *leaf* will be presented with a number of instances of the concept. It would be fallacious to suppose, though, that the presentation of "particular leaves" eventually results in his grasping "an **idea** which we imagine to be some kind of general **image**" (*The Blue and Brown Books*: 18 [emphasis mine]). Furthermore,

> [w]e say that he sees what is in common to all these leaves; and this is true if we mean that he can on being asked tell us certain features or properties which they have in common. But we are inclined to think that the general idea of a leaf is something like a visual image, but one which only contains what is common to all leaves. ... This again is connected with the idea that the meaning of a word is an image, or a thing correlated to the word. (*The Blue and Brown Books*: 18)

By denying that the exemplars of categories need to have a common essence, Wittgenstein's account of family resemblances inspires mistrust in the plausibility of mental-image theories. Wittgenstein rejects the idea that meaning is contained in mental images. More radically, he is opposed to any philosophical semantics drawing on "mental entities", however defined (cf. Kober 1996: 126). Much of his later work is commonly considered a sustained campaign against the persistent belief that general terms essentially relate to non-linguistic entities, whether they are labeled universals, predicates, concepts, ideas, attributes, or images. To rehearse all of Wittgenstein's observations on this score is beyond the scope of the present work. I will limit myself to adumbrating the main outlines of a particularly well-known argument specifically concerned with mental images. Wittgenstein's thoughts on mental images will serve as a starting point for a criticism of Lakoff's conception of semantics as expounded in Lakoff (1987).

Perhaps the most accessible illustration of Wittgenstein's argument can be found in the *Philosophical Investigations* (§§ 139–140). It is not implau-

sible to assume that on hearing a word like *cube* a person associates the picture of a cube. Wittgenstein does not deny that at least in some cases such images may in fact be called to mind if the corresponding word is encountered. What he objects to, however, is the assumption that the potential presence of images can *explain* word meaning: Mental representations are at best circumstantial concomitants of our use of (certain) words (cf. Kober 1996: 127–130). They are irrelevant to word meaning inasmuch as they are susceptible to different interpretations. A picture which might be taken to represent a cube can equally be understood in a variety of other ways. The picture *per se* does not tell us how it should be taken – it does not "contain its application". What it signifies crucially depends on our "method of projection" (*Philosophical Investigations* §§139).

The picture itself is applicable to anything, at least in principle. For example, given a suitable method of projection, it could represent a pyramid (cf. Kober 1996: 126–127 for an in-depth account). Even if we focus on what a picture intuitively *suggests*, there are still numerous possibilities of interpretation. A treasure-chest, for example, differs greatly from a cardboard box. Still, suitable pictures can be taken to represent either the former or the latter, leaving it up to the "user" (interpreter) of the picture to decide on the correct interpretation.

Pictures and mental images, then, cannot be individuated on their own, i.e., pinned down as signifying one thing rather than another. A correlate of this impossibility is the problem of how to decide what entities count as their instantiations. Having nothing else to go on, we are hard put to judge whether an entity is correctly assigned to the category which the picture is supposed to represent. Whether or not an entity "fits" a picture, and is sufficiently *similar* to be included in the respective category, is not determined prior to the picture's application. Pictures as such cannot in principle fix the relevant similarities. Examples which illustrate this point will be given below.[46]

5.3 Mental images and experientialist semantics

How does Lakoff's approach fare in the light of the preceding observations? Consider his comments on sentence (1) below. Lakoff's (1987: 292–293) discussion is found in a sub-chapter which promises to delineate a *philosophical* approach to understanding that is claimed to compete with analytical philosophy (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: chapter 21).

(1) The cat is on the mat.

> The fit of the **direct understanding** of the sentence to the direct understanding of the situation works like this:
>
> - The **mental image associated with your basic-level concept of CAT** can accord with your perception of the overall shape of a cat.
> - The mental image associated with your basic-level concept of MAT can accord with your perception of a mat.
> - The image schemas that constitute your understanding of ON can accord with your perception of the relationship between the cat and the mat.
>
> If the direct understanding of the sentence is in overall accord with the direct understanding of the situation, then we can characterize truth relative to a direct understanding. (Lakoff 1987: 293 [emphasis mine])

What, then, is the gist of Lakoff's philosophical approach to meaning? In the immediately preceding section Lakoff (1987: 293) relates meaning to meaningfulness: "Meaning is not a thing; it involves what is meaningful to us." Meaningfulness can ultimately be traced to "preconceptual structure", which encompasses basic-level structure and image-schematic[47] structure (cf. Lakoff 1987: 296, 302). Basic-level structure in turn is, among other things, characterized as a matter of *images* (e.g., Lakoff 1987: 46). Hence, Lakoff's implicit proposal seems to be that we should conceive of meaning in terms of mental images. This is corroborated by Lakoff's claim that understanding the meaning of sentence (1) proceeds by way of grasping the images which supposedly correspond to the meanings of the individual words the sentence is composed of (cf. Lakoff 1987: 293; quoted above). These images may or may not "accord with" our "direct understanding of the situation" (recall that Lakoff fails to spell out the notion of "according" with something).

Lakoff/Johnson (1999) espouse the same view: Mental images, in conjunction with other preconceptual structures such as "motor programs" and "perceptual gestalts", are constitutive of concepts (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 116). The following sections mainly focus on mental images, as does Lakoff (1987: 293). We will see that all arguments against positing mental images as crucial to meaning can easily be applied to other preconceptual structures.

Lakoff's (1987: 291) reference to "directly understood" expressions, i.e., expressions that are linked to the images associated with "directly meaningful" basic-level and image-schematic concepts (Lakoff 1987: 292–

293), falsely suggests that certain images admit of one interpretation only, and are automatically interpreted in a certain way. Following Lakoff (1987: 291), basic-level concepts are "directly understood in terms of preconceptual structures in experience". Even if this supposition is granted, appeal to images or other preconceptual structures could not solve the philosophical problem of meaning: How can anything non-linguistic (e.g., a series of sounds, an image) come to *mean* something, and thus enable us to class together certain entities or phenomena in the world? *Saying that* meanings are understood via intermediaries (e.g., mental images) does not *explain how* this is possible, even if it is also assumed that these intermediaries admit only of one interpretation.

To resort to directly understood concepts amounts to pushing the problem to a different level, rather than solving it. It is crucial to note that Lakoff offers no arguments for the view that mental images or other mental structures are indeed intrinsically representational (and hence do not permit various interpretations). On the contrary, it can be shown that given Lakoff's exposition of the topic there is no reason to suppose this to be true. Now, it might even be the case that mental structures do exist which are intrinsically representational due to their *embodiment*. But then, the latter notion is familiar from philosophers such as Merleau-Ponty. As we shall see, there is nothing in Lakoff's discussion which presents an advance on this familiar idea; the details of his exposition are problematic.

Possibly, cognitivists might object to my use of the term "representation". Johnson/Lakoff (2002: 250) carefully eschew this term to avoid potential philosophical implications. However, I do not endorse the philosophical position the authors associate with this term. Following Johnson/Lakoff (2002: 250), the idea of representation suggests "an idealized cognitive model of mind with disembodied internal idea-objects that can somehow correspond to states of affairs in the external world." In fact, the word representation/representational could be replaced by terminology which the authors do not consider objectionable (e.g., *intrinsically representational* could correspond to *directly understood*, although it is not always quite transparent what Lakoff/Johnson mean by the latter phrase).

The present section explores in greater detail an issue broached above: Even from a purely cognitivist perspective adverting to images as the mental "representation" of meanings is not a solution to the pressing questions Lakoff purports to have answered. The arguments hinted at in 5.2 will be brought home more clearly. Even if there are sharp constraints on psychologically likely interpretations of images, these do not provide a sufficient

foundation for a *philosophical* theory of understanding which is supposed to form the basis of a theory of truth. This, however, is precisely what Lakoff's account is designed to do. Lakoff (1987: 268) characterizes "understanding in terms of meaningfulness [and hence meaning]"[48] and "truth in terms of understanding". As we have seen, "understanding" in turn seems to be conceived as the association of images, at least in some passages (cf. Lakoff 1987: 293).

The weak spots in Lakoff's model are exposed more clearly if it is transferred to somewhat different examples. I will argue that the same image which corresponds to *cat* is also "activated" by *feline* ('resembling a cat in any respect, cat-like in character or quality'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. feline*). *Feline* in this sense merely conveys the idea of 'resembling a cat', not of '*being* a cat'. How are speakers to sort out these crucial meaning differences if understanding the meaning of words rests on images? Little is gained by taking recourse to such representations: Images do not come with a label attached to them telling us how they are to be understood.

The following two sentences illustrate my point. Imagine a context where these sentences are uttered at the sight of a dog which has acquired feline characteristics:

(2) a. The feline one/feline entity is on the mat.
b. The cat is on the mat.

Sentences (2a) and (2b) presumably call forth identical images.[49] At the very least, the images invoked do not by themselves suggest that the sentences differ in meaning. Nevertheless, their sense *is* different, and so are their truth values vis-à-vis the same situation. Thus, suppose that I catch sight of a dog which for some reason has come to look very much like a cat, but is still identifiable as a member of its species. The dog is stretched out on a mat. If in this situation someone utters (2a), I will be inclined to agree, even though nothing could persuade me to assent to (2b).

In Lakoff's (1987: 293) parlance, we would have to say that in the case of (2a) the cat-image (called forth by *feline*) "accords" with the image of the entity observed, while in the case of (2b) *an equivalent image* (called forth by the word *cat* this time) does not. Or perhaps we should say that the representations connected to the words *feline entity* and *cat* "accord" with the image of the entity in both cases, but still there is "somehow" a difference in meaning, and hence truth value. Either way, images are of little help to theorists confronted with situations of this kind. The example shows

that it is not the images themselves which determine meaning, even if we presuppose psychologically plausible interpretations of these images.

To forestall potential objections to the above example on the grounds that (2a) contains additional lexical items not present in (2b), imagine that what we see on the mat is the skeleton of an elephantoid, i.e., an elephant-like animal that is now extinct. Suppose that in pointing to the mat someone tries to convince me that the following statements are true:

(3) a. The (skeleton of an) elephantoid is on the mat.
b. The (skeleton of an) elephant is on the mat.

The argument is exactly parallel to the one outlined above. In this case, (3a) would be true, while (3b) would be false: Not every elephantoid is an elephant. For example, the elephantoid on the mat is not an elephant, but merely an elephant-*like* animal.

The preceding discussion can be summarized by reflecting on the core assumption underlying Lakoff's approach. The tenet that a term like *cat* is understood via a mental image of a cat implies that we categorize entities as cats or non-cats depending on whether they are 'sufficiently similar' to the image representing cats. This interpretation is corroborated by a look at Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 123).[50] Let us grant Lakoff's account for the sake of argument and apply his reasoning to the term *feline*. In virtue of its meaning ('cat-like'), the term *feline* should be understood via the same image. The very definition 'cat-*like*' already indicates that the criteria offered by images for applying the term *feline* are the same as those available for applying the term *cat*: We categorize something as *feline* if it is sufficiently 'like a cat', and hence sufficiently similar to the image of a cat. The mental image approach thus merely allows us to stipulate that we categorize an animal as a *cat* if it is sufficiently similar to the image of a cat, and that we categorize an animal as *feline* if it is sufficiently similar to the image of a cat. Unfortunately, sufficient similarity in the former case is not the same as sufficient similarity in the latter. In the former case, it means "sufficiently similar" *to be called cat*, in the latter, it means "sufficiently similar" *to be called feline*. This clarifies the point made in 5.2: Even if images may be important from a psychological perspective, they do not provide a sufficient foundation for a theory of understanding which is supposed to form the basis of a theory of truth. It is precisely such a new philosophical theory of truth which Lakoff presumes to have originated (e.g., Lakoff 1987: 268). Images cannot constitute the moorings of a philosophical semantics; or at

least Lakoff does not show how. Similar observations apply to other preconceptual structures, such as motor programs. To see this, we simply have to replace talk of "sufficient similarity to an image" by "fit with a motor program" or "fit with a gestalt perception" (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 116). If a feline or an elephant-like animal is sufficiently similar in its overall behavior, bodily shape, etc., to a cat or elephant, the motor programs and gestalt perceptions applied to the feline or elephant-*like* animal will be the same as those we apply to real cats and elephants.

5.4 Basic-level categories and "direct understanding"

This section deals with those phenomena which in cognitive semantics seem to function as the self-interpreting structures that have been rejected as chimerical by Wittgenstein and other philosophers. Lakoff occasionally characterizes what he calls "preconceptual structures" as the self-interpreting basis of meaning. Following Lakoff (1987: 291),

> linguistic expressions **get their meanings** via (*a*) being associated directly with ICMs [*Idealized Cognitive Models*] and *(b)* having the elements of the ICMs [i.e., concepts] either be **directly understood in terms of preconceptual structures in experience**, or indirectly understood in terms of directly understood concepts plus structural relations. [emphasis mine]

Preconceptual structures are "directly meaningful" or "inherently meaningful" (Lakoff 1987: 268, 273, 292). Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 77) use the phrase *intrinsically meaningful* mental structures; a partial account of this topic is offered in Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 116). Lakoff (1987: 267) distinguishes between two central types of "inherently meaningful" structure: Basic-level structure and image-schematic structure.[51]

Lakoff's claims that basic-level structure is inherently meaningful and that some concepts are "directly understood" in terms of basic-level structure seem to imply that a certain level of classification is destined to be considered "basic". Put differently, certain concepts should be assumed to be basic-level concepts across individuals and cultures.[52] English *dog* and corresponding terms in other languages are candidates for such basic-level concepts. Lakoff's account seems to entail that concepts which roughly correspond to English *labrador* are invariably subordinate-level concepts. In other words, to "directly" understand the preconceptual experiences (images, etc.) called forth by the sight of a growling labrador would be

tantamount to understanding them in terms of a concept such as English *dog* rather than in terms of a concept such as *labrador*. After all, "basic-level categories are **defined** by the convergence of our gestalt perception, our capacity for bodily movement, and our ability to form rich mental images" (Lakoff 1987: 267 [emphasis mine]). These abilities are "innate" (cf. also Lakoff 1988: 150). Innate capacities of this kind should not be dependent on the culture one happens to live in or the language one happens to speak. Our interpretation is confirmed by the fact that basic-level structures are characterized as *pre*conceptual (cf. Lakoff 1987: 267). Given Lakoff's exposition, there seems to be no reason to believe that what constitutes a basic-level category is contingent on cultural or even personal factors.

Unfortunately, Lakoff's account is misleading. His enumeration of "defining" features of basic-level structure is in a crucial respect incomplete, and the attribute *preconceptual* inadequate. Basic-level concepts do vary from culture to culture, even from person to person (cf. Dougherty 1978; Ungerer/Schmid 1996: 70, 73). For this reason, "directly understood" concepts, which include basic-level concepts, also vary depending on one's cultural background, one's current interests, and other factors. The variability of basic-level structure is acknowledged in a different work by Lakoff himself (cf. Lakoff 1988: 134–135), but the author fails to draw the relevant conclusions from this finding. If basic-level structure is variable in the way outlined, it cannot simply be "**defined** by the convergence of our gestalt perception, our capacity for bodily movement, and our ability to form rich mental images" (Lakoff 1987: 267 [emphasis mine]). There are further factors at play, notably the overall cultural context in which the relevant categories have a certain function. It is therefore misleading to refer to basic-level concepts as *pre*conceptual (cf. Lakoff 1987: 267). Culture is in large part communicated via concepts. Lakoff's "preconceptual" understanding is not really preconceptual, but mediated by the concepts speakers have at their disposal.

Granted, some concepts *might* be universally situated at the basic level. This might be Lakoff's (1987: 302) reasoning, though he does not mention a single candidate which has been shown to be universal. Witness Lakoff (1987: 302): "[T]he principles determining basic-level structure are universally valid, though the particular concepts arrived at may differ somewhat." What Lakoff overlooks is that such differences are crucial to a theory of meaning and truth. Experientialism is supposed to offer such a theory. Moreover, it is mysterious how a few universal basic concepts – assuming they exist – can form the basis of an account of the almost infinitely many

other concepts in a language. A detailed and philosophically compelling explanation of how this can happen is not provided by the authors.

The notion of *direct understanding* is as misleading as the attribute *preconceptual*. Not even basic-level concepts are directly understood in the sense that they can be "directly" derived from bodily experiences. As noted above, even a single speaker can choose different levels as basic in different contexts. If the image formed on seeing a cat can – depending, e.g., on one's current interests – be either "directly interpreted" in terms of *felid*, *cat*, or *Siamese cat*, etc., this provides a further argument against adducing mental images as the key factor for understanding even basic-level concepts in the way sketched in Lakoff (1987: chapter 17). The author himself reminds us that human "concepts are structured, both internally and relative to one another" (Lakoff 1987: 267). He seems to assume that semantics must account for differences in meaning, such as the one between the words *cat* and *cherry*. The different interpretations of an image of a barking animal wagging its tail – in terms of the concept *labrador*, in terms of the concept *dog*, or in terms of the concept *pet* (etc.) – constitute such a semantic difference. Experientialist semantics cannot capture these differences in meaning. By Lakoff's own standards, it is not really a theory of meaning in the strict sense of the term.

That cognitive semantics is not a theory of meaning in the strict sense is even more obvious for abstract concepts putatively based on metaphorical transfer from source to target domain (cf. chapter 6). Pointing out that an abstract concept is motivated by its supposed source meaning (cf. Lakoff 1987: 268), which in turn 'accords with preconceptual structures', does not in the least explain why the relevant term has developed this particular abstract meaning among a range of other likely candidates.

The tension observed above between the tacit concession that concepts are only in part motivated by bodily experiences and the need to posit "mental structures" that are "inherently meaningful" can also be observed in Lakoff/Johnson (1999) (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 77). The basic message conveyed by Lakoff/Johnson (1999) is familiar from earlier publications by the authors. Witness Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 442): "Concepts ... get their meaning via their embodiment", with *embodiment* here simply relating to body-based experiences (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 43, 77, 116). I will not examine Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) general account of this subject in detail, since the major difficulties observed for Lakoff (1987) have not been remedied in the authors' later work. Note, however, that La-

koff/Johnson's more recent account of *metaphorical* concepts does take center stage in later chapters.

5.5 The foundation of cognitive semantics

Lakoff's reasoning concerning the foundations of cognitive semantics merits special attention:

> Basic-level and image-schematic concepts are **the foundations of** the approach. They are **directly meaningful, since** they put us in touch with preconceptual structures in our bodily experience and functioning in the world. **It is because** the body is in the mind ... that basic-level and image-schematic concepts are meaningful. (Lakoff 1987: 292 [emphasis mine])

The decisive question is how these considerations bear on a theory of meaning (as opposed to meaningfulness) – rather than why "image schematic concepts are meaningful": *That* has already been explained in an earlier chapter (cf. Lakoff 1987: 267–268). What is the relation between meaning and meaningfulness? Basic-level structures, for instance, are supposed to be meaningful. But as we have seen, Lakoff's account of basic-level structures does not capture the kinds of meaning differences that are crucial to semantics. Quite apart from this, it is quite mysterious how we arrive at determinate *non*-basic-level meanings. "By means of projection" is the familiar answer, but this response is merely programmatic. Just how programmatic it is will be seen in chapter 6.

A tendency sometimes observable in Lakoff/Johnson's writings is to advert to causal constructions even if they are out of place. The above passage features two such unnecessary causal constructions, which misleadingly create the impression of a coherent argumentation. The second causal construction is even emphasized by means of inversion ("it is because ...").

Another relevant passage in this context is the immediately following section from Lakoff (1987: 292), which likewise evades rather than addresses the cardinal issue. This section, which bears the title "meaning", promises to outline the essentials of Lakoff/Johnson's cognitivist approach to semantics.

> Meaning is not a thing; it involves what is meaningful to us. Nothing is meaningful in itself. Meaningfulness derives from the experience of functioning as a being of a certain sort in an environment of a certain sort. Ba-

> sic-level concepts **are meaningful to us because** they are characterized by the way we perceive the overall shape of things ... Image schemas **are meaningful to us because** they too structure our perceptions and bodily movements ... Natural metaphorical concepts **are meaningful because** they are based on ... directly meaningful concepts ... And superordinate and subordinate concepts **are meaningful because** they are grounded in basic-level concepts ... (Lakoff 1987: 292 [emphasis mine])

The fact that the decisive questions are nowhere broached is veiled by a spate of parallel causal constructions. The assertion that "meaning is not a thing" is not informative, the more so since the term *meaning* is notoriously ambiguous between a number of different construals (e.g., sense, reference, denotation, extension, intension). Rather than elucidating the question what meaning *is*, Lakoff states what meaning is *not*, and what it "involves". Granted, meaning "involves what is meaningful to us", but how to define *meaningfulness*? Once again, Lakoff evades a clarification of the term *meaningful* by means of causal constructions which tell us *why* certain phenomena are meaningful – rather than explicating the notion of meaningfulness itself by specifying how it relates to meaning. And once again, all the information contained in these causal sentences can also be found in the preceding chapter (cf. Lakoff 1987: 268), which reminds us of the fact that repetition is one of the principal rhetorical strategies in Lakoff/Johnson's works.

The whole section devoted to Lakoff's novel approach to semantics thus does not go beyond the truism that "meaning is not a thing", that "it involves what is meaningful to us", and that "[n]othing is meaningful in itself". Still, the author regards his account as a significant refinement of Putnam's philosophy, and characterizes experientialism as a strand of internal realism. According to Lakoff (1987: 265), it is experientialism (rather than Putnam's work) which supplies new accounts of, inter alia, meaning, understanding, truth, and objectivity.

Not only does Lakoff fail to elucidate the relation between meaning and meaningfulness; he even seems to conflate these terms, at least in some passages. Only three of them will be cited here. Consider Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 227):

> What legitimately motivates subjectivism is the awareness that **meaning is always meaning *to* a person.** What's **meaningful to me** is a matter of what has significance for me. And what is significant for me will not depend on my rational knowledge alone but on my past experiences, values, feelings,

> and intuitive insights. Meaning is not cut and dried; it is a matter of imagination and a matter of constructing coherence. [emphasis mine]

Here, parallel constructions and the fact that the statement about meaningfulness ("[w]hat's meaningful to me ...") immediately follows the statement about meaning ("meaning is always meaning *to* a person") suggest an equation of meaningfulness and meaning. Rhetorical repetitions (e.g., "what .. what ... what... what") are again apt to suggest a coherence in Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning which is actually absent from their account. And once again, the central issue is avoided rather than tackled: How to define meaningfulness? Lakoff/Johnson merely offer a synonym for "meaningful" ("significant").

A similar passage is found in Lakoff (1987: 294). According to the author, an experientialist theory of truth is committed to the following assumption: "If a sentence is true, it is true by virtue of what it means and how it is understood. Truth depends on meaningfulness." Here, the juxtaposition of "[a sentence is] true by virtue of what it means" and "truth depends on meaningfulness" suggests a conflation of meaningfulness and meaning.

Our final example is Lakoff (1987: 266), who offers the following characterization of experientialism as championed by himself and Mark Johnson: "We have taken **meaning** to be **the central issue**. **The central question ...** is how linguistic expressions and the concepts they express can be **meaningful**" [my emphasis]. The parallelism ("... the central issue. The central question ...") again suggests that *meaning* is to be equated with *meaningfulness*. So does the fact that the statement about meaningfulness immediately follows the one about meaning. Furthermore, in both cases Lakoff talks about "the central issue" and "the central question", the definite article implying that there is just one question under consideration.

The above passages illustrate Lakoff's conflation of meaning and meaningfulness. It is not entirely clear whether the two notions should be construed as synonyms or not. All possible interpretations throw into relief major shortcomings of experientialist semantics. Suppose that *meaning* is *not* synonymous with *meaningfulness*. In that case, experientialism stops short at what Lakoff (1987: 266) considers "the central issue", viz. meaning: We have seen that Lakoff's account is at best a theory of meaningfulness in the sense that it tells us how linguistic items can have some meaning *or other*. What it does not explain is how we arrive at particular concepts, which is the crucial question a theory of meaning is supposed to an-

swer (cf. Blackburn 1984: 45); this issue is also crucial to the theory of truth experientialism is believed to have offered (cf. Lakoff 1987: 265; 5.3).

The second possible construal of Lakoff's overall line of reasoning is that *meaning* is indeed synonymous with *meaningfulness* (in the sense of 'having some meaning or other'). In that case, Lakoff has "solved" the problem of meaning by changing the terms of the discussion, redefining *meaning* as 'meaningfulness' (again in the sense of 'having some meaning or other'). Again, what Lakoff does not provide is an answer to the most basic issues a theory of *meaning* is concerned with, where *meaning* is construed in the usual sense of the term[53] which is also adopted by Lakoff himself (cf. Lakoff 1987: 237, 267). Lakoff occasionally concedes that preconceptual structures merely "motivate concepts that accord with those preconceptual structures" (Lakoff 1987: 303).

The third possible interpretation is that the terms *meaning* and *meaningfulness* are synonyms, but meaningfulness is used in the sense of 'intrinsically having a particular meaning'. In that case Lakoff has failed to show how precisely mental images and other structures cited by him can be meaningful in this sense.

However we construe Lakoff's claims, the author 'evades the issue' (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 64). This observation is no counterargument against our interpretations. "Evading the issue" is a recurrent strategy in the works of Lakoff/Johnson, which will be encountered throughout this book.

5.6 Summary

Having reviewed Lakoff's account of the foundations of cognitive semantics, we are forced to conclude that Lakoff's suggestions do not provide us with a viable philosophical theory of meaning. Lakoff's emphasis on images and other preconceptual structures is misguided. Such structures cannot form the backbone of a *philosophical* account of understanding, since they are open to different interpretations (ways of understanding). For the same reason, preconceptual structures cannot offer the key to a new philosophical theory of meaning; theories of meaning are closely linked to theories of understanding.[54] An analogous mistake will be seen to lie at the heart of Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) approach to metaphor: The fact that metaphorical equations such as ARGUMENT IS WAR are open to various interpretations does not jibe with Lakoff/Johnson's contention that their

theory of metaphor constitutes a major philosophical contribution to the problem of understanding (cf. chapter 6).

I have argued that Lakoff's approach is incapable of accounting for semantic differences such as the difference between the concepts *dog* and *labrador* – even if we adopt a psychological perspective, presupposing that the relevant images are interpreted in a psychologically plausible way. A theory of meaning which cannot do justice to such differences is, strictly speaking, not a theory of meaning at all. Even more problematic is the status of experientialism as a new account of truth. This result has already emerged from chapter 4; it is reinforced in section 5.3 by different considerations.

Even though Lakoff presents his semantics as the continuation and peak of a tradition pioneered by Wittgenstein, among others (cf. Lakoff 1987: 11), Lakoff is hardly a true Wittgensteinian.[55] With its emphasis on mental images as constitutive of meaning, experientialist semantics is deeply rooted in a tradition of thinking Wittgenstein was concerned to combat. This tradition is closely associated with philosophers that count as principal *objectivists* such as Plato or Locke (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 190–191).

Lakoff's emphasis on mental images is not only incompatible with influential arguments advanced by Wittgenstein, it is also at odds with Putnam's philosophy. Consider Putnam's Wittgenstein-inspired criticism of theories of meaning based on mental images or other "mental objects" (cf. Putnam 1981: chapter 1):

> [P]ossessing a concept is not a matter of possessing images ... since one could possess any system of images you please and not possess the *ability* to use the sentences in situationally appropriate ways. (Putnam 1981: 19)

> Coming back now to our criticism of magical theories of reference ..., we see that, on the one hand, those 'mental objects' we can introspectively detect – words, images, feelings, etc. – do not intrinsically refer any more than the ant's picture[56] does (and for the same reason), while the attempts to postulate special mental objects, 'concepts', which do have a necessary connection with their referents, and which only trained phenomenologists can detect, commit a logical blunder; for concepts are (at least in part) abilities and not occurrences. (Putnam 1981: 21)

It seems strange that Lakoff (1987: 265) considers his approach an improved version of Putnam's internal realism as championed in this very book by Putnam. Lakoff's (1987: 303) assumption that 'internal matchings' between cognitive models and preconceptual structure "provide a basis for

an account of truth and knowledge" flies in the face of Putnam's case against positing mental objects as the key to solving the problem of how words refer (and hence how sentences can be true). Ironically enough, Lakoff holds that it is precisely "[b]ecause such matching is 'internal' to a person" that "the irreconcilable problems pointed out by Putnam in the case of objectivist theories do not arise in experientialist theories" (Lakoff 1987: 303).

As for Lakoff/Johnson's more recent publication (Lakoff/Johnson 1999), the fundamental problems outlined in this chapter remain. None of Lakoff's earlier claims are withdrawn. This can already be gleaned from the assertion that "[m]ental structures are intrinsically meaningful by virtue of their connection to our bodies and our embodied experience" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 77). To simply *assert that* "intrinsically" meaningful structures exist is precisely the position which does *not* advance philosophical semantics – which is what Lakoff/Johnson claim to have achieved.

Some final notes are hoped to pre-empt potential misunderstandings of the above discussion. My main target is not the claim that images or other mental structures are intrinsically representational. For all we know, it might even be true that there are intrinsically representational structures. However, as Blackburn (1984: 54–55) has noted in reference to Fodor's otherwise rather different theory, appealing to underlying meaningful structures can at best be part of a "causal explanation" of the psycho-physical preconditions for meaning. This move at best explains under which conditions human beings can mean something by their words. It does not explain the nature of meaning itself. The putative presence of intrinsically meaningful structures is not a *philosophical* answer to the question 'What is meaning?'. This can be seen most easily if we consider the possibility of creatures that are *not* endowed with these structures and nevertheless use language as we do. We would not be inclined to deny that they *mean* something with their words, even if they are not endowed with these intrinsically representational structures. In that sense, the essence of meaning is left unexplained even if such structures do exist (cf. Blackburn 1984: 55).

Most important, Lakoff does not show *how* images and motor programs can be intrinsically representational in the sense necessary to escape the objections voiced in the preceding sections. His general account is reminiscent of ideas associated with philosophers such as Locke and Merleau-Ponty, while the details of his suggestions are not compelling.

Our misgivings about *directly meaningful* concepts aside, the latter are at best the scaffolding of the cognitivist framework. The majority of con-

cepts are not "directly meaningful" (cf. Lakoff 1987: 267). The litmus test of the experientialist program is whether it gives us a handle on more abstract, "indirectly understood" concepts, which include first and foremost the various "metaphors we live by" (cf. Lakoff 1987: 267–268). As will be seen in the following chapter, however, Lakoff/Johnson's theory of metaphor does not yield a new and compelling approach to meaning either.

Chapter 6
Lakoff/Johnson's theory of metaphor

6.1 Introduction

Lakoff/Johnson (1980) credit themselves with having taken a radical departure from time-honored views of metaphors as random and merely ornamental figures of speech. The authors make out a case for the opposite position: Metaphor figures prominently as an indispensable instrument of human cognition. It is seen as essentially "a matter of thought and action and only derivatively a matter of language" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 153). The import of metaphors resides in their function as tools for *creating* reality. Lakoff/Johnson purport to demonstrate that a huge number of everyday concepts (such as *love* and *war*) as well as basic cognitive categories (time, space, quantity, etc.) are largely structured by metaphor.

Recall that metaphorical transfer is believed to involve whole domains rather than isolated concepts (cf. Lakoff 1987: 288). Lakoff/Johnson sharply distinguish between "surface" metaphorical expressions and underlying *metaphorical concepts*. An example we are already familiar with are expressions revolving around the idea of argument as a kind of warfare (e.g., *indefensible claims*, *demolish an argument*, *shoot down an argument*, etc.; cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 4). These expressions are supposed to reflect the existence of a conceptual metaphor (ARGUMENT IS WAR), which partially structures our concept of argument. The domain of verbal confrontation is conceptualized in terms of the domain of war. The metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS WAR gives rise to the expressions cited. Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 4–6) claim that metaphorical expressions are systematically grounded in conceptual metaphors.

According to the authors, "*the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 5 [emphasis original]). MacCormac (1985: 59) argues that Lakoff/Johnson's definition is not rigid enough, since it would be compatible with virtually all kinds of symbolic processes. This problem parallels the one we observed for cognitivist analyses of metonymies, which turn out to be applicable to a great number of phenomena whose status as metonymies is debatable.

Lakoff/Johnson propose a threefold distinction between *orientational*, *ontological* (*physical*[57]) and *structural* metaphors. *Ontological* metaphors enable us to view immaterial phenomena as physical objects. They confer "entity or substance status" on concepts that are not intrinsically entities or substances. The authors cite events and ideas, among other things, as concepts that do not intrinsically have entity status (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1981: 295).

Three types of ontological metaphors are distinguished by the authors. The first type are called *entity* (or *substance*) *metaphors*. A typical example of an entity metaphor is the metaphorical concept INFLATION IS AN ENTITY, which is instantiated in expressions such as *Inflation makes me sick* and *If there's much* ***more inflation****, we'll never survive*. So-called container metaphors represent the second type of ontological metaphors. Examples of container metaphors include STATES ARE CONTAINERS (*He's* ***in*** *love*, *We're* ***out of*** *trouble now*). Finally, the authors mention *personifications* as the third type of ontological metaphors. A case in point is the conceptual metaphor FACTS ARE PERSONS, instantiated in expressions such as *This fact* ***argues*** *against the standard theories* (all examples are taken from Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 26, 32–33).

Structural metaphors represent a more complex type of mapping. Such metaphors serve to organize or "structure" a certain concept in terms of a different concept (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 14). Two typical examples are ARGUMENT IS WAR and TIME IS MONEY (e.g., *to* ***waste*** *time*, *reading this* ***costs*** *a lot of time*; cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 4; Lakoff/Johnson 1981: 290). Structural metaphors like TIME IS MONEY are assumed to be based on ontological metaphors like TIME IS A SUBSTANCE (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 66).

Orientational metaphors are mappings which "organize ... a whole system of concepts with respect to one another" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 14). Examples include HAPPY IS UP/SAD IS DOWN (e.g., *I'm feeling* ***up***, *My spirits* ***rose***, *He's really* ***low*** *these days*, *I* ***fell*** *into a depression*) and CONSCIOUS IS UP/UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN (e.g., *Wake* ***up***, *He's* ***under*** *hypnosis*; examples from Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 15).

The bulk of this chapter offers a close reading of key sections in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) that set out the authors' principal claims. Section 6.2 will be concerned with the authors' most important hypothesis: Our conceptual system contains many metaphorical concepts. I will show that Lakoff/Johnson fail to provide compelling arguments for their view. Lakoff/Johnson's account of metaphorical structuring will be the focus of

section 6.3. The assumption that the structure of the concept *argument* is due to the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor will prove to be problematic. Section 6.4 demonstrates that Lakoff/Johnson's contentions concerning the utility of metaphorical concepts are unwarranted: There is no reason to assume that general metaphorical concepts like ARGUMENT IS WAR allow us to dispense with individual definitions for expressions that supposedly belong to these broader metaphorical concepts. The question whether Lakoff/Johnson's approach constitutes an advance in the philosophy of understanding will receive a negative answer in section 6.5. The subsequent section is devoted to the experiential grounding of metaphors. Lakoff/Johnson's observations on this theme turn out to be circular. Furthermore, the authors suggest both that the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor is a presupposition of being able to understand the concept *argument* and that the metaphor presupposes an antecedent conception of what an argument is. Particularly problematic are Lakoff/Johnson's assumptions concerning the experiential grounding of metaphors that are based on "experiential similarities" created by ontological metaphors. Ontological metaphors do not even qualify as metaphors by Lakoff/Johnson's own standards. The most important ideas on metaphor advanced in Lakoff/Johnson (1999) will be canvassed in section 6.7. Many shortcomings that beset Lakoff/Johnson's earlier publications can also be found in their later work. A more detailed criticism of Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) later account will be given in chapter 8, since many of my objections trade on concepts that will only be introduced in chapter 7.

6.2 Lakoff/Johnson on metaphorical concepts

What is the significance of metaphorical concepts? Take ARGUMENT IS WAR, a metaphorical concept which is deemed to inform our style of thinking about and conducting arguments (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 63–64). If we instead had ARGUMENT IS DANCE in our repertoire, arguments would be conducted in a wholly different way – or so the following passage seems to suggest:

> Try to imagine a culture where **arguments are not viewed in terms of war**, where no one wins ..., where there is no sense of attacking ... Imagine a culture where an **argument is viewed as a dance**, the participants are seen as performers, and the goal is to perform in a balanced ... way. In such a culture, people would **view arguments differently**, experience them dif-

> ferently, carry them out differently, and talk about them differently. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 5 [emphasis mine])

The conclusion of this argument is launched by an observation which merely repeats the premise. Lakoff/Johnson presuppose what they should be arguing for. Their premise ("imagine a culture ...") can be spelt out as follows: Suppose that people in a certain culture view arguments in a different way than we do (i.e., not in terms of war, but in terms of a dance). Their conclusion says that in such a culture, people would "view arguments differently" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 5).

The sentence we have interpreted as a first "conclusion" from Lakoff/Johnson's premise does indeed have this status according to the logic of Lakoff/Johnson's exposition. This emerges from Lakoff/Johnson's subsequent observation, which is little more than yet another repetition of the preceding contention that people in such a culture would "view arguments differently": People in that culture would also "experience" arguments in a different way.

If we grant the validity of Lakoff/Johnson's presuppositions as sketched above, the conclusion in question follows as a matter of course ("In such a culture, people would ... carry ... out [arguments] **differently**"). The real problem is located at the interface between language and thought, rather than between thought and action. In light of Lakoff/Johnson's source of evidence (linguistic expressions), the main challenge is to demonstrate that the use of *linguistic expressions* from what Lakoff/Johnson categorize as a common source domain reflects the presence of a metaphorical *concept*.

Thus, a different premise should have been Lakoff/Johnson's starting point: 'Imagine a culture where people use *expressions* from the domain of DANCE, ...' rather than "[i]magine a culture where an argument is **viewed** as a dance". The idea of *viewing* one thing in terms of another already contains the essence of Lakoff/Johnson's definition of metaphorical concepts (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 5). This shows even more clearly that the authors presuppose the existence of metaphorical concepts they should be arguing for. Lakoff/Johnson's sequence of conclusions illustrates how the authors reverse the correct line of argumentation. What should be their point of departure – a certain way of talking – is turned into a conclusion: "In such a culture [i.e., in a culture where people view arguments differently], people would view arguments differently, experience them differently, carry them out differently, and **talk about them differently**" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 5 [emphasis mine]). Rather than showing that concepts

can be inferred from linguistic data, Lakoff/Johnson create the impression that the principal challenge is to demonstrate the opposite: Given the presence of a metaphorical concept like ARGUMENT IS DANCE, we talk about arguments in a different way.

The subsequent paragraph from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 5) does not remedy the difficulties we have identified. It merely presents another illustration of the authors' tendency to use rhetoric to make a point that cannot be established by argument.[58] The strategy of employing key terms even when inapposite is occasionally carried to a point where Lakoff/Johnson's exposition becomes unintelligible:

> This is an example of what it means for a metaphorical concept, namely ARGUMENT IS WAR, to structure (at least in part) what we do and how we understand what we are doing when we argue.

How to construe the proposal that metaphors "structure ... how we understand what we are doing ...", i.e., that they structure the *way* we understand something? A more felicitous way of expressing what Lakoff/Johnson seem to have in mind is this: Metaphorical concepts simply *constitute* (but do not "structure") a particular way of understanding. This much at least is contained in the well-known tenet immediately following the sentence quoted, which states that metaphor *is* essentially understanding one thing in terms of another thing. In other words, metaphor *is* a particular mode of understanding; namely, a mode of understanding a phenomenon that is supposedly mediated by our conception of a different phenomenon. Possibly, the term *structure* is employed for the simple reason that it is the omnipresent keyword habitually used by Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1987) at pivotal points in their exposition (cf. also the appendix).

The trouble with Lakoff/Johnson's position is this: All that Lakoff/Johnson's data show is that we employ certain *expressions* (rather than *concepts*) that can – but need not – be associated with the domain of WAR. Demonstrating the presence of metaphorical *concepts* is impossible on the basis of purely *linguistic* evidence (cf. Murphy 1996). How is the jump from language to thought justified? Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 5) do not tackle this question, merely repeating their principal claim once again.

6.3 Lakoff/Johnson on metaphorical "structuring"

The idea that "the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 6) has already been encountered as a key assumption of Lakoff/Johnson's theory. What are the major implications of such a view? Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 4) illustrate their position with the help of ARGUMENT IS WAR. This metaphor is believed to 'structure the actions we perform in arguing'. A more plausible assumption is that in the case of ARGUMENT IS WAR it is the very structure which is common to both source and target. The common structure of the two domains can be gathered from a list of typical features of arguments given in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 79). This list draws parallels between "stages" or features of arguments and stages or features of warfare, such as the following:

> You have an opinion that matters to you. (*having a position*)
> The other participant does not agree ... (*has a different position*) ...
> The difference of opinion becomes a conflict of opinions. (*conflict*)
> You think of how you can best convince him of your view (*plan strategy*)
> (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 79 [emphasis original])

The authors identify further parallels. For example, they draw a parallel between the stage of an argument where objections are leveled against the view entertained by one's interlocutor, and the stage of "attacking" an opponent (in the domain of war). A further parallel exists between attempting to "change the premises of the conversation" and "maneuvering" in war (cf. L/J 1980: 79–80)

Following Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 81), "[u]nderstanding a conversation as being an argument involves being able to superimpose the multidimensional structure of part of the concept WAR upon the corresponding structure CONVERSATION." Lakoff/Johnson clarify this contention with the help of the above "list of characteristics of argument", putting the respective features in correspondence with central aspects of war. The authors do not explain why the specific structure of the concept *argument,* which distinguishes it from a concept such as *conversation*, should be the result of metaphorical extension from the source domain WAR.

The mere fact that one can draw parallels between the different stages of an argument and stages of warfare does not show that the structure of ARGUMENT partially derives from the source domain WAR. Why not claim that the structure of ARGUMENT as presented by the authors is present *prior* to metaphorical transfer (ARGUMENT IS WAR)? Lakoff/Johnson's

above-quoted juxtaposition of central features of arguments and their analogues in the domain WAR is merely suggestive – yet to the present writer it suggests a rather different conclusion: Argument and war share a common structure *independently* of metaphorical transfer. Setting aside the absence of any evidence in support of Lakoff/Johnson's position, the opposite conclusion is plausible on two counts.

First, the very descriptions employed by Lakoff/Johnson[59] show that it is possible to refer to the various characteristic features of arguments without resorting to metaphorical language, and hence metaphorical conceptions. Speakers do not need to use expressions that supposedly pertain to ARGUMENT IS WAR when talking about aspects of arguments.

Second, Lakoff/Johnson attach considerable importance to the idea that metaphors are grounded in our experience. The experiential basis of the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR seems to be the very fact that we sometimes experience arguments as similar to WAR in the respects detailed in the passage quoted above. Lakoff/Johnson cannot have it both ways: Either the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor is a presupposition of being able to 'understand a conversation as being an argument' (cf. again Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 81), or the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is based on our experience of arguments as warlike.

The inconsistency of Lakoff/Johnson's account of metaphorical structuring is also reflected in Lakoff's (1993) *Invariance Hypothesis*. The Invariance Hypothesis is believed to present a "potentially groundbreaking advance in the theory of constraining metaphorical production and comprehension" (Brugman 1990: 257). Even though it has come in for some criticism, it still figures importantly in certain strands of cognitive linguistics (cf. Barcelona 2000b: 45). The most well-known formulation of the Invariance Hypothesis is found in Lakoff (1993: 215):

> Metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive topology (that is, the image-schema structure) of the source domain, in a way consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain.

Lakoff (1993: 215) provides the following comment on the Invariance Hypothesis:

> What the Invariance Principle does is guarantee that, for container-schemas, interiors will be mapped onto interiors, exteriors onto exteriors, and boundaries onto boundaries; for path-schemas, sources will be mapped onto sources, goals onto goals, trajectories onto trajectories, and so on.

The Invariance Hypothesis has a "corollary": "Image-schema structure inherent in the target domain cannot be violated, and ... inherent target domain structure limits the possibilities for mappings automatically" (Lakoff 1993: 216).

Lakoff's reasoning is not compelling. Metaphors mapping spatial source concepts (which involve *sources*, *goals*, *interiors*, *exteriors*, etc.) onto abstract terms *impose* a *quasi*-spatial structure on the target domain. Crucially, the "interiors" of the target domain are not present prior to metaphorical extension, they are rather created via such cross-domain mappings. Consider the "container metaphor" MOODS ARE CONTAINERS, which is reflected in expressions like *I'm in a good mood* (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: chapter 6). We can speak of the "interiors" of the target domain MOOD only in a *metaphorical* sense, which presupposes prior metaphorical transfer.

Lakoff's phrasing suggests otherwise. His reference to a 'mapping of interiors onto interiors, sources onto sources, etc.' is incoherent, since the "interiors" of the target domain do not exist prior to the mapping (cf. Lakoff 1993: 215). One cannot map something (literal interiors) onto something else (metaphorical "interiors") which comes into existence only as the *result* of this very mapping process. Lakoff's infelicitous phrasing indicates his ambivalence between the view that metaphors impose a structure onto the target domain – a structure which consists of interiors, among other things – and the view that this very structure is already present in both source and target.

A comparison of this example and ARGUMENT IS WAR discussed above indicates that the conflict between the two positions can only be resolved by identifying precisely what is meant by *structure* in each case. Such a clarification of the concept of *structure* is rarely, if ever, provided in Lakoff/Johnson's works. The mistakes committed by Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1993) are complementary. The structure presumably at issue in the case of ARGUMENT IS WAR is present prior to metaphorical transfer – contrary to Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) contentions. On the other hand, the structure under scrutiny in the above example does *not* exist prior to figurative extension – which again does not tally with Lakoff's (1993) exposition.

6.4 Metaphorical definitions

One of Lakoff/Johnson's major motivations for viewing conceptual metaphors as central to meaning and understanding is this: Once we have accurately categorized lexemes in terms of underlying conceptual metaphors, we can predict their figurative meanings. Two examples chosen to illustrate Lakoff/Johnson's assumption are *budgeting time* and *attacking a claim*. These two metaphorical expressions are attributed to the metaphorical concepts TIME IS MONEY and ARGUMENT IS WAR, respectively (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 4, 8).

> The definition of subconcepts [i.e., metaphorical expressions falling under a metaphorical concept], like BUDGETING TIME and ATTACKING A CLAIM, should fall out as consequences of defining the more general concepts (TIME, ARGUMENT, etc.) in metaphorical terms. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 117)

How should we interpret the proposal that "less clearly delineated" concepts (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 109) are *defined* in metaphorical terms? What precisely is a "metaphorical definition" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 117)? Is it merely the equation of source and target, i.e., the idea that TIME IS MONEY, irrespective of how this equation is to be construed? Like every metaphorical equation, TIME IS MONEY is open to various interpretations. Depending on which features of MONEY are singled out and transferred to the target TIME, we get different meanings for the metaphorical expressions attributed to this metaphorical concept (cf. 6.5).

If Lakoff/Johnson adhere to the superficial notion of "metaphorical definition" outlined above, it is entirely mysterious how the meaning of metaphorical expressions grouped under a general metaphorical concept can 'fall out as a consequence' of defining this concept in metaphorical terms. Lakoff/Johnson do not clarify this issue.

A slightly different formulation of the authors' hypothesis is found in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: chapter 18). The metaphorical concept under scrutiny here is AN ARGUMENT IS A BUILDING; *buttress* (an argument) represents one expression which falls under this metaphorical concept. Lakoff/Johnson maintain that an "independent definition" of the concept *buttress* as used in figurative expressions relating to arguments is dispensable. All that is needed for grasping the metaphorical meaning of *buttress* is knowledge of the "superordinate" metaphorical concept AN ARGUMENT IS A BUILDING and knowledge of the source meaning of *buttress* (i.e., the

meaning the word has when applied to buildings). More precisely, the figurative meaning of *buttress* is held to "follow from" the source meaning of *buttress* "plus the way that the BUILDING metaphor in general structures the concept ARGUMENT" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 106). But what precisely is meant by this? How does the metaphor AN ARGUMENT IS A BUILDING "in general" organize the concept of argument? And how precisely do the literal meaning of *buttress* and the general structuring principle underlying the relevant conceptual metaphor add up to produce the figurative meaning of *buttress*? No clarification is provided. The onus of proof is certainly on Lakoff/Johnson to show that general metaphorical concepts do indeed figure crucially in our understanding of metaphorical expressions. Nothing in their line of reasoning demonstrates that this assumption is correct. Neither do they show that we can indeed dispense with "independent definitions" of subconcepts such as *buttress* used figuratively. This objection will be complemented in the following chapters by arguments to the effect that Lakoff/Johnson's position cannot be true, regardless of how we interpret their vague assertions.

6.5 Understanding metaphorical concepts

Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 5) seem to hold that an ARGUMENT IS DANCE metaphor would promote – as ARGUMENT IS WAR does not – a conception of arguments as a co-operative and serene kind of human interaction, characterized by an atmosphere of friendliness and mutual respect among the participants. The authors' assumption is open to doubt. ARGUMENT IS DANCE might have completely different associations, depending on which features from the domain DANCE are transferred to ARGUMENT. Speakers might very well single out for transfer a feature like 'continual movement which leads to physical exhaustion'. In the target domain ARGUMENT, this might translate into the idea of exasperation, disappointment, or confusion. The conception of arguments which emerges from this construal of ARGUMENT IS DANCE differs significantly from the one proposed by Lakoff/Johnson. That such an interpretation is possible is shown by metaphorical expressions such as *to lead a person a dance* ('to lead him in a wearying, perplexing, or disappointing course; to cause him to undergo exertion or worry with no adequate result'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. dance*).

The above example suggests that source-to-target mappings like ARGUMENT IS DANCE can yield disparate conceptions of the target. What

kind of conceptualization is settled on depends on which semantic/pragmatic features of the SOURCE are filtered out for transfer, and how these are generalized so as to apply to the more abstract concept.[60] Lakoff/Johnson at times seem to ignore these facts. Their conception of metaphor tellingly contrasts with the one espoused by numerous other scholars. Many theorists merely accept novel extensions as "true" metaphors, since the interpretation of conventional metaphors is no longer open-ended (cf. 4.5.2). By contrast, Lakoff/Johnson place particular emphasis on conventional metaphors. Even though they contend that every conceptual metaphor "gives a certain comprehension of one aspect" of the target domain (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 221), the authors do little to show how a *particular* conception of the target is arrived at. Typically, they simply resort to the idea of metaphor as 'construing something in terms of a different thing', which by itself is not illuminating.[61] Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) account is more complicated, but hardly more satisfactory (cf. chapter 8).

The failure to take into consideration the possibility of various construals of the target has serious implications for the experientialist theory of truth. Consider the sentence *Employees steal time from their employers.* According to Lakoff (1987: 295), accepting this sentence as true presupposes understanding time "as the sort of entity that can be stolen". Yet, understanding time as the sort of entity that can be stolen by itself does not amount to understanding time in any specific way at all. Since *steal* in *steal time* cannot be taken in its literal sense, we have to search for a proper interpretation. We have to single out features from the source LITERAL THEFT which are transferred to the target domain, resulting in a reinterpretation of *steal.* At first sight there appears to be only a single possibility: The expression *steal time* is probably a more or less conventional means of expressing (roughly) 'take up time'.

There are further options, however. Take expressions like *tempo rubato* ('robbed or stolen time; time occasionally slackened or hastened for the purposes of expression'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. tempo*). Here, understanding "time metaphorically as the sort of entity that can be stolen" means 'understanding time as the kind of entity that can be slackened or hastened for the purposes of expression'. The formula "understanding X in terms of Y" is empty: What we need is an interpretation of the metaphor – a specification of how this understanding of X in terms of Y is itself to be *understood.* In *tempo rubato* and *steal time from someone* the interpretation has become fixed: A new literal sense has emerged, at least according to "objectivists".

Lakoff's (1987: 295) observation is of course correct: Accepting the sentence *Employees steal time from their employers* as true presupposes understanding "time metaphorically as the sort of entity that can be stolen". However, this does not represent a substantial contribution to either the philosophy of understanding or the problem of truth. Depending on how "stolen" is construed, completely different ways of *understanding* the sentence will arise. Whether the sentence is considered true in a given context wholly depends on which construal we adopt. Note also that the underlying idea that metaphor is understanding one thing in terms of another recalls Black (1981 [1955]: 75), who speaks of 'seeing' the tenor (what he calls the "principal subject") 'through' the metaphorical expression.

In resorting to metaphorical phrases that allow only a single interpretation, such as the conventionalized expression *steal time*, Lakoff commits the very mistake he accuses objectivist philosophers of. Following Lakoff (1987: 295), objectivist scholars focus on situations that cannot be interpreted in several ways. This observation introduces Lakoff's comments on the sentence *Employees steal time from their employers.* Conceivably, the apparent success of Lakoff/Johnson's theory of metaphor is in part due to the fact that they largely investigate conventional metaphors with more or less fixed meanings. The possibility of interpreting highly conventionalized expressions such as *steal time* in different ways seems precluded. Given such examples, the idea that metaphor is understanding one thing in terms of another at first sight appears to throw light on the nature of understanding. Only one particular way of understanding the source comes to mind, namely the conventionalized figurative sense of the expression. However, such metaphors have been argued to "scarcely deserve the name" for this very reason (Blackburn 1984: 172).

Merely insisting that we understand things by reference to "more clearly delineated" things tells us little about the process of understanding, and nothing which has not been noted elsewhere (cf. Jäkel 1999 on "cognitivist" theories of metaphor prior to the emergence of cognitivism). I therefore agree with Hobbes (*Leviathan*) and Blackburn (1984: 179), for whom "understanding things metaphorically is not understanding them at all, although it may often immediately yield understanding, and guide it and increase it". Murphy (1996) sheds further light on the issue from a psychologist's angle.

6.6 Lakoff/Johnson on the experiential basis of metaphors

The notion of an "experiential basis" of metaphors is integral to experientialism (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 19). This section will scrutinize several problems raised by Lakoff/Johnson's tenets concerning experiential bases. Grady's approach to this subject is a considerable improvement on Lakoff/Johnson's own, but suffers from various problems to be discussed in chapter 8.

6.6.1 General considerations

Lakoff/Johnson concede that their customary way of representing metaphors along the lines of 'X IS Y' is a makeshift chosen in ignorance of their experiential basis. Following the authors, the word *is*, which connects source and target domain of metaphors (as in MORE IS UP), is merely a "shorthand" for the experiences that constitute the experiential grounding of these metaphors. We understand metaphors "in terms of" these experiences (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 20). A metaphor's experiential basis constitutes the only link between source and target domain. Furthermore, a metaphor can function as a cognitive tool only "by means of" its experiential basis (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 20).

Let us have a closer look at the experiential basis of the metaphor MORE IS UP. According to Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 16), we can understand such an equation only on the basis of our experience that 'adding *more* of a substance' correlates with the 'level going up'. This implies that we have a prior conception of what constitutes 'adding *more* of a substance', otherwise we could not notice that this process *correlates* with the level going up. The metaphor MORE IS UP thus presupposes a rather full-fledged conception of the target domain MORE.

Yet what enables us to understand that "part" of the concept MORE which is a precondition for understanding MORE IS UP? The only answer to this question that seems in line with Lakoff/Johnson's model is to resort to the notion of metaphorical definitions. For the authors hold that metaphorical definitions enable us to understand an abstract concept in terms of a more concrete one and "to **get a handle on** those natural kinds of experience that are less concrete or less clearly delineated in their own terms" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 118 [emphasis mine]). In fact, Lakoff/Johnson mention MORE as one of those less concrete experiences. The source domain

UP referred to in the metaphorical definition MORE IS UP 'gives us a handle on' the target concept MORE (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 115–116).

It is presumably "metaphorical definition" along the lines of MORE IS UP, then, which enables us to "get a grasp on" the central portion of the concept MORE. Yet, as noted above, metaphorical definitions are merely a "shorthand" for experiential bases (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 20). This brings us full circle to the experience that 'adding more of a substance' correlates with the 'level going up', which constitutes the experiential basis of MORE IS UP (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 16). But again, the question arises how we can experience a correlation between MORE and UP if not via a concept of MORE present independently of MORE IS UP. How is this "core" concept MORE understood?

It seems clear, then, that Lakoff/Johnson's approach is in danger of circularity and does not tackle the crucial question: How can we understand the core concept MORE? Given Lakoff/Johnson's account, the domain MORE is understood by means of the very experiential basis which already presupposes a full-fledged conception of MORE. Rather than saying that the metaphor MORE IS UP allows us to understand the concept MORE, it would be more plausible to contend that an independently existing concept MORE allows us to understand that metaphor in the first place.

Lakoff/Johnson's exposition also provokes the question *how* UP is supposed to 'give us a handle on' the concept MORE.[62] The knowledge that MORE is typically co-occurrent with UP constitutes a rather marginal facet of our comprehension of the notion. The pivotal problem here seems to be that the authors assimilate all kinds of metaphors to those that do reflect a substantial characterization of the target. For example, the expressions commonly assigned to LOVE IS WAR might be said to reflect our conception of love. By contrast, MORE IS UP and the expressions assigned to this concept do not really reflect a particular conception of MORE. It is important to draw a distinction between these different types of metaphors, which were described in chapter 2.

The general deficiency in Lakoff/Johnson's line of reasoning concerning MORE IS UP is this: If metaphors contribute to our understanding of abstract concepts precisely what is contained in their experiential basis,[63] the experience *gained* by metaphorical concepts (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 3; 15) proves to be the very experience already *presupposed* (according to Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 19) for understanding them. The circularity in Lakoff/Johnson's account stems from their vacillation between the conflicting

views that metaphors allow us to experience something in the first place and that metaphors are based on what turn out to be the same experiences.

The inconsistency of Lakoff/Johnson's position also transpires from their observations on ARGUMENT IS WAR. Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 61) seem to imply that a structural metaphor like ARGUMENT IS WAR is based on the experience that arguments exhibit many features typically associated with warfare: The authors note that "structural metaphors are grounded in systematic correlations within our experience".[64] This in turn presupposes an antecedent conception of what arguments are, otherwise the purported ability to experience "correlations" between the two domains appears wholly mysterious.

Lakoff/Johnson favor the opposite position in a passage we are already familiar with. Following Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 81), we can conceive of a conversation as an argument only if we are capable of mapping part of the concept of *war* onto the concept of *conversation*. In sharp contrast to the statement from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 61), the claim advanced here entails that we need the very metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR to even so much as understand the concept *argument* (cf. also Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 118).

6.6.2 Ontological metaphors as experiential basis

The experiential basis of metaphors comes in two types: "Experiential cooccurrence" and "experiential similarity". The experiential grounding of MORE IS UP is cited as an example of the former kind of basis; there is a correlation between the experience of increase in quantity and the experience of increase in height. Thus, adding further things to a pile of objects correlates with the pile rising. By contrast, the metaphor LIFE IS A GAMBLING GAME is supposed to be based on experiential similarity. There is an experiential similarity between actions we perform in our lives and playing games, and between the results of these actions and the results of games, viz. winning or losing (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 154–155).

It is mainly in the context of orientational metaphors that Lakoff/Johnson discuss the experiential basis of metaphors. Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 19) remarks on the experiential grounding of these metaphors are compelling. Typically, the two phenomena invoked by source and target co-occur in our experience. A paradigm case is the metaphor HAPPY IS UP. The experiential basis of HAPPY IS UP is explained as follows: Happiness

usually correlates with upright bodily posture (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 15).

Identifying the experiential basis of certain other metaphors seems more difficult. For example, how is Lakoff/Johnson's metaphor IDEAS ARE CUTTING INSTRUMENTS grounded in our experience? This metaphor is not based on experiential co-occurrences: We do not experience ideas as co-occurring with cutting instruments. In fact, ideas and instruments are on a different category-level. Since the first type of "experiential correlation" cannot be relevant to the metaphor, the experiential basis of IDEAS ARE CUTTING INSTRUMENTS must consist in the second possible type of experiential grounding, viz. "experiential similarities".

It is not obvious in what sense IDEAS and CUTTING INSTRUMENTS are similar enough to trigger metaphorical transfer. Lakoff/Johnson's answer would presumably be to appeal to the idea of ontological metaphors, which "make similarities possible" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 147). Indeed, this is what Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 147–148) do in comparable cases: Metaphors like IDEAS ARE FOOD are motivated by ontological metaphors.

How are ontological metaphors supposed to lead to the creation of similarities? A telling example is provided by Lakoff/Johnson's discussion of PROBLEMS ARE PRECIPITATES IN A CHEMICAL SOLUTION:

> ... PROBLEMS ARE PRECIPITATES IN A CHEMICAL SOLUTION is based on the physical metaphor PROBLEMS ARE SOLID OBJECTS. This metaphor [viz. PROBLEMS ARE SOLID OBJECTS[65]] creates similarities between PROBLEMS and PRECIPITATES, since both can be identified, analyzed, and acted upon. (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 152)

Lakoff/Johnson thus hold that only solid objects can non-metaphorically be described as "identifiable" and "analyzable". This is the only possibility to make sense of the claim cited above that the similarities between problems and precipitates are the result of the metaphor PROBLEMS ARE SOLID OBJECTS, "since" both problems and precipitates can be "identified, analyzed, and acted upon".

In other words, we need the metaphor PROBLEMS ARE SOLID OBJECTS to explain why problems can be identified and analyzed. Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning can be summarized as follows: i) We can act upon, identify, and analyze solid objects. ii) Problems are metaphorically conceived as solid objects (via PROBLEMS ARE SOLID OBJECTS). iii) Consequently, we can also talk about acting upon, identifying, and analyzing problems (they are, "metaphorically speaking", solid objects). That this

interpretation is correct is confirmed by a glance at a parallel case discussed in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 148).

Thus, the fact that it makes sense to use sentences like *I have identified the problem* or *I have analyzed the problem* is due to the PROBLEMS ARE SOLID OBJECTS metaphor. This hypothesis is very much open to doubt. No evidence is given in its favor.

Even more questionable is the assumption that only concrete objects can be literally identified, analyzed, or acted upon. Indeed, in the case of *act upon* ('to regulate one's conduct according to'), it is plausible to hold that what is acted upon are, in the first place, abstract phenomena. We do not strictly speaking 'regulate our conduct according to' physical objects or animate beings, but rather according to abstract concepts such as rules, commands, wishes – or indeed "problems". For example, the sentence *He acted upon the queen* would be a shortened way of saying that he acted upon the queen's *command* (for similar criticism, cf. Murphy 1996). The above passage from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 152) also illustrates the tendency in Lakoff/Johnson's works for the conjunction *since* to have a rhetorical function, suggesting rational argument without indicating any real reason, or being problematic in other respects (e.g., chapter 5; appendix).

Lakoff/Johnson's reference to ontological metaphors is problematic for yet another reason. Even if we grant Lakoff/Johnson's own conception of metaphor, ontological metaphors are not metaphors at all. Metaphors are considered a means of explaining "less clearly delineated (and usually less concrete) concepts" in terms of "more clearly delineated (and usually more concrete) concepts" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 109). Recall that Lakoff/Johnson do not explain the term "clearly delineated"; what can be gleaned from their exposition is that "clearly delineated" is not tantamount to "concrete". More clearly delineated concepts are typically "more concrete", but not invariably so.

Consider an example of an ontological metaphor given in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 66): TIME IS A KIND OF ABSTRACT SUBSTANCE. The supposed source domain ABSTRACT SUBSTANCE is hardly more clearly delineated than the source domain TIME: ABSTRACT SUBSTANCE is a general concept, while TIME is a far more specific concept. Similar remarks apply to other ontological metaphors such as INFLATION IS AN ENTITY (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 26). Whether or not the source domains of these two metaphors are more concrete than the target domains is irrelevant, since a source domain need not be more concrete than its target, it only has to be more clearly delineated.

Thus, ontological metaphors such as the ones mentioned above do not qualify as metaphors by Lakoff/Johnson's own standards: Their source domains are hardly "more clearly delineated" than their target domains. Further reasons for denying that ontological metaphors are real metaphors emerge once we investigate their experiential basis. This will be our topic in the following section.

It is interesting to compare Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) way of motivating metaphorical concepts by means of ontological metaphors with Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) account, where metaphorical concepts are motivated by primary metaphors. Much as ontological metaphors, the putative "primary metaphors" do not really qualify as metaphors (cf. chapter 8).

6.6.3 The experiential basis of ontological metaphors

Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 19) view that all metaphors have an experiential basis has important implications for the status of ontological metaphors. Take IDEAS ARE OBJECTS (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 214). Arguably, the "experiential basis" of this metaphor can neither reside in experiential co-occurrences nor in *pre-existing* experiential similarities.

As for the first possibility, it does not seem to make sense to posit an "experiential co-occurrence" between IDEAS and PHYSICAL OBJECTS. Such a position would also be at odds with Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 25) conception of ontological metaphors as a means of grasping abstract experiences. In order to have the strange experience that ideas co-occur with physical entities we have to be able to know what kind of "thing" an idea is – which involves the ability to refer to it and to categorize it. This capacity is supposed to be the *result* of conceptualizing ideas in terms of physical entities by means of the ontological metaphor IDEAS ARE OBJECTS (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 25). If the experience of co-occurrence between ideas and physical objects indeed *presupposes* the metaphor IDEAS ARE OBJECTS, it cannot form the experiential *basis* of that metaphor.

An analogous argument refutes the claim that the experiential basis of IDEAS ARE OBJECTS resides in pre-existing experiential similarities. One cannot experience similarities between ideas and physical objects prior to knowing what an idea is, which on Lakoff/Johnson's position presupposes the IDEAS ARE OBJECTS metaphor. Knowing what an IDEA is involves the ability to refer to it and categorize it; this ability is the result of the ontological metaphor IDEAS ARE OBJECTS (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 25–26).

Ontological "metaphors" like IDEAS ARE OBJECTS, then, do not have an experiential basis. For this reason they do not even qualify as metaphors by Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 19) own conception. Similar observations apply to the more complex ontological metaphors such as TIME IS A PERSON. There is no reason to suppose that there are either pre-existing similarities or experiential correlations between time and persons. In the absence of experiential correlations, even a more refined view of the experiential basis of metaphors such as the one espoused in Grady (1997) cannot save Lakoff/Johnson's account. Ontological metaphors cannot be motivated by primary metaphors, since the latter arise from experiential correlations (cf. 6.7; chapter 8).

6.7 A preliminary glance at Lakoff/Johnson (1999)

The preceding sections have centered on Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) exposition of their theory of metaphor. This section examines Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) approach. Lakoff/Johnson's later account of metaphor integrates ideas championed by several writers: Christopher Johnson's theory of conflation (Johnson 1999), Grady's theory of primary metaphor (Grady, Taub, and Morgan 1996; Grady 1997), Narayanan's (1997) neural theory of metaphor, and Fauconnier/Turner's (1996) theory of conceptual blending (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: chapter 4). To examine all of these approaches in greater detail would far exceed the scope of this book. The most important approach for our purposes is Grady's account and Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) interpretation of his view. The present section will largely be confined to problems that are inherent in Lakoff/Johnson's theory – but do not necessarily arise on a modified view, such as Grady's. Since my criticism of Grady's approach, and especially Lakoff/Johnson's interpretation of his findings, presupposes important concepts to be introduced in chapter 7, a more detailed discussion of Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) suggestions will be provided in chapter 8.

Even the most problematic ideas advanced in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) are still expounded as substantial doctrines in the pertinent literature.[66] Lakoff/Johnson (1999) do not explicitly withdraw any of their earlier claims. Since even their earlier work contains numerous inconsistencies, it is impossible to decide whether new concepts introduced in later writings are thought to supersede those familiar from Lakoff/Johnson (1980), or whether they are designed to complement them in some way. For instance,

in Lakoff/Johnson (1999), the notion of primary metaphors plays a crucial role in explaining the basis of more complex metaphors. It is not clear, however, whether this construct is designed to supplant the authors' earlier idea that metaphorical concepts are based on ontological metaphors. At any rate, the theory of metaphor presented in Lakoff/Johnson (1999) *is* for the most part in line with their earlier position; where it does diverge it is equally problematic. Some of the pivotal difficulties will be outlined in this section.

As already noted, Lakoff/Johnson (1999) adopt Grady's theory of primary metaphor, according to which "complex metaphors" such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY are composed of primary metaphors (cf. Grady, Taub, and Morgan 1996; Grady 1997). These primary metaphors are claimed to develop through *conflation*, a process which results in the emergence of associations linking different cognitive domains (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 46). The concept of conflation has been proposed by Christopher Johnson (1999).

Being based on primary metaphors, the prototypical conceptual metaphors examined in Lakoff/Johnson's works (like ARGUMENT IS WAR) are also based on the *experiential groundings* of these primary metaphors. The authors seem to hold that primary metaphors are always based on experiential correlations (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 46–49). This view raises a number of questions.

First, so-called "ontological metaphors" of the type X IS AN ENTITY seem to qualify as primary rather than complex metaphors. How these metaphors should arise out of experiential correlations is difficult to see; the issue is not taken up by the authors (cf. 6.6). Perhaps ontological metaphors do not qualify as primary metaphors at all. Yet, it is equally difficult to see how ontological metaphors could be based on more elementary primary metaphors. The third possible interpretation is that ontological metaphors are neither primary nor complex, but form a distinct third type of metaphors. In that case, there would be at least one type of metaphor that has no experiential basis. This in turn raises the question why we need particular primary metaphors to account for *certain* types of metaphors (complex ones), but not others (ontological metaphors). If we do not need primary metaphors as the experiential basis for ontological metaphors, why should we need them for complex metaphors? Indeed, the main thrust of my argument in chapter 8 is that primary metaphors are dispensable. As far as ontological metaphors are concerned, then, Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) theory does not fare better than their earlier proposals. Note that La-

koff/Johnson (1999) do posit ontological metaphors such as IDEAS ARE OBJECTS (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 124).

Second, Lakoff/Johnson (1999) seem to exclude the possibility, as Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 155) did not, that metaphors can be based on experiential similarities. On their view, every metaphor is either a primary metaphor or a complex one, with primary metaphors being based on experiential correlations and complex metaphors on primary metaphors (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: chapters 4 and 5). The term *experiential correlations* is equivalent to Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) term *experiential co-occurrences* (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: chapter 4).

Some of the most prototypical metaphors are left out of account if we adopt this conception. Metaphors of the type *Achilles is a lion* have been cited in literature at least since Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1406b; cf. Grady 1999). These HUMANS ARE ANIMALS mappings are recognized as metaphorical by Lakoff himself (cf. Lakoff/Turner 1989: 196). Such metaphors are clearly *not* based on experiential co-occurrences along the lines of HAPPY IS UP – people do not turn into animals when being courageous (compare HAPPY IS UP, where happiness does correlate with upright posture; cf. also Grady 1999). Rather, *Achilles is a lion* does highlight a perceived similarity: Courageous persons behave in a way similar to certain animals (more precisely, they behave in a way which resembles the way we expect lions to behave, e.g., showing no fear of other animals). Another example is *My wife ... whose waist is an hourglass*, cited by Lakoff (1993: 229) himself as a metaphor that focuses on similarities. This mapping builds on the "common shape" of the woman's waist and an hourglass (Lakoff 1993: 229; cf. also Lakoff/Turner 1987: 90).

Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) account no longer encompasses what are traditionally considered highly prototypical metaphors. For this reason, their approach does not fully deserve the title "theory of *metaphor*" – the original sense of the term has changed. A similar development has been noted with respect to cognitivist theories of metonymy (cf. chapter 2).

Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 59) contend that "[t]here are hundreds of primary metaphors" such as PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS and CONTROL IS UP. Only few examples are cited (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 50–54). Even fewer examples are given of how complex metaphors are supposed to be composed of primary metaphors. Lakoff/Johnson (1999: chapter 5) focus on a single metaphor, viz. A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which in turn is seen as the basis of LOVE IS A JOURNEY (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 64). The pivotal difficulty in Lakoff/Johnson's account is that the

authors do not really clarify how precisely a complex metaphor is "built up" from primary metaphors. Lakoff/Johnson here resort to vague metaphors that are in need of elucidation: They talk of 'joining together' primary metaphors, and of 'putting together parts' which are not necessarily primary metaphors. The precise meaning of 'putting or joining together' is not clear (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 61, 64). Lakoff/Johnson's (1999: 47) reference to Fauconnier/Turners' theory of blending does not render their account more substantial: The authors do not cite any facts which show that primary metaphors are indeed 'put together' to form complex metaphors. There is no reason to assume that primary or complex metaphors (in the sense of Lakoff/Johnson 1999 and Grady) exist, let alone that primary metaphors are 'joined together' to form complex metaphors. It is of course true that one can *construct* a theory which bases complex metaphors on primary ones, but this type of analysis is in need of independent evidence demonstrating the psychological necessity or at least utility of these primary and complex metaphorical concepts. Yet, all that the authors provide is one *possible* description of metaphorical expressions. We will see that many alternative accounts are equally plausible. Apart from the absence of compelling evidence in favor of Lakoff/Johnson's view, quite a few facts argue against such a theory (cf. chapters 7 and 8).

Further difficulties can be gleaned from Lakoff/Johnson's explanation of how we use metaphors for thinking. Discussing the metaphorical concept LOVE IS A JOURNEY, the authors mention a number of facts about *dead-end streets* which most people are familiar with (1 to 4 below). Note that the term *dead-end street* is one of the metaphorical expressions which Lakoff/Johnson attribute to the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor.

1. A dead-end street leads nowhere.
2. Suppose two *travelers* have common *destinations* they are trying to reach. A dead-end street will not allow them to keep making continuous progress toward those *destinations*.
3. The dead-end street constitutes an *impediment* to the *motion* of the *vehicle* and continuing the present course of the *vehicle* is impossible.
4. *Traveling* in a *vehicle* toward given *destinations* takes effort, and if the *travelers* have been on a dead-end street, then their effort has been wasted. (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 65 [emphasis original])

Following the authors, the LOVE IS A JOURNEY mapping can be transferred to these statements about journeys, yielding statements about love relationships. Recall that the LOVE IS A JOURNEY mapping encompasses a number of equations spelt out in Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 65): *Love – jour-*

neys, *lovers – travelers*, the lovers' *common life goals – destinations*, *love relationship – vehicle*, *difficulties – impediments to motion*. Applying this LOVE IS A JOURNEY mapping to the above statements about dead-end streets (1 to 4) yields statements about love relationships given below as 1' to 4'. Roughly, these statements result from substituting the first elements of the previously mentioned equations (i.e., those concepts which relate to love) for the corresponding concepts which relate to journeys. The elements linked by means of these equations are italicized in the passages from Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 65–66) quoted above and below:

1.' A 'dead-end street' doesn't allow the *pursuit of common life goals*.
2.' Suppose two *lovers* have common *life goals* that they are trying to achieve. A 'dead-end street' will not allow them to keep making continuous progress toward those *life goals*.
3.' The 'dead-end street' constitutes a *difficulty* for the *love relationship* and continuing the present course of the *love relationship* is impossible.
4.' *Functioning* in a *love relationship* toward given *life goals* takes effort, and if the *lovers* have been on a 'dead-end street,' then effort has been wasted. (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 65–66 [emphasis original])

As in their earlier work, Lakoff/Johnson (1999) conflate language and thought. All that the above example could possibly show is that we *talk* about love in terms of travel, e.g., by using terms such as *dead-end street*. However, Lakoff/Johnson's claims go beyond this. They maintain that the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY influences our way of thinking about love (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 66).

Lakoff/Johnson do not supply any evidence that the reasoning peculiar to the domain of journeys is transferred onto the domain love, i.e., that we change our way of *reasoning* (as opposed to *talking*) about love once we resort to the LOVE IS A JOURNEY mapping. In fact, there is nothing to suggest that the inferences in 1' to 4' could not also be formulated in language which dispenses with the JOURNEY metaphor altogether, e.g., by substituting *dead-end street* by the term *emotional crisis* (for a similar argument applied to a different example, cf. Quinn 1991).

Further objections can be brought to bear on Lakoff/Johnson's presentation. Recall that metaphors are open to different interpretations, which makes a translation into literal language – in the sense of expressions having a definite established sense – necessary for clarification. For that very reason it is logically impossible for the source domain *per se* to determine our reasoning about love. It is rather our antecedent conception of love

which determines how concepts relating to the source domain JOURNEY are to be interpreted if they are used in the domain of LOVE. We can understand expressions such as *Our relationship has reached a dead-end street* precisely because our knowledge about love allows us to translate ideas relating to the domain of LOVE into concepts relating to JOURNEYS.

Lakoff/Johnson's supposition that the reasoning peculiar to the domain of JOURNEY is transferred onto the domain LOVE is sometimes phrased in terms of the concept of *metaphorical structuring*. This notion plays a prominent role in Lakoff/Johnson (1999), as it does in Lakoff/Johnson (1980):

> The Love Is A Journey metaphor imposes the inferential structure of travel on a love relationship. And when one reasons about love in terms of travel, one talks about it in those terms. (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 66)

It is not entirely clear what the "inferential structures" created by LOVE IS A JOURNEY are supposed to be. This problem reminds us of the authors' more general tendency to leave key terms undefined. The term *structure* in particular is frequently used in an infelicitous way in Lakoff/Johnson's works (see, e.g., the appendix). The only candidates for the created inferences referred to by the authors are what they call the "inference patterns" 1' to 4' (cited above) – no other inferences are cited. We have seen that there is no evidence that 1' to 4' are the result of metaphorical extension. The inferential structure – as opposed to some of the *words* used to express these "inferences" – is precisely what source and target seem to have in common.

Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 66) themselves seem to be aware of these difficulties. In the subsequent paragraph they note that "[t]he Love Is A Journey mapping ... maps inference patterns about travel like those in 1–4 onto **inference patterns about love like those in 1'–4'**" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 66 [emphasis mine]). Lakoff/Johnson here explicitly state that the inference patterns in 1' to 4' are logically *prior* to the mapping from JOURNEY to LOVE – even though these inferences are the only candidates for the supposedly *created* inferences to be found in Lakoff/Johnson's exposition. After all, one can map an inference pattern about travel onto an inference pattern about love only if the latter inference pattern already exists. Particularly telling is the contrast between Lakoff/Johnson's wording in the above passage, where they talk about mapping inference patterns *onto other inference patterns*, and their phrasing in the previously quoted excerpt from the same page. In the latter passage, Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 66) talk about 'im-

posing the inferential structure of travel *on a love relationship*' – rather than on another inference pattern – which implies that the inference patterns about love are created.

This ambivalence concerning the question whether metaphors impose structures or whether they reflect pre-existing structures is a pervasive feature of Lakoff/Johnson's approach, which can in part be traced to their refusal to explicate the concept of *structure* in the first place. It also surfaces in Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) thoughts on metaphorical structuring and Lakoff's (1993) exposition of the Invariance Hypothesis (cf. 6.3).

The above-mentioned difficulties become even clearer once we examine the metaphor A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which includes LOVE IS A JOURNEY as a sub-case. According to Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 62), the metaphor A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY results in certain "guidelines" or ways of reasoning about life, such as the following one: "A purposeful life requires planning a means for achieving your purposes." Lakoff/Johnson hold that such "guidelines for life" are a consequence of the metaphor A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which has a number of entailments that correspond to these guidelines. For instance, the following entailment of A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY is the correlate of the previously-mentioned guideline: "A journey requires planning a route to your destinations" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 62).

Before turning to a criticism of Lakoff/Johnson's position, let us stake out what seems the most natural interpretation of these facts. We tend to think about purposeful lives along the lines detailed in Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 62). For example, purposeful lives need 'planning a means for achieving the relevant purposes'. Now, the relationship between a "purposeful life" and "a means for achieving your purposes" on the one hand, and between journeys and routes to destinations on the other, are analogous: In both cases, planning is required for achieving one's aims (i.e., achieving one's purposes and reaching one's destination, respectively). It is these correspondences between purposeful lives and journeys which make metaphorical transfer apt.

Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 62) take the opposite stance: It is *in virtue of* the metaphor A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY that we think about purposeful lives as, e.g., 'requiring planning a means for achieving these purposes' (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 62). In other words, this way of thinking about purposeful lives is held to be a *consequence* of metaphorical extension from JOURNEYS to PURPOSEFUL LIVES. The authors adduce no evidence that this is correct. Also, their way of phrasing this particular "guide-

line" for purposeful lives shows – once again – that the assumptions in question can be formulated without resorting to metaphorical language.

In summary, Lakoff/Johnson (1999) often commit the same mistakes as Lakoff/Johnson (1980). Where they seem to diverge from their earlier position – none of their earlier claims are rejected by the authors themselves – their assumptions are often even less compelling. There is one exception to this generalization: The fact that Lakoff/Johnson (1999) embrace Grady's approach to primary metaphor does present an advance on Lakoff/Johnson (1980). Still, Grady's theory faces problems which will be elucidated in chapter 8.

6.8 Summary

I have shown that the major insights Lakoff/Johnson (1980) are customarily credited with have little substance. Some important claims associated with their work recall earlier writings by scholars such as Black and Goodman, who are not mentioned in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) (cf. also Jäkel 1999). For example, the familiar notion of metaphor as understanding one thing in terms of another recalls Black,[67] who also championed the idea that metaphors can create similarities (Black 1981 [1955]). Black's and Goodman's (1968) insight that metaphors serve to structure or "organize" a concept or domain is also similar to Lakoff/Johnson's view. We have seen that Lakoff/Johnson's exposition of these tenets is hardly compelling.

When it comes to the topic of ontological metaphors, which figure importantly as a basis of created similarities, the authors do not take into consideration their own suggestions concerning criterial features of metaphors. By Lakoff/Johnson's own standards, at least very many ontological metaphors do not count as metaphors at all: They do not have an experiential basis; furthermore, their source domains (ENTITY or SUBSTANCE) are not "clearly delineated." Thus, one of the three main types of metaphor distinguished by Lakoff/Johnson is not metaphorical by their own standards.

None of the constructs invoked by Lakoff/Johnson (1980) has the power to explain metaphorical transfer. More promising in this respect is the theory of primary metaphor to be discussed in chapter 8, but even this approach is not without difficulties.

What about the hub of Lakoff/Johnson's metaphorology, the notion of metaphorical concepts? Does it makes sense to posit such constructs? The following chapters will call into question the very idea of a metaphorical

concept as opposed to metaphorical expressions. To complement this line of criticism, the foregoing discussion provides arguments against positing *metaphorical*, as opposed to literal, concepts.

My central contention is that once we know how to apply an expression in a "less clearly delineated" context, we have a new *concept*. It is irrelevant for our purposes whether this novel concept encompasses both literal meanings *and* abstract meanings due to metaphorical transfer, or is restricted to the latter. In neither case is there any reason for describing the new concept as "metaphorical". To see the latter point more clearly, consider what kind of evidence could be adduced in favor of the *contrary* view espoused by Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 52; 159) that our concept(ion) of the "less clearly delineated" domain is indeed metaphorical. Two arguments come to mind.

First, one might point out that the *expression* used to designate the "less clearly delineated" domain was *originally* restricted to a certain "more clearly delineated" domain. Thus, originally *reshuffle* could only be used in the context of playing cards, not in the context of politics. But then, metaphor *is* merely a matter of *words* (i.e., expressions, rather than concepts) after all! For the concept(ion) attached to *reshuffle* has changed, at least if speakers are to be successful in their use of *reshuffle* to describe more abstract phenomena such as political events. On this construal, talk of "metaphorical concepts" turns out to be completely unjustified – the more so since Lakoff/Johnson's tenet that metaphor is a matter of thought relates to the mental states of present-day speakers,[68] rather than exclusively to the potential *origin* of abstract concepts.

It might be objected that – even in the case of conventional and dead metaphors – speakers generally make "mental reference" to the respective source domains when talking about abstract phenomena such as *attacking a claim* (cf. Murphy 1996). Lakoff/Johnson do not cite any evidence to support this assumption. Murphy (1996) shows that it is unnecessary for a psychologically cogent account of metaphorical language. Yet, even if Lakoff/Johnson are correct in holding that speakers using metaphorical expressions such as *attack a claim* make reference to the putative source domain WAR, this would be of little consequence for the kind of *philosophical* semantics envisaged by Lakoff/Johnson as the principal target of their criticism (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: ix–x, 116, 196–197). What philosophers concerned with the problem of meaning and understanding are looking for, among other things, is an answer to two questions that have been succinctly formulated in Blackburn (1984: 45): "How [do] we come to understand words?"

and 'What does that understanding consist in?' The idea that speakers make reference to "more clearly delineated" concepts in order to grasp "less clearly delineated" ones answers neither of these queries. The reason has been discussed in section 6.5: Conceptualizing something in terms of another thing by itself does not amount to understanding it in any specific way, since metaphorical definitions can be interpreted (understood) in various ways. Indeed, this is one of the hallmarks of metaphor as construed in the tradition which is one of Lakoff/Johnson's main targets, viz. analytical philosophy as represented by Davidson.[69] However, the question that baffles philosophical semanticists is how we arrive at a specific meaning (concept).

Even if the concept (political) *reshuffle* should indeed involve reference to the source (*reshuffling cards*) along the lines of Lakoff/Johnson's familiar formula TARGET IS SOURCE, it equally involves negating the equation captured in this formula to the effect that TARGET IS *NOT* SOURCE. The correct interpretation of such a metaphor requires speakers to be aware of similarities (or analogies/correlations) *and* differences between source and target. Thus, both literal and metaphorical reshuffling involve a *redistribution* of the elements which the reshuffling process is directed at. In order to comprehend the expression *political reshuffle* we have to be alive to the fact that A TARGET DOMAIN RESHUFFLE IS NOT A SOURCE DOMAIN RESHUFFLE. Otherwise it would be incomprehensible why inviting cabinet members to a game of poker is not a promising strategy for a prime minister to launch a political reshuffle. ABSTRACT RESHUFLLE IS NOT CONCRETE RESHUFFLE is precisely the negation of the conceptual *metaphor* ABSTRACT RESHUFFLE IS CONCRETE RESHUFFLE. In thus presupposing our grasping the undeniable truth that TARGET IS NOT SOURCE, the ability to correctly interpret headlines like "Prime Minister ponders major reshuffle" requires a *denial* of the metaphorical equation at issue.

The upshot is that metaphors as treated in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) – i.e., characterized in terms of their hypothesized source and target domains (TARGET IS SOURCE) – are not a matter of thought in the sense presumably envisaged by the authors: They do not provide a determinate concept. As long as we merely think of one thing in terms of another, we have not formed a determinate thought (concept). Conversely, as soon as we have formed a determinate concept, our thinking is no longer metaphorical in Lakoff/Johnson's sense (TARGET IS SOURCE). The fact that Lakoff/Johnson advert to conventional and dead metaphors as paradigms in order to refute philosophical approaches which focus on novel metaphors

clouds the issue. In the case of these metaphors, only one particular interpretation seems natural; hence a simple TARGET IS SOURCE equation does appear to provide a specific way of understanding the TARGET (i.e., a specific concept).

The catch-phrase 'understanding one thing in terms of another' is bound to lead readers astray, falsely suggesting that the philosophical problem of understanding has been solved. Lakoff/Johnson once again "solve" long-standing questions by changing the topic, a fact which is easily overlooked due to Lakoff/Johnson's phrasing: Doesn't the notion 'understanding something in terms of another' show that Lakoff/Johnson are concerned with the philosophical problem of understanding (and meaning)? Regrettably, it does not, since 'understanding something in terms of another' is not tantamount to a specific way of understanding, which is the central problem of philosophical theories of meaning.

Chapter 7
Metaphorical expressions – metaphorical concepts

7.1 Introduction

Consider the putative ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor, reflected in expressions such as those listed in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 4): ***indefensible*** *claims*, ***attack*** *an argument*, *be on target* (criticism), ***demolish*** *an argument*, ***win*** *an argument*, *shoot* ("You disagree? Okay, shoot!"). Lakoff/Johnson also cite sentences such as "If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out" as examples, with both *strategy* and *wipe out* supposedly figuring as instances of ARGUMENT IS WAR.

This chapter will spell out the implications of what I take to be an uncontroversial fact that has received comparatively little attention (but see Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 17; Grady 1997; Glucksberg/Keysar 1999). The items given as evidence for ARGUMENT IS WAR – or indeed other metaphorical concepts – are closely associated with several additional lexical fields, and hence potential source domains, apart from WAR. For instance, *demolish* (an argument) can be aligned with the source domain BUILDINGS; *on target* in *Her objections are on target* can be aligned with the source domain PROPER PLACEMENT.

My suggestions for alternative groupings of expressions under different metaphorical concepts seem compelling for the following reason: We can usually cite a host of other expressions which can also be grouped under these alternative metaphors. Such additional examples are strictly speaking unnecessary, however. Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 54) hold that a single metaphorical expression suffices as evidence for a given metaphorical concept.

The examples chosen by Lakoff/Johnson prompt the following question: Why opt for this particular grouping of lexemes under ARGUMENT IS WAR, if the expressions at issue can also be assigned to other conceptual metaphors? Conceptual metaphors may prove to be little more than the result of a suggestive collection of expressions that tie in with each other in virtue of belonging to the same putative source and the same putative target domain. What is overlooked in applying this rationale is that there are often many entirely different ways of arranging the linguistic "evidence".

Focusing on *particular* metaphorical expressions reveals that they can be placed in different kinds of company (in the shape of similar metaphori-

cal expressions), and by implication ascribed to rather different metaphorical concepts. As a consequence, Lakoff/Johnson's examples are no longer grouped under one unifying metaphorical concept, but accounted for by several metaphors. Rather than ascribe all expressions to ARGUMENT IS WAR, we might attribute part of them to ARGUMENT IS GAME-PLAYING, others perhaps to ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS, yet others to ARGUMENT IS PLACEMENT, etc.

The putative scope of ARGUMENT IS WAR thus splits up into separate parts. Each part covers a number of items that can be attributed to the relevant alternative metaphorical concept. Only few of the expressions assigned to an alternative metaphorical concept can at the same time be attributed to ARGUMENT IS WAR. This approach might strike readers as similar to Grady's account (e.g., Grady 1997; cf. also Kövecses 2000). However, there are crucial differences which will be outlined in chapter 8. While Grady's theory is a development of Lakoff/Johnson's theory, my own account implies that we reject it.

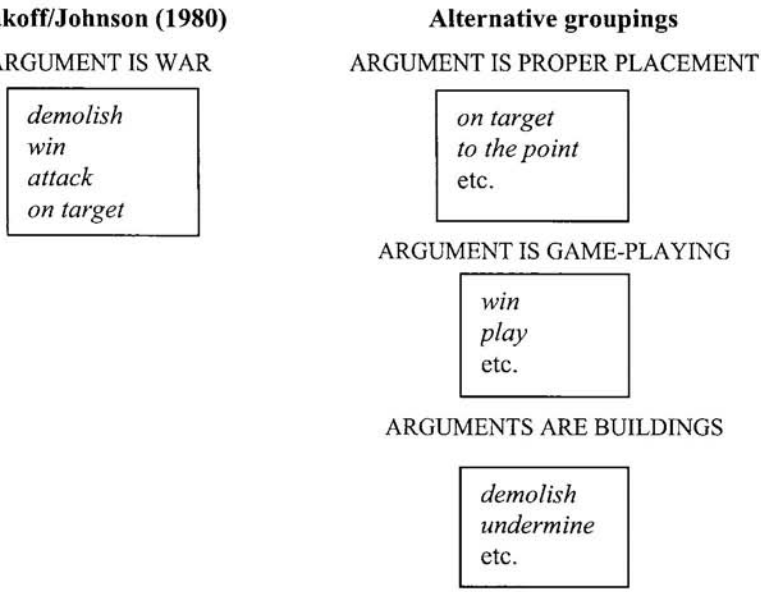

Figure 1. Alternative groupings of expressions

Two observations should be kept in mind. First, the kinds of metaphorical concepts suggested are never different in principle from the ones quoted by

Lakoff/Johnson (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1980: chapter 10). Readers might find some of my alternative metaphorical concepts rather unlike ARGUMENT IS WAR. Yet, there are metaphorical concepts posited by the authors themselves which are similar to my alternatives.

Second, I will focus on source rather than target domains. I will pretend that the target domains remain the same in the following examples, even though some of my groupings might suggest different target domains. Take the case of *on target*. Rather than grouping *on target* together with *win*, *defend*, *shoot*, etc. to yield ARGUMENT IS WAR, I will argue that *on target* can be grouped together with *to the point*, *beside the mark*, etc., to yield ARGUMENT (ARGUING) IS POSITIONING. Strictly speaking, grouping together these items might not only suggest a different source domain, but also a different target domain. A suitable candidate might be DISCOURSE or perhaps PRECISION; the corresponding metaphorical concepts would be DISCOURSE IS POSITIONING or PRECISION IS PROPER POSITIONING. These considerations will be left out of account. For one thing, they merely reinforce the conclusion drawn below that Lakoff/Johnson arbitrarily settle on one particular metaphorical concept to the exclusion of numerous other possibilities. More important, the supposed linguistic evidence that following Lakoff/Johnson allows us to posit ARGUMENT as target domain of the expressions they cite as instances of ARGUMENT IS WAR also allows us to posit ARGUMENT as target domain of the other metaphorical concepts suggested below. There is no principle which could block these alternative metaphorical concepts. One might initially suggest, for instance, that with some of my alternative metaphorical concepts, source and target domain are situated on different levels of categorization (e.g., basic level as opposed to superordinate level). But this is also true for many metaphorical concepts stipulated by Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and Lakoff/Johnson (1999), or indeed other cognitivists. One need only think of many entity metaphors posited in Lakoff/Johnson's works (e.g., the familiar INFLATION IS AN ENTITY); or of metaphors pairing a superordinate and a subordinate category (such as THINKING IS JUDGING in Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 412); or of various metaphors involving MIND as target domain, whose source domains differ with respect to the level of categorization (THE MIND IS A CONTAINER, THE MIND IS A MACHINE, THE MIND IS A COMPUTER; cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 338, 341, 247–252).

Another objection that might be raised against my target domains is that they should be far more general, since they only cover a small part of the

great number of interrelated metaphorical expressions. But the same objection will be seen to apply to Lakoff/Johnson's own suggestions.

The details about my alternative proposals are not the great bone of contention – what is at stake is rather the question whether there is generally a *fact of the matter* as to which metaphorical concept(s) posited is (are) preferable. I will argue that this does not seem to be the case. At the same time, it is implausible to assume that all potential metaphorical concepts that could be posited are indeed part of mental reality. The sheer number of potential metaphorical concepts argues against this response, which might be given by Lakoff/Johnson, who seem to allow for the possibility that an expression can be covered by more than one metaphorical concept (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: chapter 17). That there is an almost unlimited number of possible groupings and hence metaphorical concepts will emerge in this chapter and chapter 8.

Since it is not so much the niceties that are of interest but the principled objections brought to bear against Lakoff/Johnson's approach, the following reflections should be seen as tentative suggestions outlining possible alternative analyses of the data. No claims are made concerning the mental reality of the alternative metaphors – the various proposals are not put forward as a positive contribution to the conceptual-metaphor approach. Quite to the contrary: In conjunction with further arguments, they are hoped to foster our suspicion of the very idea of metaphorical concepts. What is claimed is merely that all of my groupings of expressions under metaphorical concepts are compatible with Lakoff/Johnson's account – i.e., there is nothing which *prohibits* groupings of this type. Note that Lakoff/Johnson do not offer any justification for their particular groupings that goes beyond the one I can cite for mine: The items grouped together under a particular metaphorical concept can be placed in the same source and target domains. Indeed, I hope to demonstrate that it is impossible in principle to offer linguistic evidence for assigning metaphorical expressions to one particular metaphorical concept rather than others.

Sections 7.2 and 7.3 will spell out some arguments against metaphorical concepts, calling into question Lakoff/Johnson's choice of source domain for expressions they assign to ARGUMENT IS WAR. Questions concerning the appropriate level of generality of source domains take center stage in 7.2 (cf. also Jackendoff/Aaron 1991), while 7.3 is devoted to a more principled criticism of Lakoff/Johnson's selection of source domains. Section 7.4 will elaborate on the results gained in 7.3, offering a number of case studies that focus on metaphorical expressions assigned to ARGUMENT IS WAR in

Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 4). In the ensuing sections, our findings will be viewed in a broader context. Section 7.5 examines the relation between ordinary and metaphorical concepts from the philosophical perspective introduced in chapter 5. This discussion enables us to appreciate the full import of family resemblances for our criticism of metaphorical concepts (cf. 7.6). The concluding section amplifies the central points made in this chapter.

7.2 The level of generality of source domains

The very description of Lakoff/Johnson's putative examples of ARGUMENT IS WAR is skewed. Consider the way in which Lakoff/Johnson characterize utterances based on the putative ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor. Their principal contention ("we don't just *talk* about arguments in terms of war"; Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 4 [emphasis original]) presupposes that in using the expressions cited in 7.1 we do at least talk about arguments in terms of war. This supposition is problematic for reasons to be discussed presently (cf. also Murphy 1996). A neutral way of putting matters would be to say that we use concepts or expressions which are equally applicable to ARGUMENT and WAR – as well as to other domains (cf. also Grady 1997). The tacit assumption that terms such as *indefensible*, *demolish*, or *win* are understood as relating primarily to WAR is disputable. So is the assumption that the domain WAR is invoked whenever the respective items refer to aspects of arguments. Is it really terms for war that are at issue? Lakoff/Johnson's way of framing what is essentially a tacit hypothesis – rather than a self-evident truth – obscures the fact that the lexemes in question can be quite literally[70] used in contexts other than WAR.

For many items we might at least posit a *broader* source domain, such as FORCE or FIGHT (cf. also Jackendoff/Aaron 1991). Consider the expression *indefensible*. It is not only positions in *war* that are *(in)defensible*. The concept *defend* has a much wider application – and already had one in earlier stages of English. Even the Latin etymon of the word had a far more general meaning than Lakoff/Johnson's model might have us believe, referring to the action of 'warding off' not only attacks, but also danger or evil (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. defend*). Likewise it is not only in *war* that guns are used (cf. Lakoff/Johnson's example "Okay, *shoot*!"), nor is the idea of *attack* restricted to that domain.

That Lakoff/Johnson's groupings are arbitrary is also suggested by the example *on target*, which Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 4) classify as another instance of ARGUMENT IS WAR. The central meaning of *target* is 'a shield-like structure, marked with concentric circles, set up to be aimed at in shooting practice' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. target*). Practicing how to shoot is not inherently connected to warfare. Domains that come to mind include hunting, sports, or the domain of exerting force in general.

Even more questionable examples of ARGUMENT IS WAR are *demolish* and *win*. There is no indication that these terms are primarily used in the context of warfare, or that their original meaning is solely or primarily connected to it (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. demolish*, *win*). It is true that these items *could* be used in that context and that some early examples cited in the OED do relate to war; but this is not particularly surprising in light of the subject matter of the early documents the references are taken from, and does not warrant the conclusion that the domain WAR is (was) accessed whenever such items are (were) used. Grouping such items under the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor seems little more than a gratuitous supposition.

There is no straightforward way of subsuming the terms listed by Lakoff/Johnson (*attack*, *defend*, *win*, etc.) under a definite concrete source domain (such as WAR). Once we acknowledge the whole range of literal uses of these lexemes that might have played a role in the metaphorical extensions, we are forced to posit a relatively *general* – and hence not really "clearly delineated"[71] (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 109) – source domain. It is not easy to specify its nature. Which "clearly delineated" concept covers all the various primary domains (i.e., possible source domains) of all the subconcepts *demolish*, *win*, *target*, *shoot*, and *attack*? There seems to be no "clearly delineated" domain that covers the numerous literal uses of these terms which might have played a part in metaphorical extension. The elusiveness and high level of generality of such a domain seems at odds with the idea that metaphors are used as a means for understanding a "less clearly delineated" notion or domain in terms of a "more clearly delineated" one (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 109). On virtually any construal of the notion "clearly delineated" that springs to mind, it seems unlikely that the source domain of the expressions cited by Lakoff/Johnson as instances of ARGUMENT IS WAR should be "more clearly delineated" than the concept *argument* itself (cf. also Ortony 1988).

The above discussion prompts the question why Lakoff/Johnson have singled out WAR as source domain, rather than more plausible candidates such as FIGHT or FORCE. Possibly, the reason is connected to La-

koff/Johnson's (1980: 84) observation that ARGUMENT IS A FIGHT could be considered a literal, rather than a metaphorical conception, depending on how broad our concept of *fight* is. The authors contend that an argument could indeed be seen as a kind of fight, in which case the equation AN ARGUMENT IS A FIGHT would not qualify as a metaphor. Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning applies even more clearly to the potential metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS FORCE.

The above suggests that if Lakoff/Johnson had opted for a slightly different – and in fact rather more convincing – way of classifying the metaphorical expressions cited, the examples of Lakoff/Johnson's paradigm metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR might not even by the authors' own account qualify as metaphorical expressions. In virtue of its more general meaning, FIGHT seems to be a more appropriate source domain than war.

7.3 Alternative groupings of metaphorical expressions

The considerations set forth in 7.2 raise the question how to characterize the source domain for the items which Lakoff/Johnson misleadingly attribute to the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor. The ensuing analysis will challenge the very assumption that all lexemes listed under ARGUMENT IS WAR are covered by a single source domain (cf. also Grady 1997). More important, even the presupposition that it is generally possible to trace items to one particular source domain – or even several clearly specifiable source domains – will be called into question.

At first glance, we might propose a source domain which is more general than WAR but retains many of the typical implications associated with this concept. A plausible candidate might be PHYSICAL FIGHT, with ARGUMENT IS PHYSICAL FIGHT representing the corresponding metaphorical concept. Unfortunately, this suggestion fails to capture at least some literal uses of *demolish* or *win* that may have played a part in the relevant metaphorical extensions. That PHYSICAL FIGHT is not the only prominent domain invoked by either *demolish* or *win* is reflected in the possibility of grouping these terms under alternative conceptual metaphors. The next section will expand on this point. Lakoff/Johnson's example *win an argument* will lend some initial plausibility to my contention. This expression could be traced to a hypothetical ARGUMENT IS GAME-PLAYING metaphor, rather than ARGUMENT IS WAR. The case for grouping *win an argument* as well as the examples given below under the hypothetical AR-

GUMENT IS GAME-PLAYING metaphor is as strong as Lakoff/Johnson's case for considering the expression an example of ARGUMENT IS WAR.

Quite a few potential examples of ARGUMENT IS GAME-PLAYING come to mind: *win* (an argument), *lose* (an argument) (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 4), *lay one's cards on the table*, *trump card* ('a telling argument; a clincher'), *gambit* (e.g., *His first gambit was to question the premises of his argument*), *play/play down/play along* (e.g., *John refused to play* 'did not agree'), *to make game of* ('to make fun of, turn into ridicule') (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. card*, *gambit*, *play*, *game*).

These expressions can be employed in the context of argument. True, they can also be used in other target contexts; but so can Lakoff/Johnson's examples of ARGUMENT IS WAR – most conspicuously *wipe out* in "If you use that *strategy*, he'll *wipe you out*" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 4). There is nothing which suggests that this sentence is primarily used in the context of arguments. Similarly, abstract senses of *attack* are not restricted to the context of argument, neither are those of *on target*, *demolish*, *win*, *strategy*, or *shoot*. These items can be employed in different target domains.

The implications of the frequently rather wide range of application characterizing these items are unfortunate for Lakoff/Johnson's approach. For instance, the fact that *on target* can be metaphorically employed in many different contexts forces us to posit different conceptual metaphors accounting for the metaphorical sense of this lexeme in these different contexts. A cognitively implausible proliferation of conceptual metaphors ensues. Take the sentence *His measurements are on target*. Adopting Lakoff/Johnson's line of reasoning, this metaphorical use of *on target* is not covered by the metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS WAR, which merely accounts for the meaning of *on target* when used in the context of arguments. A tentative suggestion for a metaphorical concept that does cover the meaning of *on target* in *His measurements are on target* might be PURPOSEFUL ACTIONS ARE WAR. Yet another conceptual metaphor has to be postulated in order to explain the metaphorical meaning of *on target* in contexts such as neutral discourse (e.g., *His advice turned out to be on target*). And if *on target* is used in other contexts, we will be forced to posit yet further conceptual metaphors.

This proliferation of metaphors follows from two observations. First, as sketched above, there is as much (or as little) reason for positing metaphors of the type suggested by myself as there is for positing the conceptual metaphors suggested by Lakoff/Johnson. Second, Lakoff/Johnson contend that the meaning of a metaphorical expression in a given target domain

depends on the relevant general metaphorical concept that relates to this target domain (i.e., on the metaphorical concept under which we subsume the figurative expression). The authors illustrate this idea with the help of the metaphorical expression *the foundation of a theory*, which they assign to the metaphorical concept THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS (cf. also 6.4): "What *foundation* ... means in the metaphorically defined domain will depend on the details of how the metaphorical concept THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS is used to structure the concept THEORY" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 52). It follows that if a particular expression is used in several figurative domains, we need several metaphorical concepts to account for its meaning in these different domains.

7.4 Case studies: Further examples and implications

This section gives more detailed accounts of possible alternative analyses of Lakoff/Johnson's evidence for ARGUMENT IS WAR. We will focus on the following expressions: *on target*, *defend*, *demolish*, and *shoot*. A close investigation of the various possible ways of assigning these expressions to metaphorical concepts allows us to pinpoint theory-internal difficulties. A comparison of my line of reasoning to Grady's sometimes similar arguments will be given in chapter 8.

7.4.1 *On target*

On target, which Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 4) count as an example of ARGUMENT IS WAR, could be grouped along with the items cited below to yield a conceptual metaphor such as ARGUMENT IS ((IM)PROPER) PLACEMENT/POSITIONING – if something is on target it is positioned accurately. *On target* is definitely more similar to *on the right track*, *on the beam* and similar examples than to the other expressions cited by Lakoff/Johnson in favor of ARGUMENT IS WAR (e.g., *demolish*, *indefensible*). Potential examples of ARGUMENT (or ARGUING) IS POSITIONING include the following expressions: *to the point*; *miss the point*; *beside the mark/point*; *to hit the mark/needle/pin/nail upon the head; be out of place*; *to place* (an objection, etc.); *well-placed* ("his point is well-placed"); *to be on the right track*; *to be on the beam; on the nose*, *on the button*; *wide off the mark*, *to side-*

track; *to put* (e.g., "as the authors put it ..."); *to shuffle*; *position* (as verb and noun).

These expressions have none of the "war"-connotations ascribed to ARGUMENT IS WAR. The same is true for lexical items that can be grouped along with another concept cited as an example of ARGUMENT IS WAR, viz. *defend*, which will be examined in the next section.

7.4.2 *Defend*

Metaphorical uses of the lexeme *defend* can be aligned with metaphorical uses of expressions like *vindicate* (a claim),[72] *saving*,[73] *rescue* (a claim), *uphold* ('preserve unimpaired' [a claim]),[74] and *fortify* ('confirm' [a claim]) to yield the metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS PRESERVATION. The term *preservation* is to be understood in the sense of 'preserving or keeping from injury or destruction' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. preservation*). Some of Lakoff/Johnson's metaphorical concepts are comparable to my suggestion in that they focus on relatively narrow source domains. The metaphor IDEAS ARE CUTTING INSTRUMENTS is a case in point (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 48).

Another possibility is to propose a somewhat more general metaphorical concept, which includes the above items (*uphold* in particular) as well as lexemes such as *support*, *sustain*, *back* and *confirm* ('make firm'), resulting in a conceptual metaphor such as ARGUMENT IS PHYSICAL SUPPORT. Again, a glance at Lakoff/Johnson's own examples shows that this proposal does not go against the grain of their account, which offers a wide variety of conceptual metaphors with different types of source domains (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1980: chapter 10). In any case, no reasons are given why we should block such types of metaphorical concepts. Given that the relevant metaphorical expressions are used in the target domain ARGUMENT, positing ARGUMENT as target is defensible – in the same way as positing this target seems defensible for the expressions cited by Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 4) as examples of ARGUMENT IS WAR. The same observations hold for the source domains suggested. In some cases, we might prefer to call the target domain "ARGUING" rather than "ARGUMENT", but this makes no difference to our overall line of reasoning: It is rather unlikely that the human mind distinguishes metaphorical concepts of the type ARGUMENT IS X from concepts of the type ARGUING IS X. Hence, I will consider these two types to be interchangeable.

Some lexemes cited as examples of ARGUMENT IS PHYSICAL SUPPORT are closely associated with further expressions that can be metaphorically used to describe arguments. *Confirm* 'make firm' is related to expressions such as *firm* (argument) and *strong* (argument). The latter items can in their turn be linked to expressions such as *forceful*, *weighty*, *cogent* (literally 'impelling; powerful'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. cogent*), or *penetrating* ('having the quality of *strongly* affecting the senses'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. penetrating*). All of these lexemes are often employed in the target domain ARGUMENT. Since all of them revolve around the idea of strength, focusing on this set of lexemes might suggest a metaphor such as ARGUMENT IS STRENGTH (or ARGUING IS BEING STRONG).

It is difficult to find a common denominator (in terms of a common source domain) for this set of items *plus* the whole group of lexemes cited above as instances of ARGUMENT IS PRESERVATION and ARGUMENT IS PHYSICAL SUPPORT. The possibilities that come to mind are not "clearly delineated" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 109) enough to serve as adequate source domains. The greater the number of items that are taken into consideration, the greater the likelihood that the domain which covers all of them is too abstract to serve as a proper source domain, i.e. as a domain that meets Lakoff/Johnson's requirement of being "clearly delineated".

Our difficulties in settling on any one source domain, and hence metaphorical concept, are compounded by the possibility of aligning individual members of the last group of items cited above with yet further expressions. *Penetrating* could not only be grouped along with *forceful*, *strong* (argument), etc. – and hence traced to ARGUMENT IS STRENGTH; it could also be associated with items that convey the notion of 'having a keen edge' (*poignant*, *piquant*, *piercing*, *pungent*, etc.). The latter grouping yields the metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS HAVING A KEEN EDGE (cf. Lakoff/Johnson's 1980: 48 similar metaphorical concept IDEAS ARE CUTTING INSTRUMENTS). Another option that has not been mentioned so far would be to link *support*, *uphold*, etc., to expressions such as *carry* (conviction [of an argument]), *tenable*, *handle*[75] (a topic), *get to grips with*, *tackle*[76], *grapple with* (a question). The resulting metaphorical concept might be something like ARGUMENT IS GETTING A HOLD ON SOMETHING/HOLDING SOMETHING. Still another possibility is to link *support* to *buttress*, *build*, etc. to yield ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS; this metaphorical concept is posited by Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 46).

In short, individual expressions grouped under a conceptual metaphor can often be aligned with further items which have so far been left out of

consideration and which do not fit into the source domain originally proposed in view of the selective group of expressions surveyed. Taking into account further data often necessitates devising an alternative conceptual metaphor. The lesson to be learned is this: It is impossible to do justice to all semantic interconnections that could be cognitively relevant between items metaphorically used in a certain target domain. "Cognitive relevance" here relates to the possibility that semantic similarities between lexemes – reflected in what Lakoff/Johnson would call membership in the same source domain – may have triggered parallel metaphorical extensions. Once a lexeme acquires a metaphorical meaning, similar lexemes belonging to the same source domain may follow suit (cf. Lehrer 1985). Since lexemes usually belong to several domains, they may activate parallel developments in items belonging to distinct domains.

From this perspective, Lakoff/Johnson's conceptual metaphors effect an *ad hoc* tailoring of the data: Conceptual metaphors like ARGUMENT IS WAR are the result of arbitrarily grouping together lexical items; opting for one metaphorical concept implies that a host of other possible connections are ignored. It may be true that some metaphorical expressions seem to unambiguously accord with a single conceptual metaphor, or at least a small number of conceptual metaphors. However, the majority of lexical items that can be used metaphorically can be connected to many alternative metaphorical concepts. The whole gamut of possibilities will become apparent in chapter 8. These different metaphorical concepts tend to be mutually exclusive in the sense that neither of them can cover the whole range of items which are covered by metaphorical concepts proposed as alternatives.

The same point can also be captured with the help of the concept of *family resemblances* explained in chapter 5. Lexical items that can be metaphorically used in a certain target domain are linked by family resemblances to further items which can also be employed in that domain, the latter are in their turn linked to yet further items, etc. Each of these links may suggest a different source domain and, by implication, a different conceptual metaphor. The following sketch gives a highly simplified survey of some of the links and source domains that emerge once we focus on the above-mentioned expressions. A particularly interesting case is *fortify*, which in virtue of its various meanings[77] might be classified along with either of the first three categories, as well as with a metaphor like ARGUMENT IS WAR.

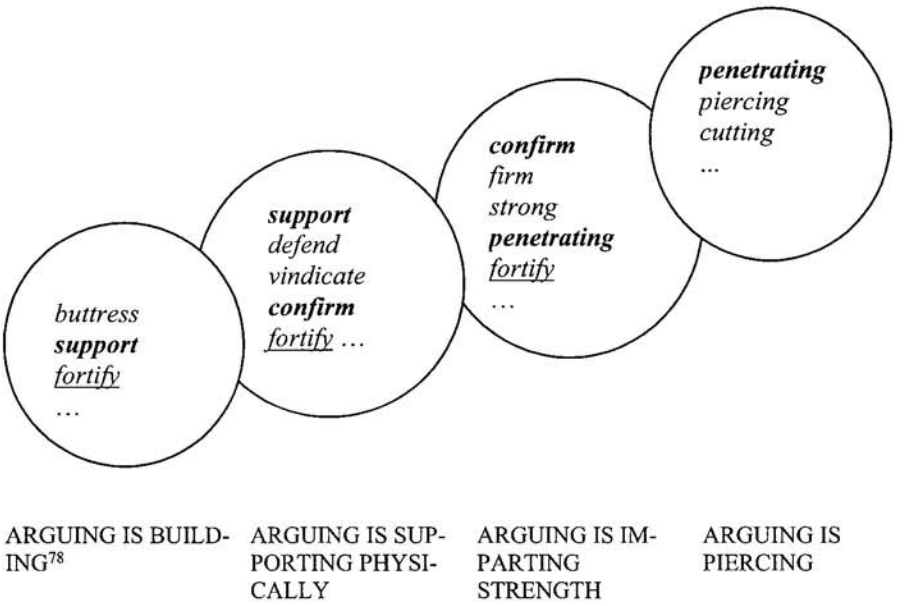

Figure 2. Family resemblances among metaphorical domains.

7.4.3 *Demolish*

Consider next the lexeme *demolish*. Staying within the compass of conceptual metaphors discussed in Lakoff/Johnson (1980), we could trace this item to ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS. It is, after all, buildings which are typically demolished (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. demolish*). Furthermore, one of the antonyms of *demolish* is *build*, which is also used in the context of discourse, as is *construct*. Since antonyms are cognitively salient semantic relations, the link between *demolish* and *build* might trigger parallel extensions. Further items that could be mentioned in this context are *sustain* ('be the support of, as in a building'; cf. OED 1994; *s.v. sustain*) and examples of ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS cited by Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 46).

Pursuing this line a little further opens yet another perspective on the data. *Demolish* literally refers to a process of decomposition, the action of 'pulling to pieces' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. demolish*). There are quite a few similar expressions relating to decomposition that can also be used in an "argument"-sense. Examples include *tear apart, take to pieces*, *take apart* and *dissect* ('to take to pieces, so as to lay bare every part; to criticize in

detail'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. dissect*). *Demolish* could be aligned with these lexemes, resulting in a metaphorical concept like ARGUMENT IS DECOMPOSITION (or UNDOING SOMETHING). At least some of the above items are in turn related to *unravel*, *disentangle* and *knotty* (issue).

Given the possibility of tracing *demolish* to different metaphorical concepts, the principal issue for a cognitivist might be to resolve the following question one way or another: Should we attribute *demolish* to ARGUMENT IS WAR or to ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS, or perhaps to ARGUMENT IS DECOMPOSITION? On close inspection, the very question seems misconceived. *Demolish* is connected to various other items that have also acquired a metaphorical sense applicable to the domain ARGUMENT. The lexeme thus forms part of different potential source domains (lexical fields) and may constitute an important link in several potential chains of extensions. For example, in virtue of its connection to items such as *build*, *construct*, etc., the term *demolish* is a member of the source domain BUILDINGS. In virtue of its connection to items such as *attack*, *shoot down* (arguments), etc., it might be argued to be a member of the domain WAR. In virtue of its connection to items such as *tear apart* and *dissect*, it could be placed in the domain DECOMPOSITION.

7.4.4 *Shoot*

The lexeme *shoot,* possibly one of the best instances of ARGUMENT IS WAR, allows us to amplify the observations made in preceding sections. An example of *shoot* as used in the context of argument is "You disagree? Okay, *shoot*!" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 4). The Oxford English Dictionary (1994) lists a highly similar, but more general metaphorical sense of this verb, viz. 'putting forth, uttering (words)' alongside the sense 'to emit swiftly and forcibly' (rays, flames, etc.; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. shoot*). *Present-day* uses of *shoot* in this metaphorical sense are, however, aligned with a different source meaning: 'to send forth, let fly (arrows, bolts, etc.) from a bow or other engine'. Whatever the reasoning behind these different accounts of present-day as opposed to earlier metaphorical uses of *shoot*, the fact that shooting can be described as a kind of sending forth or emitting something opens up another way of looking at the data.

At least three major characteristics of the activity denoted by *shoot* could play a role in metaphorical transfer to the ARGUMENT domain: Forward motion (or forward momentum),[79] emission and violence. The do-

main VIOLENCE qualifies as a possible source domain if we focus on that feature of *shoot* that connects the word with other items quoted by Lakoff/ Johnson as examples of ARGUMENT IS WAR. FORWARD MOTION (MOMENTUM) and EMISSION are no less plausible source domains. Thus, the metaphorical sense of *shoot!* might be construed as an invitation for the addressee to present his arguments. Several similar examples indicate that the latter process is often metaphorically conceived as a kind of "putting forward" or "emission" (see figure 3 below). If something is literally emitted or put forward, humans typically react to it in some way. The same is true for metaphorical putting forward or emission, construed as making a statement. This kind of analogy might underlie the numerous examples of expressions from the source domains FORWARD MOMENTUM and EMISSION which can be metaphorically used in the ARGUMENT domain. The development of *shoot* may well have been triggered by such parallel extensions, which supports the hypothesis that *shoot* can be placed in the source domains FORWARD MOTION/MOMENTUM and EMISSION.

The following pages will provide some examples of other lexemes that could similarly be placed in the two alternative source domains. All of them can be metaphorically used in the target domain ARGUMENT. Let us first consider the source domain FORWARD MOTION/MOMENTUM. The idea of forward motion/momentum – employed to convey the sense of 'arguing for' a hypothesis – is present in items such as *go ahead!*, *advance* (an opinion), *put forward* (a claim), *set forth* (a claim), *propose* (an argument), *point of departure*, and *sally* ('going forth, brilliant remark'). Note also the opposite metaphorization as evidenced in *reject*, which conveys the sense of arguing against a position. The original meaning of *reject* is reflected in a participle form ('cast back') which has for some time survived in English (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. reject*). A similar conception might underlie constructions such as *to withdraw* (literally 'draw back' a claim, etc.).

The source domain EMISSION connects *shoot* to the following items: *give vent to* ('cause to issue out', 'give utterance to'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. vent*), *issue* ('going/passing out'; 'upshot of an argument'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. issue*), *effusion*,[80] *gush* (of rhetoric),[81] *discharge* ('disburden'; 'emit'; 'give utterance or expression to'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. discharge*). The verb *emit* also belongs in this group; it can have the figurative sense 'give expression to an opinion' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. emit*).

Finally, *shoot* can also be connected to expressions like *demolish* and *attack*; a possible source domain of these three items is VIOLENCE. This suggestion is similar to Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 4) proposal, which con-

stitutes yet another possibility: Lakoff/Johnson trace these three items, as well as further expressions, to the source domain WAR.

Figure 3 offers a sketch of the various semantic connections. Words that are in bold print are related to yet further source domains pictured in the diagram; these domains are indicated by means of broken lines. Only a few examples are given of expressions relating to the respective source domains.

Figure 3. Possible source domains of *shoot* and related items

The various linguistic expressions listed above offer a convenient peg on which to hang a summary statement of the reflections set forth in the preceding pages; they also allow us to enlarge on our basic findings. My principal hypothesis is this: There is a striking analogy between (problems raised by) ordinary concepts and "metaphorical" concepts. This parallelism comes to the foreground once we compare the interrelations between different metaphorical expressions – i.e., instances of putative metaphorical "concepts" – to the semantic links connecting the various instances of an *ordinary* concept. To grasp the main thrust of my argument, it is crucial to notice the status of metaphorical concepts in relation to ordinary concepts. This will be the topic of the following section.

7.5 Ordinary vs. metaphorical concepts

This section deals with the relation between ordinary and metaphorical concepts, adopting the philosophical perspective outlined in chapter 5. The full import of the observations made in the preceding sections emerges once we call to mind the points made in that chapter concerning the notion of *idea* in philosophical theories of meaning. Recall that *ideas* are designed to justify why several similar instances of a concept are called by a certain name and subsumed under a given concept. Some traces of this adherence to *ideas* and related conceptions have resurfaced in cognitive linguists' postulation of images as crucial to meaning. The impact of this style of thinking in terms of ideas is even more pronounced in experientialist metaphorology. I will argue that positing metaphorical concepts is singing the same song in a different tune. Metaphorical concepts are perhaps most aptly described as *ideas writ large* – constructs invoked to serve, on a different level of abstraction, a very similar goal as ordinary ideas. The chief difference between Platonic ideas and cognitivists' metaphorical concepts lies in the former being situated in a mind-independent reality, while metaphorical concepts are held to reflect human cognitive processes. However, metaphorical concepts and ideas have a very similar function. Ordinary ideas are supposed to explain why several *instances* of a single concept are treated as similar (or on a par) in the sense of being subsumed under the same label. They are thought to fulfill this task by capturing what is common to and characteristic of all instances of the respective concept. Metaphorical concepts are designed to fulfill a similar purpose. They are supposed to explain why several *concepts* – rather than instances of a single

concept – are perceived as similar (treated on a par) in the sense of being transferred to the *same target domain*. Take the case of ARGUMENT IS WAR. The fact that several concepts relating to WAR are metaphorically used in the target domain ARGUMENT is explained by positing a very general metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS WAR. In the same way in which ordinary concepts are to represent the common and typical characteristics of certain *non-linguistic* entities (e.g., "doghood" as the defining feature of all dogs), metaphorical concepts are intended to capture what several *linguistic* entities (expressions like *attack*, *strategy*, and *demolish*) have in common. In the case at hand, *attack*, *strategy*, and *demolish* are manifestations of ARGUMENT IS WAR. Much as ordinary ideas are supposed to account for correct uses of a single concept, metaphorical concepts are thought to explain why we are able to employ expressions from a source domain in a particular target domain. This position is clearly stated in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 52).

The meanings of expressions like *attack* and *demolish* in the target domain ARGUMENT – the range of phenomena they can be applied to – are even held to depend on how the metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS WAR structures the target domain (cf. 6.4; 7.3). Recall that determining the range of phenomena to which an expression can be applied has traditionally been considered the task of ideas.

Conceptual metaphors thus constitute "meta-ideas" (or ideas governing ordinary ideas/concepts), which are supposed to motivate why several ideas, or the corresponding concepts/expressions, are treated on a par as far as their potential for metaphorical extension is concerned. What Lakoff/Johnson overlook is that an approach stipulating metaphorical concepts still has to earn its keep, even if the metaphorical concepts in question should turn out to reflect mental reality. Merely positing metaphorical concepts buys us next to nothing. Such a move merely raises the question *why* we should have a metaphorical concept such as ARGUMENT IS WAR in the first place. Why does a given concept present a suitable source for a certain other (target) concept? Lakoff/Johnson's (1980) answer is to admit "ignorance" on this score, while conceding that understanding conceptual metaphors presupposes knowledge of their experiential basis (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 19). Lakoff/Johnson's account again merely pushes the problem to a different level. As will be seen in chapter 8, Lakoff/Johnson's later approach is equally problematic.

7.6 Family resemblances and metaphorical concepts

The analogy between ordinary concepts and metaphorical concepts can be pushed a step further. In the same way in which family resemblances cast doubt on the search for "ideas" (cf. chapter 5), the wide variety of similarity relations holding between lexical items which are used in similar metaphorical senses cast doubt on the viability of an approach that proposes "super-ideas" in the guise of metaphorical concepts.

As for ordinary concepts or categories, Wittgenstein's discussion of *game* suggests that there is no *one* similarity between the various members of the category ("concept") which is crucial to classification. Frequently there is rather a host of crisscrossing links connecting the various lexical items, which he calls *family resemblances*. Family resemblances encapsulate semantic features that typically apply to some, but not all, category members.

Similar observations hold for metaphorical "concepts". Consider the relation between *shoot* and the other lexemes listed in figure 3 above as examples of the source domains EMISSION, FORWARD MOTION, and VIOLENCE (or WAR). There is no *one* similarity between *shoot* and these other lexemes which takes precedence over others: *Shoot* is not only similar to lexemes relating to the source EMISSION, it has also features in common with lexemes relating to the source domains FORWARD MOTION and VIOLENCE. Why then should we grant superior status to either the feature EMISSION, VIOLENCE, or FORWARD MOTION – or indeed to other potential sources? The lexeme *demolish* (cf. 7.4.3) prompts similar considerations. Why should we single out as crucial one particular source domain proposed rather than another? *Demolish* can be classed together with various groups of other items, and hence assigned to distinct domains, on the basis of semantic features it shares with these different groups. Only *ad hoc* decisions can settle the question which of these semantic feature(s) (similarities) are to be chosen as the relevant ones from the range of possible candidates. At the same time, it cannot be the case that all conceptual metaphors that could be "inferred" from the data are part of mental reality (cf. 8.1; 8.3).

Formidable obstacles to the conceptual metaphor approach loom large as soon as a wider range of data is taken into account. Consider the other expressions given in figure 3, which have been preliminarily classified as members of either the domain EMISSION, FORWARD MOTION, or VIOLENCE. Most of these items can likewise be traced to alternative source

domains. An unbiased survey of metaphorical expressions, which does not narrowly focus on one or a few possible metaphorical concept(s) to the exclusion of others, has little in common with Lakoff/Johnson's neat assortment of metaphors. At the level of individual metaphorical expressions – which constitute the starting point of any account of metaphor – the different items are connected through a host of crisscrossing similarities comparable to the family resemblances between various instances of a single lexeme.

Take the expression *set forth* listed in figure 3. *Set forth* is related to items such as *sally* ('a going forth, setting out'; 'brilliant remark'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. sally*). *Sally* in turn is connected to lexemes from various domains. For example, *sally* is related to *attack* because it can refer to 'a sudden rush out from a besieged place upon the enemy' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. sally*). The resulting pattern of similarities could be schematically rendered as (A)B (*set forth*), BC (*sally*), C(D) (*attack*), with the crucial link represented by the features B (FORWARD MOMENTUM) and C (ASSAULT). *Attack* in turn is related to *demolish* (at least according to Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 4), which is itself associated with a variety of other items (cf. 7.4.3). In this way, the family resemblance structure perpetuates itself.

7.7 Summary

The upshot of the preceding discussion is that conceptual metaphors reflect the preconceived grid superimposed by linguists on actual linguistic expressions. My results tie in with misgivings voiced especially by psychologists that it seems unwarranted to derive claims concerning concepts from observations about linguistic expressions (e.g., Murphy 1996). Most or all items are open to various (meta-)classifications in terms of metaphorical concepts. Granting for the sake of argument the mental reality of metaphorical concepts, different speakers are likely to assign metaphorical expressions to different metaphorical concepts. This point will be elaborated on in chapter 8.

Several examples have been offered in support of my contention that disparate source domains will be posited depending on the selection of items taken into consideration. Which source concept will be chosen is largely a matter of *ad hoc* decisions. Lexemes such as *win* can be placed in distinct domains (e.g., WAR, GAME-PLAYING), depending largely on

which other metaphorical items are grouped along with the lexeme. We will see in the following chapter that the number of possible groupings is (almost) unlimited.

Even if we focus on *relatively* similar source domains, we are spoilt for choice. Suppose we settle on a fixed core of metaphorical expressions that are stipulated to relate to the same metaphorical concept. The kind of source domain we arrive at may still vary considerably according to the amount and kinds of *additional* metaphorical expressions selected. Schematically, grouping together the expressions a, b, c, and d often yields a different source domain than grouping together b, c, d, e, f, and g. There is frequently no reason to prefer one particular selection of items to another. As a result, it remains unclear which source domain and metaphorical concept(s) should be chosen.

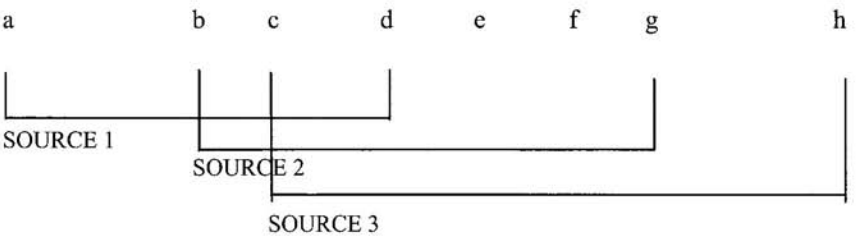

Figure 4. Alternative groupings of metaphorical expressions

The various potential source domains of individual metaphorical expressions are typically overlapping – which shows once more that source domains, like metaphorical concepts themselves, are probably a mere construct. Figure 5 below illustrates this fact with the help of examples that can metaphorically refer to aspects of arguments. The basis of the various entries below are definitions of the respective lexemes given in the Oxford English Dictionary (1994). Note that some of these examples are obsolete (notably *obtend*).

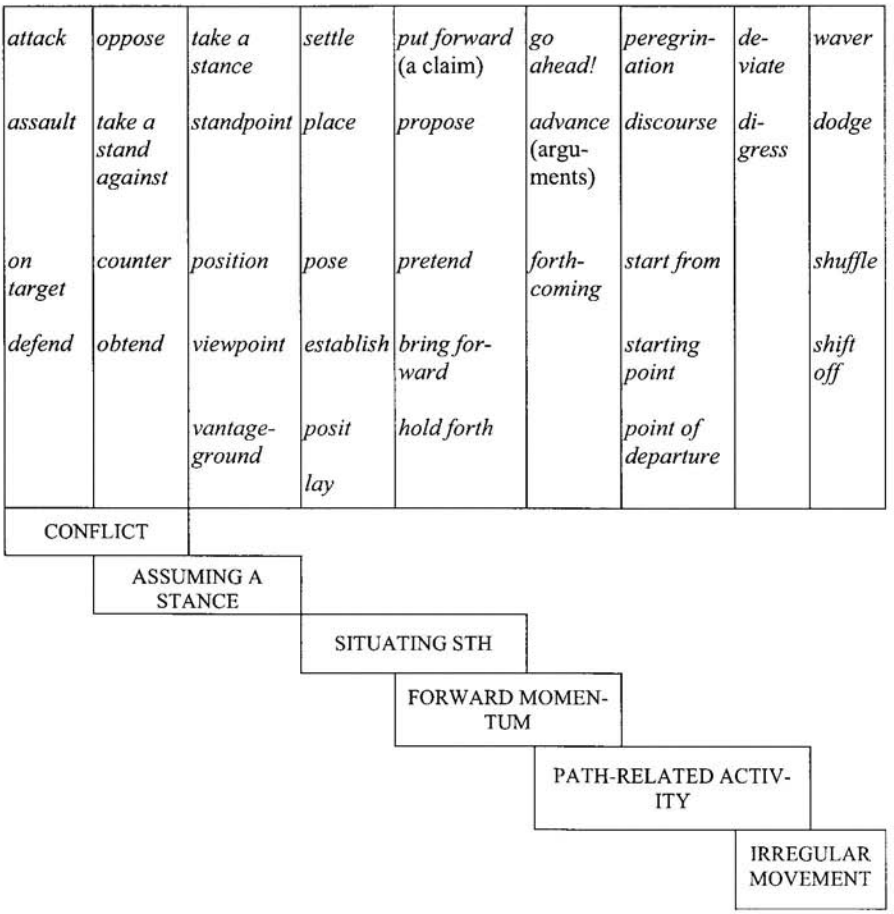

Figure 5. Overlapping of source domains

Figure 5 offers just one of countless ways of arranging the "evidence" (metaphorical expressions). The above items could be aligned with completely different expressions to yield completely different source domains. For example, *advance*, which is often associated with movement of armies, could be related to other items referring to domains such as CONFLICT, VIOLENCE, or WAR; *hold forth* could be related to expressions such as *tenable*, *support* (an argument), or possibly *carry on* ('argue noisily'), and could thus be grouped together with items that refer to a source domain such as PHYSICAL SUPPORT or HOLDING IN ONE'S HANDS. The fact that

our putative source domains glide into each other reinforces the conclusion that every source domain selected is largely an arbitrary choice.

One possible cognitivist response to our objections is to simply acknowledge the possibility of various 'meta-classifications'. Indeed, Lakoff/Johnson (1980: chapter 7) seem to grant that a metaphorical expression can be covered by more than one metaphorical concept. Yet, the result of our reflections is that the number of potential metaphorical concepts is vast to such an extent as to become cognitively unrealistic; this impression will be strongly reinforced by arguments given in chapter 8. We will also show that at least in the case of so-called "primary metaphors", there is clearly no point in positing several alternative metaphorical concepts.

Chapter 8
The conceptual metaphor view: Recent developments and criticism

8.1 Introduction

This chapter surveys recent developments in cognitive metaphorology. We will have a look at recent psychological criticism of Lakoff/Johnson's approach (section 8.2) and at Lakoff/Johnson's more recent work, which builds on suggestions by Grady and other cognitivists (cf. 8.3). Our discussion is necessarily selective. A wealth of compelling criticism of the conceptual metaphor approach complements this exposition. The reader may turn to Taylor (2002), Drewer (2003), Rakova (2003), and Seminor, Heywood, and Short (2004), among others. Sections 8.2 and 8.3 provide the basis for a summary of the chief differences between the conceptual metaphor approach and my account, which assigns a central role to family resemblances as a major principle motivating metaphorical expressions (cf. section 8.4).

8.2 Psychological criticism of Lakoff/Johnson's theory

Murphy (1996) has proposed what in light of Lakoff/Johnson's writings on metaphor seem to be the two most plausible "translations" of their claims into a more or less full-blown theory of mental representation. These two construals are labeled the "strong" and "weak" view of metaphoric representation, respectively.

Let us first turn to the strong view of metaphoric representation. The strong view encapsulates the following interpretation of the vague experientialist idea that our conceptual system is metaphorically structured: Representations of target concepts (or "domains") are "mediated" in that speakers are able to refer to – and grasp – such abstract concepts *only* via reference to the relevant source domain. Thus, abstract concepts do not exhibit a distinct structure "of their own"; rather "they are represented entirely as a set of mappings from the representational structure of more concrete concepts" (McGlone 2001: 93). Take the example ARGUMENT IS WAR. On the strong view, we do not have a separate representation of the

target concept *argument*. Instead, the target is referred to indirectly via our representation of the source concept (*war*).

According to the weak view, there is an independent mental representation not only of the source, but also of the target concept. However, the target concept is, in Murphy's parlance, "influenced" by the source, which as it were superimposes its structure on the target and shapes its content (cf. Murphy 1996: 179).

Following McGlone (2001: 93) and Murphy (1996), Lakoff/Johnson and congenial cognitivists do not explicitly subscribe to the strong view; nevertheless some of their claims are consistent with it. On close inspection, however, Lakoff/Johnson do at times advocate a theory that corresponds most closely to the strong view, while in other places, they seem to espouse the weak view.

Let us consider some pertinent passages. In Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 114), at least, the authors do seem to be committed to the strong view. Lakoff/Johnson here assert that their theory addresses "the issue of how we comprehend and understand areas of experience that are not well-defined in their own terms and must be grasped in terms of other areas of experience." Lakoff/Johnson's phrasing strongly suggests a penchant for the strong theory, where abstract concepts are not independently represented. If a concept is not 'well-defined in its own terms', it cannot have an independent mental representation. Conversely, if a concept does have an independent mental representation, it does not seem to make sense to claim that it "*must* be grasped" in terms of other concepts. This interpretation is strengthened by a pertinent passage from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 116), where the authors maintain that they "are concerned with how human beings get a handle on the concept – how they understand it and function in terms of it." If metaphors are necessary for 'getting a handle on' abstract concepts in the first place, we should not be able to understand them prior to metaphorical transfer. As a consequence, these concepts should not have independent mental representations – having a mental representation of a concept surely presupposes understanding or having a 'grasp of' the concept. It has to be conceded, though, that once again a familiar problem emerges: Key terms such as the recurrently used phrase *well-defined* are not really "well defined" concepts in Lakoff/Johnson's framework.

The clearest evidence that Lakoff/Johnson are sometimes committed to the strong view is found in the following passage from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 81): "Understanding a conversation as being an argument involves being able to superimpose the multidimensional structure of part of the

concept WAR upon the corresponding structure CONVERSATION". This entails that we need the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR to even so much as understand the concept *argument.* As already pointed out, this claim contrasts with others cited in chapter 6 (e.g. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 61). Lakoff/Johnson's vacillation on this score emerges clearly in the following passage, which could be cited both in support of the weak and the strong view: "... experiencing certain activities of talking and listening as an argument **partly requires** the structure given to the concept ARGUMENT by the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 118 [emphasis mine]).

Here, "partly requires" may strike readers as a contradiction in terms. At first sight, it seems that the phrase is to be construed as 'requires part of the structure'. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that what is superimposed in metaphorical transfer from WAR to ARGUMENT is, according to Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 81), "part of the concept WAR". A close look at the context of this claim shows, however, that our attempt at saving Lakoff/Johnson's formulation does not work.[82] Lakoff/Johnson's phrasing testifies to their shuffle between the view that conceptualizing arguments requires the metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS WAR, and that it cannot require it, because understanding the metaphor already presupposes grasp of the target ARGUMENT.

Lakoff/Johnson (1999) also occasionally seem to espouse a model that is at least very similar to Murphy's strong view. Thus, Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 137) claim that "all of our understandings of time are relative to other concepts such as motion, space, and event". This seems to imply that there is no independent mental representation of the concept of time.

This example deserves a brief aside. Characteristically, Lakoff/Johnson draw inferences about our *conceptualization* of time on the basis of facts about our *language* about time. That this is quite unwarranted emerges from the sharp contrast between Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning and an alternative view voiced in a completely different context by Devitt/Sterelny (1999: 223):

> ... it is not obvious what our conception of time is ... These are not matters that can be read off language, particularly **since most talk** that is directly about time **seems straightforwardly metaphorical** (How *could* time flow?). [my emphasis in boldface]

For Devitt/Sterelny, as opposed to Lakoff/Johnson, the very fact that our language about time is metaphorical counts as a reason *against* drawing any conclusions about our conceptualization of time.

Neither the strong nor the weak version of the conceptual metaphor view have been corroborated by adequate evidence (cf. Murphy 1996, 1997). Furthermore, each version suffers from additional shortcomings.

Two problems have been raised for the strong version. The first is aptly summarized in McGlone (2001: 94). How to tease apart source and target concept, if the mental representation of the target is fully dependent on the source? Take the metaphor THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS. In the absence of "at least a minimal independent representation of theories, we would assume that theory terms are synonymous with building terms and would be conceptually incapable of distinguishing between them" (McGlone 2001: 94). Even in the absence of such an "independent representation of theories", however, theory terms need not be synonymous with building terms. For Lakoff/Johnson contend that one target domain can be structured by different source domains (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: chapters 16, 17). An abstract target concept cannot at the same time be synonymous with two different (non-synonymous) source concepts. Whether this fact could save Lakoff/Johnson's position is open to doubt, however.

In any case, the strong view is marred by another shortcoming: Speakers should be expected to draw incorrect inferences when it comes to applying properties of the source concept to the abstract concept.

> ... if we understand theories entirely in terms of buildings, then we should occasionally make erroneous inferences about the applicability of building properties to the abstract concept – for example, that theories not only can have foundations (assumptions), architects (formulators), and blueprints (origins), but also have stairwells (?), hallways (?), sprinkler systems (?), and so on. (Mc Glone 2001: 94).

The possibility of structuring one target in terms of different source domains again introduces additional complexities. Thus, theories are not merely structured by the THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS metaphor, but also by other metaphors such as THEORIES ARE CHILDREN (e.g. *He fathered the theory*; cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 47). It is difficult to see, however, how the mere presence of a THEORIES ARE CHILDREN metaphor, for instance, could prevent mistaken inferences relating to the THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS metaphor. Indeed, the more source domains are used for struc-

turing a given target, the greater the number of erroneous inferences that should be expected to occur.

The above arguments establish the inconsistency of the strong view of metaphoric representation. Does the weak view fare any better? According to Murphy, it does. Following the weak interpretation, both source and target are represented directly by means of symbols referring to the different components of a concept. Thus, in the case of *argument*, speakers have access to representations referring to arguers, claims, etc. (rather than to combatants or battle positions). Still, the metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS WAR in some way has a 'causal influence' on both the content and structure of the symbol system representing the concept of argument.

Take the much discussed metaphor ANGER IS HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER. Murphy approvingly cites Barsalou, Yeh, Luka, Olseth, and Wu (1993: 56) for illustration: "... the exploding container metaphor [for anger] may lead speakers to believe that emotions reflect psychic energies in regions of the mind ..." These psychic energies are conceived as "breaking forth from time to time to produce behavioral outbursts." Hearing such metaphors leads to the construction of "intuitive theories about aspects of direct experience that remain unobservable."

It is important to note, however, that the presence of two independent mental representations for source and target does not solve the problem of interpretation. We have already seen that thinking of X in terms of Y does not, by itself, result in any determinate interpretation of X. Even if we know what anger is and what heated fluid in a container is, a mere psychological link (mapping) of heated fluids onto anger does not issue in a determinate interpretation. The metaphor ANGER IS HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER might be interpreted in various ways, e.g., as stating that anger is dangerous, or frightening, or potentially destructive, or that its effects become apparent suddenly (etc.). It is not the source-target equation itself, which has a "causal influence", but rather the interpretation of this equation. And this very interpretation depends on our antecedent conception of anger. It is therefore impossible to decide whether the "intuitive theory" of anger is really caused by the metaphor, as the weak view suggests. A no less plausible assumption is this: The intuitive theory reflects a conception of anger which exists independently of the metaphor, and which leads us to interpret metaphorical expressions the way we do. Indeed, it is because we have a certain conception of anger that we can single out certain features of heated fluids as similar to features of anger. If we had a different concep-

tion of anger, the metaphor would have been interpreted in a completely different way.

The following question arises for anyone adopting the weak version: *How* can a conceptual metaphor shape our conception of abstract concepts? Take the conceptual metaphor THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS. Following McGlone (2001: 94), there are numerous expressions from the source BUILDINGS that can be used to refer to theories. It is the ubiquity of such metaphorical expressions which influences our conception of theories. In that case, however, the crucial feature of Lakoff/Johnson's approach is given up: The primacy of metaphorical concepts over metaphorical expressions (e.g., Lakoff 1993: 209). On Lakoff/Johnson's view, it is not because we have metaphorical expressions that we have a particular metaphorical concept. It is rather because we have metaphorical concepts that we have metaphorical expressions. Let us have a closer look at McGlone's account of the matter:

> ... the ubiquity of building-oriented idioms about theories in our culture may ... have exerted an influence on our understanding of theories, resulting in a concept of theories that is similar in some relevant respects to our concept of buildings. (McGlone 2001: 94)

How precisely can the concept of theories come to resemble the concept of buildings? Take the example chosen by McGlone. Metaphorical expressions subsumed under THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS include *construct, foundation*, and *support.* Given these expressions, one might argue that theories have become similar to buildings due to a THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS metaphor. The similarity is reflected in the fact that we can talk about the *construction* of a theory, about the *foundations* of a theory, about *supporting* a theory. In other words, we use expressions from the domain BUILDINGS in the domain THEORY. But this is merely how we *talk* about theories and buildings. In what sense is the *concept* of theories similar to the *concept* of buildings (cf. also McGlone 2001: 95)?

The problem arises because the terms we use have different senses depending on the domain in which they are used. Thus, *construct* in the BUILDING domain means something different than *construct* in the THEORY domain – even if these activities may be similar in certain respects. Arguably, it is only our antecedent conception of theories (and buildings) which allows us to recognize these similarities. The similarities between the two concepts are *noticed* due to metaphorical transfer – it is in this sense that similarities are "created". Still, this does not necessarily change our

concept of theory; at least our basic understanding of what theories are remains the same. For the features of the concepts that allow us to perceive similarities between theories and buildings must be present prior to metaphorical transfer – otherwise this metaphorical equation could not be interpreted in any determinate way.

In sum, no compelling evidence in favor of either the strong or weak view has been cited in the cognitivist literature (cf. also Murphy 1996, 1997). A third view has been proposed by Gibbs (e.g., Gibbs 1992a, 1992b). According to Gibbs, conceptual metaphors allow us to interpret metaphorical expressions – even though they do not necessarily influence or even structure our knowledge of the respective target domains, as is claimed in the weak and strong view, respectively. Metaphorical expressions can be understood because they are perceived as examples of the superordinate conceptual metaphor. Several psychologists have offered arguments to the effect that the results of Gibb's experiments are open to interpretations which do not support his account (e.g., Glucksberg, Brown, and McGlone 1993; McGlone 1996, 2001).

In fact, quite a few psychological studies have appeared in recent years which call into question key claims associated with the cognitivist view. For an insightful survey of this line of research, one might turn to McGlone (2001). Two important studies will be briefly summarized in the following pages.

Keysar/Bly (1999) convincingly demonstrate that idioms cannot provide evidence for the existence of metaphorical concepts. They show that arguments to the effect that idioms are motivated by conceptual structures must fail for lack of negative evidence. Lakoff/Johnson do not specify criteria for negative evidence which could falsify the claim that a particular conceptual structure exists. In the absence of negative evidence, Lakoff/Johnson cannot be said to have offered much in the way of convincing positive evidence either. Keysar/Bly demonstrate that idioms cannot even in principle be used to prove that a particular conceptual structure does *not* exist. It is impossible to go into details concerning their complex line of reasoning, but their work offers a subtle and compelling analysis of some problematic aspects of the conceptual metaphor approach.

Another excellent paper by Glucksberg/McGlone (1999) sheds much light on one of the central claims on target in chapters 6 and 7: Do conceptual metaphors constitute the basis for interpreting idioms and metaphorical expressions? The authors' answer is unambiguous: "... there is no good

reason to suppose so, and very good reason to suppose not" (Glucksberg/McGlone 1999: 1555).

Glucksberg/McGlone asked college students to interpret the following metaphorical expressions: *Our love is a bumpy rollercoaster ride*, *Our love is a voyage to the bottom of the sea*, *Our love is a filing cabinet*. These metaphors can – at least on a cognitivist view – be accounted for in terms of metaphorical concepts such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY and LOVE IS A CONTAINER, respectively. Glucksberg/McGlone demonstrate that the conceptual metaphors which might be posited to account for *Our love is a bumpy rollercoaster ride* do not appear to play a role in students' interpretations. Similarly discouraging for the conceptual metaphor view are the results obtained for the expression *Our love is a voyage to the bottom of the sea*. Different subjects arrive at different interpretations – which is unexpected in light of Lakoff/Johnson's assumption that people in a given culture share metaphorical concepts: "To the extent that people share common conceptual mappings, people's interpretations should be consistent with one another's" (Glucksberg/McGlone 1999: 1548). Furthermore, only few subjects did invoke journey-related conceptions.

Cognitivists might attempt two possible lines of response to Glucksberg/McGlone's challenge. On close scrutiny, however, both of them merely reinforce the conclusion that the experientialist account is ill-founded. Let us consider them in turn.

Conceivably, cognitivists might try to counter Glucksberg/McGlone's arguments by claiming that speakers' interpretations of the relevant expression *are* rooted in the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, even though these interpretations do not explicitly mention journeys. Consider the following four interpretations of the metaphor *Our love is a bumpy rollercoaster ride* given by subjects 1 to 4:

1 We have our good days and bad days.
2 Although we might have highs and lows in the relationship, we're having fun while it lasts.
3 Our love varies a great deal, from extremes of joy and happiness to extremes of pain and sadness.
4 We have some really troublesome times, but they are countered by some terrific times. (Glucksberg/McGlone 1999: 1547)

Cognitivists might argue that these interpretations are partly rooted in speakers' personal experience of journeys, as enterprises with ups and downs ("having good days and bad days"). Some of Lakoff/Johnson's re-

marks concerning the metaphor LOVE IS A COLLABORATIVE WORK OF ART strengthen my construal (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 143). Unfortunately, such a response could merely show that Lakoff/Johnson's approach eludes falsification, and for that matter verification: It builds on unwarranted assumptions that are not spelt out to such an extent that they can be tested. It remains quite mysterious why we should need the JOURNEY-metaphor in particular in order to arrive at the interpretations given by subjects 1 to 4. Such interpretations could also be derived from other metaphorical concepts, or indeed from the metaphorical expression itself (*Our love is a bumpy rollercoaster ride*).

One further cognitivist response to Glucksberg/McGlone's reasoning comes to mind: It is true that people share common conceptual mappings. Nevertheless, different persons might access different metaphorical concepts for one and the same metaphorical expression. For instance, while one speaker accesses the LOVE IS A JOURNEY mapping on hearing the phrase *Our love is a bumpy rollercoaster ride*, another speaker accesses a mapping such as LOVE IS EXPERIENCING EXTREME CHANGES/UPS AND DOWNS. Both of these concepts might be claimed to constitute part of our conceptual system. While some speakers only access the first metaphorical concept on hearing the expression at issue (possibly exploiting the second concept in other cases), other speakers focus on the second metaphorical concept ("using" the first one when accessing other concepts).

In many cases it seems all but inevitable that different persons draw on different conceptual metaphors. Given Lakoff/Johnson's view that the meaning of a metaphorical expression depends on its literal meaning on the one hand, and on the superordinate metaphorical concept accessed on the other, differences in metaphorical concepts should inevitably lead to differences in interpretation. To illustrate the problems involved, let us consider conceptual metaphors and metaphorical expressions that are discussed by Lakoff/Johnson themselves. This approach allows us to sidestep a number of speculative remarks on what Lakoff/Johnson *might* say concerning the case discussed by Glucksberg/McGlone (1999). Consider AN ARGUMENT IS A BUILDING as opposed to ARGUMENT IS WAR. The concept *building* is certainly different from *war*. Speakers relying on a BUILDING metaphor for interpreting an expression such as *demolish an argument* should therefore arrive at a different interpretation than speakers relying on a WAR metaphor. The problem with expressions like *demolish an argument* is that we do have to allow for the possibility that one speaker merely accesses the BUILDING metaphor on hearing this phrase, while another one focuses on

the WAR metaphor. After all, *demolish* is not always and not even typically used in the context of war. At the same time, it does not always involve buildings. Note that Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 105) seem to grant that such a term can be assigned to several metaphorical concepts (and hence source domains).

If the metaphor ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS leads to a different interpretation than does ARGUMENT IS WAR, a speaker accessing the BUILDING concept is bound to misunderstand a speaker accessing the WAR concept. Alternatively, the two metaphorical concepts really amount to the same thing; in that case they are dispensable. However we look at it, the conceptual metaphor approach is in trouble.

The first scenario is unrealistic. It is difficult to see *how* choosing one metaphorical concept over another could be relevant to speakers' interpretations. Suppose a speaker accesses ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS, rather than ARGUMENT IS WAR, and interprets the expression *demolish* in accordance with the ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS metaphor. Does she "miss" anything because she does not access ARGUMENT IS WAR? Hardly: All one needs to know for interpreting the expression *demolish* (in the sense presumably envisaged by Lakoff/Johnson) is that *demolition* involves an act of destruction and aggression.[83] Accessing the domain WAR is dispensable for interpretation. According to Lakoff/Johnson, accessing the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR involves superimposing the structure of war on the target domain (cf. chapter 6). But why should speakers need to view people who are arguing as combatants, if they are to correctly understand the phrase *demolish an argument*? Why should they need to view the argument as a kind of war or fight (cf. also Vervaeke/Kennedy 1996)? The crucial semantic features 'destruction, aggression, etc.' that give rise to the target sense of *demolish* are already contained in the word *demolish* itself. Speakers merely have to be able to extract the sense 'put an end to' from the literal meaning of *demolish*. This abstracted sense is directly motivated by the semantic features of *demolish*. Accessing the concept *war* is an unnecessary detour in the interpretation process, since it is not specifically war-related destruction that is at issue. In order to arrive at the correct interpretation, speakers thus have to abstract away from the very concept (*war*) they are supposed to have accessed on hearing *demolish*. By parity of reasoning, the concept BUILDINGS is also dispensable for interpreting *demolish*.

One might argue that the meaning of metaphorical expressions should be accounted for in terms of the supposed *primary* metaphors on which the

complex metaphors (ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS and ARGUMENT IS WAR) are based. However, the notion of primary metaphor is problematic (cf. 8.2).

Furthermore, the present author does not deny that a metaphor such as *An argument is a building* might for all we know have motivated the figurative use of *destroy*. My objections merely relate to three assumptions inextricably linked to Lakoff/Johnson's approach. First, there is ample reason to doubt that general conceptual metaphors are crucial to understanding the meaning of metaphorical expressions (cf. chapters 6–8). Secondly, the available evidence usually does not allow us to single out one (or several) potential metaphorical concept(s) over other potential candidates, i.e. metaphorical concepts that could likewise "explain" a given metaphorical expression (cf. 8.2; 8.3; chapter 7). Thirdly, I deny that the metaphors which motivate a range of metaphorical expressions are metaphorical *concepts* that have a different status from ordinary metaphorical expressions. On my more parsimonious view to be outlined in this chapter, what has motivated the metaphorical expression *demolish an argument* is another metaphorical expression rather than a metaphorical concept. Still, this expression might well be a phrase such as *An argument is a building.*

I am in sympathy with Glucksberg/McGlone's (1999: 1549) conclusions: "... analogical reasoning (of the sort assumed by Lakoff) is apparently not a necessary step in metaphor comprehension." The authors do not dispute that people are able to create, notice and store analogies between different domains. The present writer likewise accepts this assumption. What is important is rather that such potential analogies do not have a special status as pre-stored metaphorical concepts that underlie all or at least most metaphorical expressions. It is this claim that is refuted by Glucksberg/McGlone's finding that the kind of analogical reasoning involving metaphorical concepts is no precondition for metaphor comprehension. Lakoff/Johnson's tenet is also undermined by other arguments (cf. McGlone 2001), including those adduced in chapters 6 to 8. The criticism leveled against their approach is devastating since Lakoff/Johnson's major contribution to cognitive linguistics and philosophy is generally thought to lie in a novel theory of how we understand concepts.

According to Glucksberg/McGlone (1999: 1549), conceptual metaphors can also be misleading. More generally, it is not the case that any superordinate category (or "metaphorical concept") to which an expression belongs is relevant to interpretation. Glucksberg/McGlone's objections are very much to the point. Unfortunately, Lakoff/Johnson do not devote any

space to giving a clear account of how general metaphorical concepts are interpreted. It is therefore difficult to refute their claims by arguing that a conceptual metaphor is irrelevant to interpreting a metaphorical expression that can be subsumed under this metaphor: Since metaphorical concepts are open to various interpretations, it is in principle possible to select one interpretation which does "fit" the relevant expression. The problem with this potential strategy, however, is that it would be entirely *ad hoc*. Lakoff/Johnson do not elucidate the process of metaphor interpretation in a way that could explain how speakers arrive at the correct interpretation of a metaphorical expression.

In summary, psychologists did not find conclusive evidence in favor of Lakoff/Johnson's account. The assumption that conceptual metaphors are stored in our conceptual system could not be verified. The most that can be claimed is that "people can spontaneously construct conceptual mappings to understand novel metaphoric expressions" (McGlone 2001: 103). However, the results of pertinent experiments which support this hypothesis are entirely in line with my position. I do not wish to deny that speakers can detect the analogical underpinnings of metaphorical expressions, and that they are able to create the corresponding mappings. What I do deny is that we can specify a number of conceptual metaphors which are prestored in our conceptual system, which can clearly be related to particular metaphorical expressions, and which allow us to use these expressions in a specific sense. Moreover, whatever actual mechanism it is that underlies our use of metaphorical expressions, this mechanism is unlikely to deserve the title *metaphor*. This point will emerge more clearly in the next section.

8.3 On primary metaphors

8.3.1 General observations

Lakoff/Johnson's account of primary metaphors builds on interesting articles by Grady (1997) and Grady, Taub, and Morgan (1996). The theory of primary metaphors, especially as summarized in Lakoff/Johnson (1999), invites a number of objections. Some major issues will be discussed in this section. This section will for the most part center on Lakoff/Johnson's take of Grady's account. Grady's own reasoning is sometimes different from Lakoff/Johnson's, and would occasionally require a different kind of response. Most of the objections to be voiced below, however, apply to both versions of the theory.

Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 54) follow Narayanan (1997) in tracing primary metaphors to neural connections in our brains. Grady (1999: 112) regards primary metaphors as a type of entrenched associations.

The problem with Lakoff/Johnson's and Grady's account is that it involves an unwarranted postulation of conceptual metaphors (the "primary" metaphors). Neural connections by themselves are not metaphors. Neither do the associations resulting from (or triggering) these connections constitute metaphors. Associations underlying metaphorical expressions such as *I am low today* are just that: Associations explaining certain metaphorical expressions. Lakoff/Johnson and Grady offer no compelling reason why the forces underlying metaphorical expressions (like *I am low today*) should be labeled (primary) *metaphors* (in this case SAD IS DOWN), rather than simply *associations* or experiential correlations. Put differently, appealing to mere association and, possibly, connections between neural networks suffices for motivating the corresponding expressions.

Note that mere associations do not even by Lakoff/Johnson's standards qualify as metaphors. Recall that Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 5) define metaphor as a means of understanding, more precisely, 'of understanding one thing in terms of another'. Metaphor involves seeing one concept in light of another, and arriving at a particular construal of the target.

Now, consider the relation between concepts connected by means of entrenched associations, such as *happy* and *up*. As a result of the putative neural connections between *happy* and *up*, persons often think of upright posture when thinking of happiness. But mere association of this kind does not amount to *understanding* one concept with the help of another. Associations and neural connections do not by themselves provide a particular "comprehension" of the target domain – which is what metaphorical concepts are supposed to achieve (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 221).

Let us spell out this argument in greater detail. There are in fact numerous reasons for rejecting the view that the neural connections underlying so-called primary metaphors do constitute metaphors. One reason relates to the fact that putative primary metaphors are metaphors based on experiential correlations. Such metaphors do not offer a particular "comprehension" of the target domain. They do not in any substantial sense enable us to understand a more abstract concept (cf. 2.4; 6.6). Strictly speaking, metaphorical concepts based on experiential cooccurrences do not qualify as metaphors by Lakoff/Johnson's own standards. The same applies to the neural connections and associations on which these putative metaphors are based.

These difficulties aside, neural connections do not even in a broader sense qualify as metaphors. We can speak of metaphors only if source and target concepts or domains are construed as standing in a particular relation to each other, in a way that goes beyond being connected by association. This relation involves, first of all, that the elements connected are not on a par. Thus, in the metaphor HAPPY IS UP, one element functions as source domain, the other as target. Secondly, the source domain is construed as standing in a specific relation to the target in the sense of Glucksberg/Keysar (1990) (cf. 2.4). For example, persons maintaining an upright posture are construed as the *prototype* of persons who are happy. Neural connections between two concepts do not convey this information.

Neural connections do not even involve selecting one element as the source domain. It is therefore difficult to explain how the asymmetry characterizing metaphorical mappings arise: One element functions as source domain, the other element constitutes the target domain. Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 55) and Narayanan (1997) attribute this asymmetry to the fact that "results of inferences [performed by source or target domain networks] flow in one direction only", i.e., from the domain UP to the domain HAPPY. This is what makes UP the *source* and HAPPY the *target* domain. Lakoff/Johnson offer the following example of an inference which is projected from source to target domain; the inference relates to the phrase *prices hit bottom*, which the authors attribute to the conceptual metaphor LESS IS DOWN: "*Hit bottom* activates the source-domain inference mechanism that computes that the entity *hit bottom*, went as far down as it can go" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 55). The term *inference* seems to be rather infelicitous here, since "went as far down as it can go" is merely a paraphrase of the *meaning* of the phrase *hit bottom*. Other examples of inferences provided by Lakoff/Johnson invite the same objections. It is therefore difficult to see in what sense "results of inferences" are projected from source to target domain. Thus, it remains unclear how two domains linked by neural connections can be differentiated into source and target.

Correlative metaphors of the type BAD IS STINKY (e.g., *Her ideas stink*) and STINKY IS BAD (e.g., *The milk was bad*) pose further difficulties. The former metaphorical concept is cited by Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 50) themselves. In such examples, results of inferences necessarily flow both ways, since the two domains involved can function both as source and as target. Given Lakoff/Johnson's (1999: 55–56) exposition, this should result in the establishment of symmetrical two-way connections between the respective domains. Since the asymmetry described by Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 55–56)

as crucial to establishing source and target is absent in this example, the long-term neural connections between BAD and STINKY cannot involve the selection of one element as source and of the other element as target. It is not the neural connections then, which make BAD IS STINKY and STINKY IS BAD metaphors, i.e. mappings from *source* to *target* domains. By implication, it is not neural connections which make other mappings metaphors.

In short, associations and neural connections may give rise to *expressions* that are usually called metaphors, such as *I am feeling up.* Yet, the associations or neural connections themselves do not constitute metaphors. These results have important implications for the idea that metaphor is situated in the realm of thought. Apparently, Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 57) consider metaphor to be a matter of thought and concepts in the sense that "from a neural perspective", primary metaphors "are neural connections" in our brains which we acquire by "coactivation." It is the neural connections between conceptual networks which "carry out the function of a conceptual mapping" between source and target domain (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 54). Since neural connections are not metaphors, however, the term primary *metaphor* is misleading: Metaphor is not a matter of thought in the sense of Lakoff/Johnson (1999). There is no reason to posit primary metaphors in addition to the metaphorical expressions presumably motivated by the relevant experiential correlations.

While the above reflections show that the neural connections involved in so-called primary metaphors should not be called metaphors, it might in theory still be possible to claim that primary (and hence also complex) conceptual metaphors exist – as a phenomenon that is based on, but goes beyond, neural connections of the sort described by Lakoff/Johnson. Yet, the nature of this phenomenon would remain entirely unclear. Quite apart from this, there are at least two further arguments against positing conceptual metaphors in this sense. First, applying Lakoff/Johnson's principles leads to a proliferation of conceptual metaphors which is cognitively implausible. This point has already been discussed in chapter 7; it will be further elaborated in this chapter.

Second, associations between concepts seem to be wholly sufficient for explaining metaphorical expressions. There is no reason why we should also need conceptual metaphors – the primary metaphors – in order to account for metaphorical expressions. Thus, the presence of metaphorical items like *I'm feeling up* can be fully explained by appealing to their common basis in everyday experience, which leads to entrenched associations and neural connections between concepts in the respective domains. We do

not need to resort to the notion of a metaphorical concept to motivate these phrases. This, however, is precisely the gist of the conceptual metaphor view, which holds that the metaphorical concept "is primary, in that it sanctions the use of source domain language and inference patterns for target domain concepts" (Lakoff 1993: 209).

I therefore suggest that once again we follow Ockham's well known advice that entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity. This advice will be modified so as to apply to metaphors: Metaphors should not be multiplied beyond necessity. We do not need conceptual metaphors in order to motivate metaphorical expressions – not even primary metaphors.

Viewed from a different angle, the case of primary metaphors may well be another example of a tendency noted in chapter 2: Cognitivists often use the terms *metaphor* and *metonymy* in order to describe phenomena that do not really qualify as metaphors or metonymies; in the case at hand, neural connections seem to be elevated to the status of metaphors.

The crucial idea that fuels Grady's work and Lakoff/Johnson's account of metaphor is this: Metaphors are (or can be) based on recurrent correlations in our experience. This insight has already been voiced prior to Lakoff/Johnson (1980):

> *The baritone's voice was heavy* might be spoken in response to hearing a singer's voice, due to the strong associations between *low-pitched voice, large body, heavy, loud*, etc., in prior experience. Comprehension involves activating these high-frequency ('literal') associates and linking them to the topic. (Verbrugge/McCarrell 1977: 496 [emphasis original])

The most important difference between the views of scholars like Verbrugge/McCarrell and Lakoff/Johnson lies in the fact that Lakoff/Johnson call these associations "metaphors", or at least assume that they give rise to general conceptual metaphors – the primary metaphors (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 54–55). Another difference between Lakoff/Johnson (1999) and Verbrugge/McCarrell resides in the fact that Lakoff/Johnson (1999) follow Christopher Johnson (1999) in claiming that the kinds of correlations on which complex metaphors such as ARGUMENT IS WAR are based are formed in early childhood.

There is no argument to support this assumption, other than Lakoff/Johnson's reference to Christopher Johnson (1999). According to the author, conceptual metaphors arise as a result of a two-stage process. The first stage is called the *conflation* stage. During the period of conflation, the potential source and target domains of metaphors are conflated or "coac-

tive", since the concepts represented by these domains are regularly co-activated in everyday experience. Later in development, these formerly conflated domains are "differentiated" (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 49).

Rakova (2002) criticizes the idea of conflation. Even if we set aside the problems mentioned by her, a number of further issues arise. Whether Christopher Johnson's (1999) findings can be generalized to all putative primary metaphors is a matter of debate, since he investigated only one particular figurative expression (*see* for 'know'). Furthermore, the author's results are open to different interpretations. Lakoff/Johnson themselves seem to misconstrue his claims in one important respect. In a footnote designed to emphasize the difference between his own theory and similar work by Ervin/Foster (1960), Christopher Johnson asserts that his approach "does not rely on the idea that attributes are undiscriminated by children – more specifically there is no claim that children are incapable of distinguishing visual and mental experiences" (Christopher Johnson 1999: 168).

If children *are* capable of distinguishing visual and mental experiences, they should be able to differentiate the conceptual domains of vision and mental experiences. Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 48), however, contend that it is only "subsequent to the conflation experience, [that] the child is able to differentiate the two conceptual domains."

Christopher Johnson's work actually casts into doubt one of Lakoff/Johnson's key claims. On Lakoff/Johnson's view, metaphors are important for human cognition because metaphors allow us to map inferences from source domains onto target domains (cf. Christopher Johnson 1999: 156). Christopher Johnson calls this "general property of metaphor ... the *cognitive utility of the source domain*." Following Christopher Johnson, his research into the acquisition of *see* "may indicate that claims about the cognitive utility of the source domain are overstated with respect to *see* and may need to be reevaluated for some other cases of metaphorical polysemy as well" (Christopher Johnson 1999: 166–167). Strangely, Lakoff/Johnson both support Grady's extension of Johnson's account to many other examples and appeal to Johnson's work as an important source of "evidence for the existence of conceptual metaphor" (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 81–87). No mention is made of the fact that Christopher Johnson questions one of the defining characteristics of conceptual metaphors in the sense of Lakoff/Johnson, at least for *see*, and thus possibly also for many other metaphors that are held to arise from conflation. In fact, on Lakoff/Johnson's view all complex metaphors can ultimately be traced to primary metaphors arising from conflations in early experience. Recall also that La-

koff/Johnson's (1999) attempts at illustrating how *complex* metaphors impose a particular perspective on concepts are hardly compelling (cf. especially 6.7).

Let us now return to Lakoff/Johnson's discussion of Grady's work. Lakoff/Johnson (1999) seem to overlook, as Lakoff/Johnson (1980) did not, the possibility of experiencing abstract analogies between different domains that are *not* based on actual correlations in our experience. Cases which do seem to rely on our capacity to perceive abstract similarities or analogies are (mis)represented as cases involving correlations (cf. also 8.3.2).

Consider the putative primary metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE, exemplified by expressions such as *The pieces of this theory fit together*:

> ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE
>
> Subjective Judgment: Abstract unifying relationships
> Sensorimotor Domain: Experience of physical objects
> Example: 'How do the *pieces* of this theory *fit together*?'
> Primary Experience: Interacting with complex objects and attending to their structure (correlation between observing part-whole structure and forming cognitive representations of logical relationships)
> (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 51 [emphasis original])

Primary metaphors "pair subjective experience and judgment with sensorimotor experience" (Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 49). In the putative primary metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE, the subjective experience of "abstract unifying relationships" corresponds to the target domain (ORGANIZATION), the sensorimotor "experience of physical objects" corresponds to the source domain (PHYSICAL STRUCTURE).

What is the ultimate goal of positing a conceptual metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE? The metaphor is designed to explain how the structure/organization of an abstract domain can be described with the help of concepts referring to the structure/organization of a concrete domain (fitting together of puzzle pieces or other physical objects, etc.). The metaphorical concept at issue could also be called ABSTRACT STRUCTURE IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE or PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION IN ABSTRACT DOMAINS ARE PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION IN CONCRETE DOMAINS (cf. also Grady, Taub, and Morgan 1996: 182–183).

It seems worthwhile to scrutinize Grady's (1999: 85) own account of the primary experience involved:

> ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE ... is plausibly accounted for in terms of a correlation between physical interaction with complex objects and the formation of cognitive representations of their causal structure. For instance, our experience of table legs includes both perceptual information about shape and conceptual information, informed by our understanding of gravity, regarding their causal role in supporting tabletops.

Pace Grady, complex objects by themselves do not have a "causal structure." We do not say, for example, that the leg "causes" the tabletop. Rather, we might say that the leg causes the tabletop *to remain in a particular position*. But this kind of "causal structure" characterizes any entities that are somehow in interaction. Any movement by an object, for example, causes some change in another entity. The movement of my fingertips, for instance, causes particular keys on the keyboard to descend. In other words, the kind of "correlation" Grady refers to is omnipresent wherever two concrete objects are in some kind of interrelation. It remains unclear why the conceptual metaphor at issue should specifically relate to the part-whole structure of complex objects as source domain (cf. Grady 1999: 85; Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 51).

Grady's account prompts further objections. How, for instance, does the highly abstract concept *structure* enter the picture? This concept is crucial to both the source and the target domain (cf. the label for the primary metaphor at issue: ORGANIZATION/ABSTRACT STRUCTURE IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE). As we have seen, Lakoff/Johnson's principal claim is that primary metaphors can be traced to conflations in early childhood. The "conflation" at issue in ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE, however, could only occur at a comparatively late stage – in fact *after* the period where conflations are supposed to occur: Very young children are unlikely to have an abstract concept such as *structure*, whether physical structure (source domain) or abstract structure/organization (target domain). The experiences of organization and physical structure could be "conflated" only at a stage where the concepts for these experiences are available. It is difficult to explain, then, how neural connections between these highly general concepts could be formed in early stages of language acquisition – given that the very concepts (or networks) to be connected are not present at that age.

ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE, then, cannot be a primary metaphor. What is conflated, if anything is, are not the two general concepts *organization* and *physical structure*, but at best particular experiences relating to these two domains. Therefore, the central issue is really the fol-

lowing: How are particular metaphorical expressions supposedly falling under the metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE motivated? Are they due to experiential correlations or due to analogies? Take Lakoff/Johnson's own example *The elements of the theory fit together.* Elements of a theory fit together in virtue of logical relationships, e.g. the elements constituting conclusions can be *inferred* from elements constituting the premises of the theory. Elements of complex objects, however, fit together in virtue of their spatial arrangement and spatial characteristics (e.g., the *smaller* element can be *inside* a bigger element). We do not experience a conflation of the experiences of concrete objects fitting together and abstract arguments (etc.) fitting together. Even if the putative primary metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE existed, it remains quite unclear why we use the expression *fit together* in the very specific figurative sense the word has when applied to theories or similar abstract concepts. Compare true cases of conflation, e.g. UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING, where we do experience both phenomena at the same time, and where the figurative meaning of *I see* can be directly derived from this correlation.

There is no reason, then, to trace the metaphorical expression *fit together* to conflation. It rather reflects a capacity that is basic to the formation of metaphors but neglected in Lakoff/Johnson (1999): The ability to perceive abstract analogies between different concepts. Similar arguments apply to other putative instances of the metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE.

8.3.2 Primary metaphors, complex metaphors, and figurative expressions

It is one of Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) principal tenets that complex metaphors are based on simple ones, the primary metaphors. If this is true, positing complex metaphors might seem superfluous. Arguments that could be taken to entail this conclusion have been provided by Grady (1997). However, Grady seems to insist that complex (or "compound") metaphors do exist: "A compound is a self-consistent metaphorical complex composed of more than one primitive" (Grady, Taub, and Morgan 1996: 181).

The idea that complex metaphors are based on primary ones faces a number of difficulties. Some issues have already been discussed above. Firstly, the very notion of primary *metaphors* seems problematic. Secondly, some expressions commonly explained in terms of experiential correlations cannot really be traced to conflation and hence primary metaphors. This

objection will be developed somewhat further in this section, which is designed to offer an alternative perspective on the relationship between primary metaphors, complex metaphors, and metaphorical expressions.

Consider the metaphorical concept THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS. According to Grady (1997: 276), most of the expressions usually subsumed under this metaphorical concept can be reassigned to a combination of two basic metaphors: ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE and PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT. Taken together, these primary metaphors yield the complex metaphor ABSTRACT ORGANIZATIONS ARE ERECT PHYSICAL STRUCTURES. Yet, viewing an argument as a building is not tantamount to viewing it as an erect physical structure.

The concept *building* contains features that are not present in the more general concept *erect physical structure*. For instance, constructing a theory is comparable to constructing a building in that it involves considerable time, effort, and careful planning/thinking. This is not true for erect physical structures in general (which may in fact be natural structures). For all we know, the features itemized above – which constitute *similarities* or analogies between theories and buildings – might solely underlie the transfer from building-vocabulary to theory-vocabulary. The metaphorical concept THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS might thus be rooted in similarities rather than in experiential correlations. A concept that is not based on experiential correlations cannot be based on primary metaphors – this much is implied in the very concept of a primary metaphor. In other words, the supposed "complex" metaphor is not necessarily "complex" in the sense of being based on a primary metaphor.

A concept that is more plausibly traced to the source BUILDINGS rather than to ERECT PHYSICAL STRUCTURES is German *Denkgebäude* ('building of thought'): The expression *Denkgebäude* contains the word *building*. Other examples for which BUILDING is a plausible source domain include the term *build* itself, which can be literally applied to theories. Intriguingly, the definition of *build* given in pertinent dictionaries highlights the relevance of the feature 'time-consuming activity' that was hypothesized to play an important role in figurative extension from buildings to theories ('to construct, frame, raise, **by gradual means** [anything that is compared to an edifice, as a philosophical system]'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. build*). Yet another example that fits the *building* concept rather closely is *edify*, whose somewhat obsolete primary sense relates quite specifically to the process of building ('to build; to construct *a dwelling, edifice* of the usual building materials'), and which could also be used in the domain of THEORIES –

again this sense is obsolete ('to build up, establish, organize *a system, institution*, etc.'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. edify*).

To some extent, such examples relativize Grady's (1997: 277) observation that buildings are unlikely to represent the source domain for the expressions traditionally classified as examples of THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS. Grady is of course correct in pointing out that many of these expressions are not confined to the source domain BUILDINGS. There do exist some lexical items, however, which qualify as examples of THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS by Grady's criterion, since they primarily relate to buildings. Note that the thrust of my exposition is different from Grady's line of thought. For all we know, the concept of buildings *might* underlie the metaphorical extensions considered, even if the expressions do not primarily refer to buildings. The crucial result of my discussion is rather that there is simply no evidence for positing a complex metaphor THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS. Yet, there is no evidence for positing other specific metaphorical concepts either (including primary metaphors). The complex web of interconnections among metaphorical expressions suggests a different picture: Individual metaphorical expressions are motivated by precedents in the shape of other metaphorical expressions, rather than by conceptual metaphors. This idea has already been outlined in chapter 7, it will be developed somewhat further in this chapter.

Even if we grant Grady's general criticism that many putative examples of THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS are not specifically used in the domain of buildings, a mapping from buildings onto theories might nevertheless underlie all of these expressions. The reason is this: Those expressions which do primarily relate to buildings, such as *build up a theory*, might have triggered parallel semantic changes in other items. Other building-vocabulary such as *buttress*, *basis*, etc. may have been applied to the target domain THEORIES in analogy with the paradigm transfer hypothetically reflected in terms such as *build up a theory* or *building of thought*. Once we speak of a *building of thought* we will be inclined to use similar expressions that fit this kind of extension. Thus, a *building of thought* must be *supported* by evidence, the *support* comes in the shape of arguments, which must be *strong* enough to *support* the theory (etc.). All that seems to matter here is consistency. It is entirely irrelevant whether the metaphorical expressions that elaborate on the hypothesized "basic" metaphorical items (viz. *building of thought*, *build up a theory*, etc.) are confined to the domain of buildings. The fact that these terms *can* be used in this domain is sufficient motivation for employing them in this way.

Speakers seem to prefer consistent metaphorical expressions; this is all that is suggested by Lakoff/Johnson's panoply of metaphorical items grouped under particular metaphorical concepts. Correspondingly, hearers will be sensitive to the similarities between expressions previously encountered and novel figurative extensions.

I am not committed to the assumption that the above sketch of parallel semantic extensions is an accurate presentation of the semantic developments at issue. The point is merely that it represents a *possible* sequence of developments. Countless other chains of extensions are equally plausible (e.g., various building-expressions used in the domain of theories may have been ultimately modeled on phrases such as *support a theory*).

It seems quite unwarranted to preclude the possibility that speakers are able to create (and understand) consistent metaphorical expressions *without* having to resort to prestored conceptual metaphors. Compare Grady's account, in which *support a theory* would have to be traced to (primary) conceptual metaphors such as PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT.

One might object that we still do need primary metaphors in order to explain the *meaning* of phrases such as *support a theory*, which at first sight needs to be accounted for by the primary metaphors PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT and ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE (cf. Grady 1997: 274–277). However, even if experiential correlations or associations may have partly motivated the meaning of these terms, there is no reason to grant these correlations the status of (primary) metaphors. As we have seen, experiential correlations or neural connections resulting from such correlations are not metaphors.

Grady offers a rather complex explanation of the figurative meaning of *support*. The unification of the two primary metaphors PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT and ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE yields the correspondence THE ASYMMETRICAL DEPENDENCE OF SOME PARTS ON OTHERS IS PHYSICAL SUPPORT. This unification "entails" the following information, among other things:

> It is part of our knowledge of all erect structured objects that there is an asymmetrical dependence of some parts on others, resulting from the asymmetrical effects of gravity: **some parts must support** others. (... this is only true of objects which are **both erect and structured**.) This proposition is mapped onto the domain of theories, and is captured in the following correspondence: THE ASYMMETRICAL DEPENDENCE OF SOME PARTS ON OTHERS IS PHYSICAL SUPPORT. (Grady 1997: 276 [emphasis mine])

This passage raises a number of objections. First, it is not clear why the primary metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE should underlie figurative uses of *support* such as *support a theory*. We do not need the concept of *structured objects* (i.e., objects having different parts) – and hence the primary metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE – in order to arrive at the idea of an "asymmetrical dependence" of one thing on another. Perhaps Grady would argue that this primary metaphor allows us to conceive of theories as entities which have different parts – in analogy with the parts of a building. But this is hardly convincing. First of all, the *facts* which *support* a claim or a theory are not really "part" of a theory. More generally, we can use *support* in many contexts where the supporting element is not conceived as forming part of a larger whole. Thus, the idea of parts supporting other parts cannot be crucial to the figurative use of *support* in the domain of theories.

Let us now turn to the second primary metaphor supposedly underlying *support*, viz. PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT. It is not clear why only *erect* (structured) objects should involve an 'asymmetrical dependence of some parts on others'. For instance, one part of a person's body, the hands, can *support* another part of the body, the head, whether or not the person is in an erect position. This casts some doubt on the assumption that the primary metaphor PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT is relevant to the figurative meaning of *support*: The concept *support* does not imply that what is supported is erect.

Other features of *support* may be more relevant to the figurative sense of this term. This fact might lead us to posit primary metaphors other than PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT as part of the basis of *support*. For instance, *support* implies imparting strength (e.g., strength needed for withstanding some kind of impact). If something is strong, it is also more likely to persist, hence the basic metaphor at issue might be PERSISTING IS BEING STRONG. This would allow us to account for *support* (arguments, theories, etc.) and very similar metaphorical expressions like *strengthen*, *confirm*, and *solidify* (argument, theories), as well as phrases like *strong mind* and *strong will*.

There are further alternative primary metaphors which might be invoked as the basis of the figurative use of *support*. For instance, we might trace *support* to PERSISTING IS BEING KEPT FROM FALLING. Note that this metaphor neither implies, nor is implied by PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT. The primary metaphor PERSISTING IS BEING KEPT FROM FALLING is suggested by similarities in figurative and literal meanings between

support and *uphold* (an argument), *tenable* (argument, etc.; literally: 'capable of being held'), and similar items. Another putative primary metaphor that might be posited is PERSISTING IS BEING CARRIED, which would account for *support* and similar expressions such as *carry* ('to support an inference, analogous case, etc.').

Let us for the sake of argument suppose that primary metaphors are needed to account for metaphorical expressions. In that case, a single expression like *support* in its figurative uses (e.g., *support a theory*) can be traced to various primary metaphors. In itself, this is no news. What is crucial is rather that these primary metaphors have the same target domain, viz. PERSISTING.[84] For this reason, only one of them could be necessary for accounting for the figurative use of *support.* Which route – or primary metaphor – we take in order to arrive at the target sense *persisting* is irrelevant. The upshot is that there is no evidence for tracing *support* to one particular primary metaphor, rather than another.

A detailed analysis of related metaphorical expressions reveals that once again a family resemblance structure emerges, which renders it impossible to provide a neat grid of primary metaphorical concepts. Consider the expressions that could be grouped under the putative primary metaphors discussed above. The metaphorical expression *solidify*, for example, could be argued to be covered by PERSISTING IS BEING STRONG (or STRENGTHENED). However, *solidify* could also be motivated by a different primary metaphor: PERSISTING IS BEING COMPACT(ED). This metaphor in turn could be argued to account for expressions like *solidify*, *compact* (in its obsolete figurative sense 'to confirm, give consistency to'), and *consistent* (argument, theory, etc.).

Along these lines, one might suggest the following interlinked source domains of primary metaphors: HOLDING, SUPPORT, STRENGTH, COMPACT. Note that all of the expressions listed below as examples relating to these domains involve a target sense PERSISTING (in the sense of Grady):

> HOLDING (*uphold, tenable, carry, sustain,*[85] *support*[86]) – SUPPORT (*uphold, support, sustain* [an argument], *carry* 'support' [an inference, etc.]) – STRENGTH (*support, solidify, confirm, strengthen*) – COMPACT(ED) (*solidify* [a claim], *compact* 'to confirm, give consistency to', *consistent* [argument])

All of the metaphors mentioned above could be considered primary metaphors in the sense of Grady in that they are linked to "primary experiences" in early childhood. For instance, PERSISTING IS BEING HELD could be linked to the primary experience that things which are allowed to fall on the

floor are often damaged, or cease to "persist" – in the rather abstract sense of *persisting* favored by Grady.

Some of the above expressions can be grouped under several source domains – which shows that the source domains glide into each other in the fashion described in chapter 7. No particular primary metaphor is clearly supported by evidence: Expressions that can be grouped under PERSISTING IS HOLDING, for example, could also be grouped under other primary metaphors, such as PERSISTING IS BEING SUPPORTED, or (depending on the lexeme at issue) PERSISTING IS BEING STRENGTHENED.

Much like complex metaphors, then, primary metaphors may turn out to be the result of an arbitrary imposition of a preconceived grid of putative conceptual metaphors on semantically related expressions. A couple of metaphorical expressions may appear to "fit" merely one particular primary metaphor. The odds are, however, that this does not hold for most figurative expressions.

Once we start out from conceptual metaphors (whether primary or complex), or at least a small number of highly similar expressions, we may arrive at a neat grid of metaphorical concepts: What we are looking for are simply expressions that "fit" the metaphorical concepts we have posited. I suggest that we reverse the procedure. Starting out from a great number of interrelated metaphorical expressions is bound to reveal that the putative conceptual metaphors posited are typically not unambiguously supported by the available "evidence." On the contrary, the web of potential primary and complex metaphorical concepts supposedly stored in our cognitive system gets complicated to such an extent as to be cognitively implausible (cf. also the following section).

Fortunately, primary metaphors need not be posited at all. They are neither needed to account for the universality of certain figurative extensions, nor for explaining the figurative sense of a figurative expression such as *support a theory*. The latter can be motivated by the literal meaning of this word, and possibly a number of pre-exising analogous metaphorical *expressions*. As for the first phenomenon, it suffices to point out that the correlations underlying the respective extensions are experienced by all humans. These correlations may lead to associations and neural connections between conceptual networks – but not necessarily to (primary) *metaphors*. What Lakoff/Johnson and Grady are labeling primary metaphors are at best correlations in our experience that lead to associations between concepts and neural connections in our brains. Associations and neural connections do not qualify as metaphors.

Suppose this argument is accepted. One might still posit primary and complex conceptual metaphors – as phenomena that go beyond neural connections in the sense outlined above. This would be a pointless undertaking, however, since it turns out to be impossible to provide evidence for any particular conceptual metaphor. Thus, it remains open to speculation *which* conceptual metaphor out of a number of potential candidates is relevant to a given expression. An expression such as *buttress an argument* may be motivated by the putative conceptual metaphor THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS, it may also be motivated by PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT or other primary metaphors – if these metaphorical concepts do indeed exist.

A final observation on the terms *primary metaphors* and *complex metaphors* will conclude this section. Consider the primary metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE. Grady himself is slightly skeptical concerning the status of this mapping as a metaphor, preferring the term *schema* (cf. Grady 1997: 273, 286). His account lends further support to our finding that the term *metaphor* is not always used felicitously. However, Grady's arguments are different from mine. The example ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE illustrates a further problem relating to the term *primary metaphor*. The primary metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE might itself be based on a complex metaphorical concept involving BUILDINGS as source domain. The word *structure* derives from a Latin verb meaning 'to build'. Many of the senses of English *structure* make reference to the concept of *building* (e.g. 'that which is built or constructed'; 'a building or edifice of any kind'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. structure*). The specific "building-sense" of *structure* may thus constitute the source of figurative extension, with the schema ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE arising via generalization from this original conceptualization of structures as 'things that are built'. The more general schema or primary metaphor ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE may thus be based on another metaphor (ORGANIZING IS BUILDING or ORGANIZATION IS A BUILDING). In a sense, then, the attribute *primary* may be somewhat infelicitous.

Given that the metaphor ORGANIZATION IS A BUILDING involves a very complex source domain which is very much unlike other source domains of so-called primary metaphors, we might call this extension a "complex" rather than a "primary" metaphor. Thus, two of the criteria that following Lakoff/Johnson and Grady seem to define primary metaphors – basicness and cognitive simplicity – may have to be uncoupled. ORGANIZATION IS A BUILDING would be cognitively complex but still basic –

since by hypothesis it underlies ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE. This observation reinforces my point that the term *primary* in *primary metaphor* may not always be justified, because these metaphors may themselves be based on other metaphors.

The major point, then, is this. Reference to primary metaphors is problematic because there is no evidence for metaphorical concepts existing apart from the "corresponding" cognitive associations and the expressions these associations give rise to. Furthermore, at least in most cases we cannot clearly assign metaphorical expressions to particular primary metaphors – the potential primary metaphors that could account for particular metaphorical expressions overlap in the fashion described in chapter 7. As a result, no primary metaphor is really supported by the available "evidence": Expressions that could count as evidence for one primary metaphor could also count as evidence for a different primary metaphor.

My analysis suggests that the network of semantic connections that might have motivated the creation of new metaphorical expressions cannot be captured by a manageable number of primary metaphors. The impression of a cognitively implausible proliferation of metaphorical concepts will be confirmed in the following section. The odds are that analyses that proceed from primary metaphors – rather than actual metaphorical expressions – are skewed: They suggest a neat classification of metaphorical expressions under primary metaphors which does not reflect the infinitely complex crisscrossing network of relationships.

8.4 Family resemblances, primary metaphors, and complex metaphors

This section will review crucial differences between Lakoff/Johnson's conceptual metaphor view and my position that the meaning and sheer existence of metaphorical expressions is motivated by family resemblances between lexical items. This contrast will be outlined mainly on the backdrop of Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) account, which highlights the idea of primary metaphors.

A good summary of the cognitivist position is provided in a passage from Lakoff (1993) which bears the title "Metaphors are not mere words". Discussing the metaphorical concept LOVE IS A JOURNEY, the author emphasizes that this metaphor is not to be equated with metaphorical expressions, but rather represents an "ontological mapping" from source to target

domain (cf. 2.2.1). Thus, metaphor is primarily a 'matter of thought'; language plays only a "secondary" role. It is the metaphorical mapping from source to target domain which allows us to use metaphorical expressions in the first place: "The mapping is primary, in that it sanctions the use of source domain language and inference patterns for target domain concepts" (Lakoff 1993: 209). The crucial idea that the meaning of metaphorical expressions is due to the metaphorical concepts they can be assigned to is also voiced in Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 65, 82).

Why does Lakoff contend that his approach is incompatible with the idea that metaphors are just expressions? Lakoff's answer is intriguing: This idea should be rejected because it implies that different figurative expressions should invariably "be different metaphors." But this is not the case, or so Lakoff claims. According to him, expressions such as *We've hit a dead-end street* and *Their marriage is on the rocks* involve the same metaphor (viz. LOVE IS A JOURNEY), as do all other examples he cites as instances of LOVE IS A JOURNEY (e.g., *We're at a crossroads*, *Our relationship is off the track*; cf. Lakoff 1993: 209).

What is asserted by Lakoff (1993: 209) is precisely what is denied in this book. The expressions *Their marriage is on the rocks* and *We've hit a dead-end street*, or indeed all other examples usually considered instantiations of LOVE IS A JOURNEY, represent different metaphors. Not even Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) position is fully in line with Lakoff (1993). Lakoff/Johnson (1999) posit primary metaphors, which are held to underlie complex metaphorical concepts such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY. On this account, various conceptual metaphors (i.e., the various primary metaphors) are held to underlie expressions relating to LOVE IS A JOURNEY. Lakoff/Johnson's adoption of Grady's account of primary metaphors raises a crucial theory-internal problem.

Lakoff/Johnson (1999) do not mention that Grady provides arguments which could be taken to undermine Lakoff's (1993) motivation for positing "complex" conceptual metaphors. Witness Grady's comments on expressions that Lakoff/Johnson (1980) would classify as instances of THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS:

> To say that all these expressions are instances of a single metaphor ... would be to ignore much of the structure of that metaphor ... and to discount the relationships between the individual expressions and other metaphors quite independent of the domains of theories and buildings. (Grady 1997: 283–284)

Even Grady himself, however, insists that complex metaphors do exist – despite some remarks that might initially suggest the opposite. Still, the following problem arises: If we assume that the metaphorical expressions itemized above as instances of LOVE IS A JOURNEY can ultimately be analyzed in terms of "complexes" of primary metaphors, the crucial motivation for positing complex metaphors such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY vanishes. Once we presuppose the existence of primary metaphors which motivate the expressions usually subsumed under LOVE IS A JOURNEY, positing the complex metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY itself becomes superfluous. The relevant figurative expressions usually assigned to LOVE IS A JOURNEY do not specifically relate to love and journeys at all, but can more easily be assigned to more abstract domains that are covered by corresponding primary metaphors (cf. Grady 1997 on an analogous case). It seems, then, that these expressions are fully accounted for by the respective primary metaphors.

Let us clarify the problems involved with the help of a few examples. For instance, the phrase *to come far* in *Look, how far we've come* – which Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 64) consider an example of LOVE IS A JOURNEY – can be fully explained with the help of the primary metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS. This mapping is one of the primary metaphors which supposedly motivate the complex metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, and hence the expressions assigned to this concept (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 61–64). In line with the primary metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS, the expression *Look, how far we've come* can be interpreted to mean that common purposes have been achieved (or that they have *not* been achieved, if the expression is interpreted ironically). The complex metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY does not seem to add anything to our understanding of the phrase at issue (*how far we've come*). This impression is confirmed by the fact that the figurative expression *to come far* is not specifically used in the context of love. It does not matter what kinds of purposes are at issue, whether they relate to love or to anything else. In other words, a plausible hypothesis – at least from a cognitivist perspective – is this: *Look how far we've come* is motivated by the primary metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS. It is this metaphorical concept which allows us to use the expression in various domains – including the domain of love. It is mysterious why we should need an additional complex metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY to motivate the expression *how far we've come*. A correlate of these reflections is that the phrase cannot be used as evidence

of LOVE IS A JOURNEY, at least once it is counted as evidence of PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS.

Similar observations apply to other examples of LOVE IS A JOURNEY cited by Lakoff/Johnson. The authors' account of complex metaphors in terms of primary metaphors, then, seems to be problematic. Once we do posit primary metaphors, the complex ones seem superfluous. Matters are more complicated, however. In most cases the various metaphorical expressions cited by Lakoff/Johnson appear to be misplaced both as instances of the complex metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY and as instances of the primary metaphors supposedly underlying this complex metaphor. Let us have a closer look at the examples of the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor adduced by Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 64) and Lakoff (1993: 206):

(1) Look how *far we've come.*
(2) It's been a *long, bumpy road.*
(3) We can't *turn back* now.
(4) We're at a *crossroads.*
(5) We may have to go *our separate ways.*
(6) The relationship isn't *going anywhere.*
(7) We are *spinning our wheels.*
(8) Our relationship is *off the track.*
(9) The marriage is *on the rocks.*
(10) The marriage is *out of gas.*
(11) We're trying to keep the relationship *afloat.*
(12) We may have to *bail out* of this relationship.

That metaphorical concepts may be irrelevant to the meaning of metaphorical expressions has been pointed out by Glucksberg/McGlone (1999). The authors construct their own examples to illustrate this point. What seems particularly puzzling, however, is that even the metaphorical concepts cited by Lakoff/Johnson themselves are frequently irrelevant to the meaning of the expressions the authors cite as instances of these concepts.

Consider the expression *We're trying to keep our relationship afloat.* It is very much open to doubt whether any of the primary metaphors that Lakoff/Johnson might cite as underlying this expression can help explaining the figurative meaning of *keep afloat.* Not even the complex metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY itself seems to be relevant. The idea of a journey does not enter into the meaning of *keep afloat*: The latter phrase is *not* an expression about journeys or travel and does not even imply journey-

related conceptions. This, however, is precisely what is claimed by Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 65), who contend that the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor "links the literal meanings of these expressions about travel to corresponding meanings in the domain of love."

The potentially relevant primary metaphors are A RELATIONSHIP IS AN ENCLOSURE, INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS, PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS and ACTIONS ARE MOTIONS (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 61–64). None of these seems particularly relevant to the figurative use of *keep afloat*. For instance, the idea of keeping something or someone afloat does not imply an "enclosure" or vehicle (cf. the putative primary metaphor A RELATIONSHIP IS AN ENCLOSURE) – a life-buoy, for instance, is designed to keep human beings afloat. Similar observations apply to PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS and INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS.

What is exploited in the image of *keeping afloat* is rather the contrast between a thing being above and being under water. As a consequence of this contrast, *afloat* transports the idea that something is in a comfortable state, not in danger of drowning or being destroyed. It is entirely irrelevant whether or not the person or thing described as being afloat is an "enclosure" (vehicle), whether or not the person is on a journey, and whether or not (s)he is a traveler having a particular destination.[87]

Lakoff/Johnson's choice of metaphorical concepts to motivate a given metaphorical expression is thus problematic, to say the least. This can be seen even more clearly once we consider Lakoff's (1993) comments on the expressions he cites as examples of LOVE IS A JOURNEY. The author concedes that not all of these phrases are restricted to the domain of love: "Those [expressions] like *look how far we've come*, which aren't necessarily about love, can readily be understood as being about love" (Lakoff 1993: 206 [emphasis original]). Lakoff's phrasing implies that some of these expressions *are* "necessarily about love", while others are not. On close scrutiny, however, none of the examples cited above (1 to 12) are indeed "necessarily about love". Neither are they necessarily about journeys.

None of the conventional expressions cited by Lakoff/Johnson involves terms like *journey* or *travel* – which is surprising in light of the supposed existence of a LOVE IS A JOURNEY mapping in our conceptual system. The one expression that might be said to be closely associated with the concept of journeys is *long, bumpy road.* Unfortunately, there is no reason to place this expression in the target domain LOVE. It can be used in countless different contexts such as the following (found on the Internet):

(13) The bumpy road out of the red and towards a more modern service (www.colson.edu.mx)
(14) Piracy fight turns into long, bumpy road (www.zdnet.com)
(15) The long and bumpy road of design and test (www.elecdesign.com)
(16) The long, bumpy road to peace (www.kbri-canberra.org.au)
(17) The long and bumpy road to completion (www.geocities.com)
(18) Perez takes long, bumpy road to stardom (www.usatoday.com)

Remarks by Grady (1997) are in a similar vein, though applied to different examples. It is strange that the devastating implications of this line of reasoning have not lead to a more fundamental rethinking of pivotal premises of the conceptual metaphor approach.

Consider the above examples. To account for the first case, one might stipulate a metaphorical concept such as MARKETING IS A JOURNEY. In view of the other examples, as well as the indefinite further uses to be found, countless other metaphorical concepts come to mind. Crucially, nothing *prohibits* postulating such concepts: If the presence of phrases such as *long bumpy road* in the context of love relationships warrants positing the conceptual metaphor *LOVE* IS A JOURNEY, the presence of this phrase in other contexts warrants positing other conceptual metaphors. Put differently, if LOVE IS A JOURNEY is needed to account for *bumpy road* in the context of love, an infinite number of other metaphors is needed to explain the use of the phrase in countless other contexts in which it can be employed.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. First, it is difficult to explain how a cognitive system could store and make use of such an endless number of metaphorical concepts – the more so since they are not even necessary for explaining the figurative meanings of the respective expressions. Alternative accounts of metaphor interpretation along the lines of Glucksberg/McGlone (1999), which will be discussed below, are far preferable to Lakoff/Johnson's conceptual metaphor view.

The above considerations prompt further questions. What is the evidence for the existence of a metaphorical concept such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY, if the figurative meaning of the metaphorical expressions putatively covered by this concept is the same across target contexts (e.g., 'laborious, difficult undertaking' for *bumpy road*), and thus cannot be due to the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor? A far simpler solution is to say that there is a metaphorical correspondence between long, bumpy roads and difficult undertakings, which can be applied to an infinite number of target

contexts. Since similar accounts can be given for all metaphorical expressions supposedly grouped under a complex conceptual metaphor, the evidence for positing complex metaphorical concepts like LOVE IS A JOURNEY dissolves.

Let us take a close look at Lakoff's (1993: 209) argument in favor of the view that metaphors are more than simply linguistic expressions. Lakoff cites various examples of expressions he considers instantiations of a single conceptual metaphor, viz. LOVE IS A JOURNEY (cf. examples 1 to 12 above). There is some irony in the fact that Lakoff's reasoning is compromised by the specific examples he uses, while the very same reasoning applied to a more compelling instance of a single metaphor, such as *long bumpy road*, would force us to abandon the conceptual metaphor approach. Consider Lakoff (1993: 209):

> Thus, 'We've hit a dead-end street' would constitute one metaphor. 'We can't turn back now' would constitute another, entirely different metaphor. 'Their marriage is on the rocks' would involve still a different metaphor. And so on for dozens of examples. Yet we don't seem to have dozens of different metaphors here. ... And this unified way of conceptualizing love metaphorically is realized in many different linguistic expressions. (Lakoff 1993: 209)

Echoing the above passage, one might turn Lakoff's reasoning on its head by remarks along the following lines: 'On the conceptual metaphor approach, *long bumpy road* in *Piracy fight turns into long, bumpy road* would be subsumed under one conceptual metaphor; while *long bumpy road* in *The long and bumpy road of design and test* would represent a different metaphor. Other uses of the term, such as *long and bumpy road to completion* would be assigned to yet further metaphors. But these are not different metaphors.'

It makes supreme sense to argue that *long bumpy road* is the same metaphor in all different contexts, since in all of these contexts the phrase has the same meaning ('process/undertaking that takes a long time and involves difficulties'). By contrast, it is far less plausible to claim that *We can't turn back now* and *Their marriage is on the rocks* constitute a single metaphor, a metaphor which offers "a unified way of conceptualizing love as a journey" – as is maintained by Lakoff (1993). The metaphorical senses of these terms are entirely different ('change one's plans' vs. 'be in a precarious state'). Furthermore, the respective expressions retain their meanings when used in contexts other than love: *We can't turn back now* means

(roughly) 'we cannot change our plans', whether or not it is *love* that is at issue. It is therefore entirely unwarranted to claim that the sentence involving *turn back* 'offers a way of conceptualizing *love* as a journey.' The same argument applies to all other putative examples of LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

The general principles Lakoff/Johnson tacitly adopt for uncovering metaphorical concepts force us to implausibly claim that *long bumpy road* in different contexts belongs to different conceptual metaphors – and thus has different meanings in different contexts (cf. 7.3), which is false. At the same time, their line of reasoning entails that expressions whose thrust *is* quite obviously different – and whose meanings are significantly further apart than the different uses of *long bumpy road* in different contexts – *do* belong to the same metaphorical concept.

The above argument which capitalizes on Lakoff's own reasoning shows that Lakoff's case for the existence of conceptual metaphors is weak. The same line of reasoning can be used to make a case for a position that is diametrically opposed to Lakoff's own. Moreover, there is no evidence that the various examples (1) to (12) above do belong to a single conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY. Lakoff's argument for the bedrock assumption of cognitive linguistics – metaphor is a matter of thought – thus turns out to be untenable. As noted above, Lakoff's (1993: 209) reason for espousing this tenet is his belief that the various metaphorical expressions listed above (examples 1 to 12) belong to a single metaphorical concept. We have seen that this assumption is unwarranted.

Lakoff/Johnson's approach raises further issues. Consider the following putative example of LOVE IS A JOURNEY: *We can't turn back now.* The corresponding nominalization *turnback* has the general figurative meaning 'person who faint-heartedly gives up an enterprise'. This general meaning can be applied in countless contexts. Now recall again Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 82),

> The Love is a Journey mapping states the generalization linking various travel-domain words and the meanings of those words to the corresponding uses of those words in the love domain.

If this is true, we should need to access or activate a specific metaphorical concept in order to be able to interpret a given metaphorical expression. Take, for example, the sentence *As far as his love relationships are concerned, he has always been a turnback.* In order to interpret this sentence, we should need to access the mapping LOVE IS A JOURNEY. For other contexts, we should need to access other X IS A JOURNEY mappings, the

target domain of the respective mappings would roughly correspond to the context in which the phrase is used. This cannot be correct. Consider a situation where we do not know the overall context at all, where the phrase *He is a turnback* is heard or read in isolation. Since we do not know the context, we do not know which particular metaphorical concept should be accessed for interpretation. We should not be able to understand the expression.

This is obviously false. We do understand the expression out of context ('He is a person who easily gives up an enterprise'). The knowledge gained once we learn that the sentence is about the person's love relationships can also be imparted by simply *specifying* the relevant context ('a turnback as far as his love relationships are concerned'). No metaphorical concept is needed to understand that he is a fainthearted person as far as his love relationships are concerned.

It is one of the principal tenets of the conceptual metaphor approach that conceptual metaphors are indispensable for understanding. Yet, the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor is not needed for understanding the sentence. In short, if conceptual metaphors are crucial to understanding, the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY cannot be cited as underlying the term *turnback* (or the corresponding verb). Analogous arguments apply to all other examples of LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

In summary, a glance at the list of examples of LOVE IS A JOURNEY shows that not a single expression can really be cited as evidence of this particular metaphorical concept. No example is confined to the domain of LOVE in its metaphorical uses, and the domain of JOURNEY in its literal uses. The fact that LOVE is not the only target domain forces us to posit an indefinite and infinite number of further metaphorical concepts. So does the fact that no expression is primarily used in the source context of journeys. Depending on the kind of example we look at, various other source domains come to mind.

One of the expressions cited by Lakoff does frequently relate to love: *On the rocks* ('quite destitute of means; also [esp. of marriage, etc.] on the point of dissolution; finished'; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. rock*). However, even this phrase is not confined to the domain LOVE and does not essentially involve the source domain JOURNEY. *On the rocks* can also be used in the sense of 'bankrupt'. Thus, a business company, for example, can be described as being *on the rocks*.

On Lakoff/Johnson's view, we should need different metaphorical concepts to be able to use and understand the phrase *on the rocks* in different

contexts. Thus, the use of *on the rocks* as applied to business should be explained by one particular metaphorical concept (BUSINESS IS A JOURNEY), the use of the same phrase in the domain LOVE should be explained by another metaphorical concept.

Such metaphorical concepts are dispensable. All that seems to be needed is knowledge of the source concept *a ship being on the rocks* and the ability to extract salient features characterizing this state which at the same time characterize more abstract states (cf. Glucksberg/McGlone 1999 for an excellent psychological account of metaphor interpretation). One of the most salient features that is easily transferred to abstract domains is 'being in severe difficulties' or 'being on the point of dissolution'. This sense can be applied to various abstract domains. Speakers simply have to access their everyday knowledge about love and business to determine in what sense a love relationship can be in severe difficulties ('on the point of dissolution') and in what sense a business can be in severe difficulties ('bankrupt'). There is no reason to posit different conceptual metaphors depending on whether it is love or business relations or anything else which is conceived of as *on the rocks*.

How precisely do we compute the meaning of a metaphorical expression? A compelling theory of metaphor interpretation has been championed by Glucksberg, Keysar, and various co-authors. This theory allows us to dispense with the cognitivist account. For example, Glucksberg/McGlone (1999) oppose their own "minimalist" view of metaphor interpretation to Lakoff/Johnson's "maximalist" view. The minimalist view of metaphor assumes that all that language users have to know in order to interpret a metaphor are the source concept and the figurative context in which this concept is used. More precisely, one must have a certain knowledge about the tenor (or "topic"); this knowledge allows us to sort out those potential descriptions which provide an apt characterization of the topic. To use the authors' example, understanding a metaphorical description of a surgeon as "a butcher" presupposes knowledge about surgeons (e.g., that surgeons should work carefully and with great skill and accuracy). Understanding such a metaphor also presupposes knowledge about the source concept (or "vehicle"). In the case at issue, hearers must be aware of features which are characteristic of – or typically attributed to – *butchers*, and which can be transferred to surgeons (cf. Glucksberg/McGlone 1999: 1544).

By contrast, Lakoff/Johnson's maximalist view assumes that speakers need to access systematic conceptual metaphors if they want to understand or produce metaphorical expressions. A wealth of arguments advanced

especially by psychologists has pointed out crucial shortcomings of the maximalist view (cf. McGlone 2001). Several arguments put forward in this book confirm that an account along the lines of Glucksberg/McGlone is indeed far preferable to a maximalist view.

To explain the relationship between the different uses of *on the rocks* we could again resort to the concept of family resemblances. Family resemblance relationships thus may not merely motivate the creation of similar figurative expressions; they may also lead to extensions from one sense of a word to another related sense of the same word. Murphy (1997) shows that chains of similarity may well underlie the creation of polysemous senses of a single word. Speakers tend to be "influenced by prior senses of a word in accepting a new sense" (Murphy 1997: 260). They are likely to consider a novel sense more acceptable if it can be related to a similar sense of the same word.

My alternative to the conceptual metaphor approach is to focus on family resemblances, both between the various figurative senses of one word (along the lines of Murphy) and between the senses of different figurative expressions that are used in the same putative target domains. As concerns metaphorical expressions relating to the same putative target domain, I have already argued at some length for a family-resemblance approach. Similarly, family resemblances can also account for the use of one particular figurative expression in different contexts. We do not have to posit different metaphorical concepts for *on the rocks* when the term is applied to love and journeys, respectively. Rather, the use of *on the rocks* to convey the idea of bankruptcy can be motivated by its similarity to the sense profiled when the term is used in the context of love ('on the point of dissolution').

The essence of my suggestion is that due to the polysemy that characterizes the meaning of most words, semantic links can be established between an item and various other items belonging to different putative source domains. Even if we focus exclusively on mappings that Lakoff/Johnson would call complex metaphors, or on mappings which they are likely to call primary ones, there is likely to be a continuous overlap of metaphorical categories. The expression *win an argument*, for example, could be linked to various other expressions belonging to the domain of GAMES, thus resulting in a metaphorical concept such as ARGUMENT IS GAME-PLAYING. However, *win an argument* could also be linked to the various expressions subsumed under ARGUMENT IS WAR. We have seen that these expressions are in their turn linked to items in various other source domains. For exam-

ple, the expression *fortify* could be linked to either the domain of war or the domain of buildings. In virtue of its links with the domain of war, *fortify* is connected to items such as *sally*, in virtue of its links with the domain of buildings, *fortify* is linked to items such as *support*. The items in these domains are again linked to items in yet further domains. Thus, *sally* can also be linked to expressions relating to ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY (cf. chapter 7).

Since every item could be "accounted for" by many different conceptual metaphors, *not a single* metaphorical concept is supported by the available data: The expression(s) that could be taken as evidence for *one* particular metaphorical concept could also count as evidence for another. Moreover, the web of potential metaphorical concepts that can be posited on the basis of the available "evidence" is exceedingly large. It is implausible to assume that all metaphorical concepts one might come up with for a particular expression are indeed part of our cognitive system and accessed for interpretation.

The only way out seems to be to grant that only some of the potential metaphorical concepts that could be posited do indeed exist. This tack raises further problems, however (cf. also 8.1). For instance, there is no principled way of determining which of a number of potential metaphorical concepts is crucial to a given metaphorical expression, because we can dispense with metaphorical concepts altogether. Figurative meanings of metaphorical expressions can be explained on the basis of a minimalist account of metaphor interpretation along the lines of Glucksberg/McGlone (1999).

There is another reason why no particular metaphorical concept can be argued to be indispensable. The features that are thought to be imported from the superordinate source domains could also be directly derived from the metaphorical expressions themselves. Consider *win an argument* for illustration. This expression could be traced to ARGUMENT IS GAME-PLAYING or to ARGUMENT IS WAR, or to other conceptual metaphors. We cannot determine which conceptual metaphor is "the relevant" one, since neither of them contains information that could not *also* be derived from the metaphorical expression itself. What kind of information could be conveyed by the respective metaphorical concepts? ARGUMENT IS GAME-PLAYING could convey the idea that arguments involve competition, may be entertaining (etc.). Yet, any information of this kind can be directly derived from the metaphorical expression *win*. The very features that (are supposed to) warrant subsuming *win* under a given conceptual metaphor –

in this case perhaps "competition", "entertainment", etc. – must be present in the figurative expression itself. Otherwise this expression could not be subsumed under this particular metaphorical concept.

It is therefore not clear why one should have to derive the features relevant to interpreting *win an argument* from the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS GAME-PLAYING, rather than from the meaning of the figurative expression itself. Similar arguments hold for other conceptual metaphors one might come up with as the basis for the expression *win an argument*.

These considerations support an alternative approach building on family resemblances. Given that the superordinate metaphorical concepts do not contain any information that could not also be extracted from the respective expressions themselves, it seems likely that an account of metaphorical extension should remain on the level of metaphorical expressions.

How similar metaphorical expressions arise can be explained by appealing to the very process of analogy that has long been held to underpin our ability for metaphorical transfer. Psychological experiments have shown that speakers tend to prefer conventional means of extensions. As Murphy (1997: 263) explains, "the preference for conventional means of extensions can be rephrased in terms of analogy." For example, the word *oak* primarily refers to a certain tree, but the term can also be applied in an extended sense to the wood of this tree. Once we are familiar with this kind of extended use, we will tend to use words for other kinds of trees in an analogous way. Thus, when we acquire a word for a kind of tree previously unknown to us, such as *hoptree*, we will believe that this word can also be applied to the wood of the relevant tree. It does not matter that we have never encountered a use of the word *hoptree* referring to the wood of hoptrees. Still, we will be inclined to use sentences such as *These are hoptree chairs*, because we use the term *hoptree* in a way which is analogous to our use of the term *oak* (cf. Murphy 1997: 263).

My suggestion is that the existence of metaphorical expressions that belong to a similar target context can be explained in a similar way. Once you have encountered a word with a given source meaning in a specific figurative context, you will be inclined to use other expressions with a similar (or at least related) source meaning in a similar (or analogous) metaphoric sense. Since a word is generally related to various other words that belong to quite different potential source domains, the original extension can trigger parallel developments in several domains. By the same token, a given figurative sense can be motivated by the presence of various extant "para-

digm" mappings. It must remain a matter of speculation, for example, whether the use of *fortify* in the domain of arguments has been triggered by the presence of similar expressions in the domain of WAR, or BUILDINGS, or by expressions belonging to more simple domains such as STRENGTH or VIOLENCE (cf. 7.4.2).

It is entirely irrelevant which of the pre-existing expressions belonging to different domains has served as the actual model for analogical extension. The resultant meaning remains the same, since the presence of a model merely serves as a *prompt* for constructing an extension which is analogical to its model (in that both can be used in similar source and target contexts). The specific *meaning* that results from this extension, however, depends on the original source meaning of the metaphorical expression *fortify*.

Conceptual metaphors cannot be essential to the meaning of the relevant metaphorical expressions. For it does not matter *which* of a variety of potential conceptual metaphors has served as the prompt for constructing the analogous expression. It does not make a difference, for instance, whether we access ARGUMENT IS WAR or ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS as "explanations" of *win an argument*. At the same time, it cannot be the case that *all* potential metaphorical concepts that might be posited to account for a given metaphor are actually accessed (and stored).

Since my focus is on concrete expressions rather than general supercategories, my account is in line with insights gained from various psychological studies that "existing exemplars greatly influence the production of novel entities" (Murphy 1997: 262). In sum, my approach contrasts with the cognitive view in being theoretically parsimonious, more economic from a cognitive perspective, and free from theory-internal contradictions.

8.5 Summary

A glance at more recent attempts at putting flesh on Lakoff/Johnson's vague tenets shows that those assumptions either elude falsification, and hence verification, or prove to be false. McGlone's excellent survey of pertinent work by psychologists winds up with a conclusion that is very much in line with the tenor of this chapter, or indeed the whole book: "Despite its valuable programmatic influence, the conceptual metaphor view has not fared well theoretically or empirically" (McGlone 2001: 105).

Some recent attempts at extending and refining Lakoff/Johnson's framework on the part of other cognitive linguists represent an advance on Lakoff/Johnson's approach. Grady and Christopher Johnson, for example, offer more refined analyses. Resorting to "primary metaphors" as the motivation for complex metaphors seems to be more convincing than resorting to the highly problematic "ontological metaphors" along the lines of Lakoff/Johnson (1980). One of Grady's and Lakoff/Johnson's basic insights – that metaphors can be traced to correlations in experience – has been anticipated by Verbrugge/McCarrell (1977). Despite its intrinsic interest, certain key assumptions of Grady's work are not compelling. Once we posit primary metaphors, the contention that we need *complex* metaphors to account for metaphorical expressions becomes even more implausible. On the other hand, there is no reason to posit primary metaphors in the first place: No persuasive arguments are given why the forces motivating metaphorical expressions like *I am low today* should be called (primary) *metaphors*, rather than simply associations, mental links, or neural connections.

The last section has solidified my claim that Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) approach involves insurmountable difficulties, leading to a psychologically implausible proliferation of metaphorical concepts. My own attempt at accounting for the relevant links by means of family resemblances is more parsimonious and cognitively more realistic. Family resemblances may not only explain links between the senses of different lexical items that are used in similar domains, they may also account for similar figurative senses of a single lexeme. The idea of family resemblances may thus provide the key to a unified account of figurative meaning.

Chapter 9
Conclusion

Anyone attempting a critical exposition of Lakoff/Johnson's approach is treading on holy ground. Their works have always held a place of honor on the shelves of most cognitivists. Lakoff/Johnson's major achievement is to have drawn attention to the omnipresence of conventional metaphors in everyday language. Their publications have sparked an unprecedented interest in metaphor and related topics and have contributed to the emergence of a new discipline – cognitive linguistics.

In recent years, the study of metonymy and the distinction between metonymy and metaphor has been a major focus of much work in this budding field. Proceeding from a critical survey of different attempts at defining metonymy and metaphor, chapter 2 has developed a proposal for drawing a neat distinction between these two phenomena. I have suggested that Glucksberg/Keysar's work offers a satisfactory functional account of metaphor as a process creating *ad hoc* categories and conceptions. Metonyms, by contrast, build on pre-given relations. This contrast has been spelt out in terms of the knowledge required for understanding metaphors and metonyms, respectively. With metaphors, what I have called source and target concept can be dissociated to the effect that knowledge of the target concept does not imply knowledge of the source concept. Source and target can be combined in a particular metaphorical extension, but are in principle separable. With metonymies, on the other hand, knowing the source meaning is indispensable for grasping the target meaning. In conjunction with Glucksberg/Keysar's characterization of metaphors and our observation that metonymic transfer typically precludes co-occurrence in discourse (cf. 2.2.4) – or at least, is not based on it – this account lends more substance to the distinction between metaphor and metonymy.

We have also seen that it is important not to assimilate all kinds of metaphors to the prototypical type, i.e., to those metaphors which reflect a substantial characterization of the target concept. It has been argued in later chapters that Lakoff/Johnson (1980) do not distinguish between these different types of metaphors.

Furthermore, I have sketched a very simple general principle that could provide a key to promising studies of figurative expressions: Our analysis

of figurative mappings should proceed from concrete expressions rather than more general superordinate concepts (whether metaphorical or metonymical). Even though this principle is at odds with much research in cognitive linguistics, there are several arguments in support of it. In chapter 2, for example, I have demonstrated that analyses of figurative mappings which proceed from more general metonymic or metaphoric categories often lead to mistaken classifications of linguistic expressions. The principle is borne out by arguments of a completely different type in the final chapters of the book. I have shown that there is no conclusive evidence for positing metaphorical concepts in the first place. Moreover, any metaphorical expression can be grouped under an indefinite number of metaphorical concepts.

Chapter 2 has also surveyed some further characteristic problems incurred by many cognitivist approaches to metonymy. The conceptions of metonymy put forward turn out to be applicable to a great number of phenomena that do not really qualify as metonymies. Metonymies are (re)defined as frame-based phenomena, relations within domains, or relations involving Idealized Cognitive Models. As a result of these redefinitions, the distinction between metonymy and metaphor is typically watered down.

Despite the undeniable merits of the conceptual metaphor view, it is not always easy to explain the great appeal exercised by Lakoff/Johnson's theory on countless scholars. Their framework is marred by numerous shortcomings which have emerged in the foregoing analyses. In many cases it is presumably Lakoff/Johnson's rhetoric which conceals inconsistencies and other deficiencies of their exposition. Two case studies presented in chapter 3 have been concerned with recurrent features of Lakoff/Johnson's argumentation. The authors' publications were found to display many of those unfair pseudo-argumentative strategies Lakoff/Johnson castigate at great length in their discussion of ARGUMENT IS WAR (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: chapter 13). Particularly striking is Lakoff/Johnson's penchant for "evading the issue", which pervades much of their reasoning.

Lakoff/Johnson's writings also feature a number of rhetorical strategies that are not explicitly mentioned by the authors. For example, Lakoff/Johnson tend to divert attention from the principal issue by focusing on sequences of easily digestible near-truisms. As a result, readers are likely to overlook that key questions are rarely addressed in a satisfactory way. Recall Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 181) thoughts on the nature of reality: "The physical world is what it is. Cultures are what they are. People are

what they are." Perhaps the most conspicuous example from later publications is "[m]eaning is not a thing; it involves what is meaningful to us. Nothing is meaningful in itself" (Lakoff 1987: 292). The simple structure of these sentences and the regular use of rhetorical repetition add to the overall thrust of such passages. Another characteristic rhetorical device is the authors' ample use of catchwords such as *structure* – even in contexts where they are inappropriate and merely cloud the issue.

Several recurrent flaws in Lakoff/Johnson's reasoning are comparatively difficult to notice on account of the above-mentioned features of their exposition. The authors' tendency to allow considerable margin for interpretation is a case in point. Many instances of this strategy have been encountered in the preceding chapters. Lakoff/Johnson's refusal to delineate the pivotal notion of "clearly delineated" domains is but one of them. More generally, none of the key concepts employed by the authors are sufficiently defined, not even *meaning* – the central concept of semantics.

Another weakness of Lakoff/Johnson's approach is their penchant for blending incompatible positions. To gain an impression of the number of such inconsistencies, we should glance back at some of the most striking examples. Lakoff/Johnson (1980) use the term *myth* in two incompatible senses, despite their explicit commitment to one particular usage. Their account of objectivity is inconsistent, as are their reflections on universal moral laws. Moreover, the authors maintain on the one hand that conceptual metaphors presuppose an antecedent conception of the target, and on the other that they make this conception possible in the first place, a mistake paralleled in their later work. Further prominent examples of contradictory statements in Lakoff/Johnson (1999) include the authors' assessment of analytic philosophy in general and Putnam's work in particular.

Chapter 4 has been devoted to Lakoff/Johnson's criticism of "the" Western philosophical tradition as well as their own alternative view. Experientialist ideas proposed by Lakoff/Johnson are often reminiscent of suggestions made by other writers. Take the doctrine that there is no absolute truth. Goodman and Putnam have advanced arguments for this bedrock assumption of cognitivist philosophy before the publication of Lakoff/Johnson (1980). We have seen that these philosophers have also anticipated other important ideas associated with experientialism. Still, Goodman and Putnam are not mentioned in Lakoff/Johnson (1980) and are even criticized in Lakoff/Johnson (1999) as part of the objectivist tradition. It has often been noted (e.g. Jäkel 1999) that the cognitivist theory of metaphor recalls earlier accounts by various other scholars. Pride of place, at

least among philosophical contributions to metaphorology, belongs to Goodman's and Black's writings. Johnson (1981b) himself offers a brief discussion of Black's and Goodman's work. However, these authors as well as other predecessors of the experientialist approach go unmentioned in Lakoff/Johnson (1980).

The very term used by Lakoff/Johnson to designate the bulk of Western philosophy indicates insufficient familiarity with one of its key thinkers. Contrary to Lakoff (1988: 122–123), *objectivism* is not a name made up by Lakoff/Johnson, but was used by Husserl to characterize a philosophical movement that has important affinities with Lakoff/Johnson's objectivism. Yet another conspicuous example of the authors' tendency to ignore significant contributions to Western philosophy is Lakoff's (1987) exposition of cognitive semantics. Lakoff's argument builds on the time-honored notion of mental images and similar constructs. His account fails to carry conviction for reasons that are common currency at least since Wittgenstein's seminal contributions to the theme (cf. chapter 5).

A close reading of extended passages of Lakoff/Johnson's philosophical writings lends support to Leezenberg's (2001: 137) contention that objectivism as expounded by Lakoff/Johnson does not really exist. Lakoff/Johnson's own proposals concerning general problems in philosophy do not live up to their self-imposed requirements. A case in point is the experientialist theory of truth. Lakoff/Johnson's suggestions on this score hardly amount to a contribution to philosophy, one issue being that key concepts are not explained. By the same token, Lakoff/Johnson do not provide a compelling new philosophical account of objectivity. The authors do not even give a substantial definition of objectivity and advance inconsistent claims. The common denominator of many passages outlining Lakoff/Johnson's philosophical theory is the absence of detailed arguments that go beyond the programmatic.

The treatment of philosophical topics in Lakoff/Johnson's more recent work leaves as much to be desired as their earlier publications. Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) exposition of supposedly standard analytical philosophy contains a considerable number of mistakes and inaccuracies. I have tried to demonstrate that Lakoff/Johnson's accounts of basic tenets of analytic philosophy are either exceedingly vague – and hence impossible to assess – or false. The most glaring misconstrual relates to the correspondence theory of truth. Lakoff/Johnson (1999) name ten philosophers and one philosophical movement (the Vienna Circle) as champions of key assumptions of analytical philosophy, including the correspondence theory of

truth. As regards the correspondence theory, Lakoff/Johnson's claims are mistaken for at least seven of these philosophers, and highly problematic for the Vienna Circle.

Philosophical publications by other cognitivists are frequently in some respects similar to Lakoff/Johnson's account. Most important, philosophical proposals by cognitivists are often vague or ignore important contributions to contemporary philosophy. In some cases, works by other philosophers are misrepresented.

Chapter 5 has been concerned with Lakoff's (1987) semantic theory, which suffers from numerous shortcomings familiar from Lakoff/Johnson's earlier work. Ambiguity and refusal to offer definitions of central concepts mar Lakoff's (1987) exposition of meaning. Notions such as *meaningfulness* and *meaning* are not sufficiently clarified. Lakoff's account of *inherently meaningful structures* is not compelling. That Putnam is approvingly discussed in Lakoff (1987), even though some of his central claims have gone unnoticed by the author, is rather strange. So is Lakoff's (1987: 11) assumption that experientialism constitutes the pinnacle of a tradition pioneered by Wittgenstein and Putnam. I have tried to show that experientialism is in important respects *not* Wittgensteinian in spirit. Quite to the contrary: It resuscitates a much older tradition associated with Plato. This is true both for Lakoff's suggestions concerning the philosophical import of mental images for understanding and the familiar idea that metaphorical expressions can be *explained* by means of metaphorical concepts. I have argued that metaphorical concepts serve a purpose reminiscent of Platonic "ideas", which Wittgenstein was concerned to banish from philosophical semantics. The Platonic thrust of Lakoff/Johnson's theory has unexpected implications for the status of their work in relation to objectivism. In some respects Lakoff/Johnson's approach continues a tradition pioneered by one of the most famous objectivists of all time: Plato counts as a typical objectivist, because he espouses the idea of absolute truth (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 190).

The discussion in chapter 6 has made a case against the experientialist approach to metaphor. We have seen that Lakoff/Johnson merely offer inconclusive arguments, if any, for the existence of metaphorical concepts. Their reflections on metaphorical structuring fail to carry conviction. Even if Lakoff/Johnson should be justified in positing ARGUMENT IS WAR and other metaphorical concepts, their account does not show how such "meta"-concepts enable us to understand the respective target meanings of individual metaphorical expressions (e.g., *attack an argument*). This issue – how

we come to understand individual concepts – lies at the very heart of cognitive metaphorology. In attempting to explain how metaphorical concepts "give us a handle on" what Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 116) call "less clearly delineated" concepts, the authors broach a more general topic that has occupied philosophers ever since Plato (cf. chapter 4). Lakoff/Johnson's assumption that they have solved the problem of understanding is one of the main reasons why they consider experientialist metaphorology to have far-reaching "philosophical implications" (cf. also Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 46).

Lakoff/Johnson's account of understanding is symptomatic of their general tendency to "solve" long-standing problems by changing the terms of the discussion. To the extent that the formula 'understanding something in terms of another thing' has content, it deals with a different notion of understanding than is relevant to philosophical semantics (cf. chapter 6). Maintaining that we understand "less clearly delineated" concepts in terms of "more clearly delineated" ones is an empty answer to the central philosophical questions at issue. These questions revolve around the problem "how we come to understand words". Most important, 'what does that understanding consist in' (Blackburn 1984: 45)? The major difficulty with Lakoff/Johnson's account is this: Understanding a given target domain in terms of a given source can trigger many different conceptions (ways of 'understanding') of the target. Thus, understanding cannot simply consist in viewing one thing in terms of another.

These facts are easily overlooked due to Lakoff/Johnson's conception of metaphor. Most analytical philosophers would deny the title *metaphor* to the conventional expressions Lakoff/Johnson adduce as examples (cf. 4.5.2). Conventional metaphors have lost what these scholars consider the crucial criterion of metaphoricity: The interpretation of such mappings is (no longer) open-ended, but rather rigidly fixed. It seems natural that Lakoff/Johnson's examples of conventional metaphorical expressions "mean what they mean" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 7), that they provide "a certain comprehension" of the target (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 221). In light of these metaphors it may indeed at first appear unproblematic to contend that Lakoff/Johnson (1980) – and Black (1981 [1955]) – have made an inroad into the age-old problem of understanding by noting that some concepts are understood in terms of others.

It is interesting to note that analytical philosophers' assumption that conventional metaphors are no metaphors at all is strengthened by psychological experiments which suggest that readers confronted with *conventional* metaphors do not seem to access the putative analogical underpin-

nings of the respective expressions, even if the mapping supposedly underlying these metaphors is explicitly mentioned (e.g., ARGUMENT IS WAR; cf. McGlone 2001: 104). Contrary to Lakoff/Johnson (1980), conventional metaphors are virtually 'dead' metaphors – they are not metaphors 'we live by'.

Lakoff/Johnson's contentions concerning ontological metaphors, which are held to create similarities, are inconsistent. Ontological metaphors do not even count as metaphors by Lakoff/Johnson's own standards, having no experiential basis and lacking a "clearly delineated" source domain. Yet another difficulty involves the notion of experiential basis, which is presented in an incoherent way.

In this summary, I have so far presupposed for the sake of argument that positing conceptual metaphors as such is justified. The reflections set forth in chapters 7 and 8 demonstrate that the conceptual metaphors "uncovered" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 118) are more likely to represent theoretical constructs than aspects of mental reality. I have tried to show that metaphorical concepts impose an *ad hoc* compartmentalization on the data. The ultimate aim of our investigation (e.g., demonstrating the presence of the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR) predisposes us to select just that kind of "evidence" which tallies with our overall aim.

Some, but by no means all, of Lakoff/Johnson's assignments of linguistic expressions to certain conceptual metaphors will strike readers as intuitively appealing. Yet, most expressions cannot be plausibly assigned to any *one* metaphorical concept, or even a small number of metaphorical concepts.

We have seen that every metaphorical expression could be "accounted for" by different conceptual metaphors (cf. also Grady, Taub, and Morgan 1997). As a result, *not a single* metaphorical concept is supported by the available data: The expression(s) that could be taken as evidence for *one* particular metaphorical concept could also count as evidence for another concept. The hypothesized relations between particular metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphors are thus invariably debatable, the more so since we do not really need conceptual metaphors for explaining metaphor interpretation (cf. Glucksberg/McGlone 1999). Moreover, the network of all potential metaphorical concepts which could be "inferred" from the available "evidence" is too complex to be stored in our cognitive system. At first sight, this observation might not seem to pose a problem for Lakoff/Johnson's later approach, which explains conceptual metaphors in terms of neural connections between conceptual networks. Unfortunately, this model

is contestable for various reasons. We have seen that conceptual metaphors deserve the title *metaphor* only if they represent phenomena that go beyond both metaphorical expressions and neural connections or associations of the sort described by Narayanan (1997) and Lakoff/Johnson (1999) (cf. 8.3). Even if we grant for the sake of argument that such neural connections constitute metaphors, the conceptual metaphor approach turns out to be incoherent. For different speakers are likely to access different metaphorical concepts on hearing a particular expression. This leads to theory-internal inconsistencies (cf. 8.1).

The case against conceptual metaphors is strengthened by the absence of any evidence that metaphorical concepts could allow us to dispense with individual definitions of metaphorical expressions. On the contrary, it is metaphorical concepts themselves which turn out to be a cognitive burden, since the meaning of metaphors can be fully explained via a minimalist approach along the lines of Glucksberg/McGlone (1999) (cf. 8.3).

I have proposed the following alternative to the conceptual metaphor approach: The meaning and existence of metaphorical expressions is motivated by family resemblances to similar expressions. Once speakers encounter a word with a given source meaning in a specific figurative context, they will be inclined to use other expressions with a similar or analogous source meaning in a similar or analogous figurative sense. Since a word is generally related to various other words that belong to quite different potential source domains, the original extension may trigger parallel extensions in various domains. A correlate of these reflections is that a given metaphorical sense can be motivated by the presence of various extant "paradigm" mappings. It must remain a matter of speculation, for example, whether the use of *fortify* in an "argument-sense" has been triggered by the presence of similar expressions in the domains of WAR, VIOLENCE, or BUILDINGS, or by expressions belonging to more simple domains such as STRENGTH. We do not need all potential analogies for explaining how *fortify* could arise and how it can be understood.

Grady's work represents a significant advance in cognitive semantics. However, his account and especially Lakoff/Johnson's (1999) elaboration on his work are in some respects contestable. Most important, the pivotal concept of primary metaphors is itself problematic. It remains unclear why the motivating forces underlying metaphorical expressions – or indeed complex metaphors – should be labeled metaphors (rather than simply associations, neural connections, or experiential correlations). Even if we grant the existence of primary metaphors, it is debatable whether putative

complex metaphors are invariably based on primary ones, as Lakoff/Johnson (1999) suggest (cf. 8.3). Note also that a central insight associated with Grady's and Lakoff/Johnson's approach – metaphors are based on experiential co-occurrences – is familiar from Verbrugge/McCarrell (1977).

Several chapters have converged on the same finding concerning a key assumption of the conceptual metaphor approach: Metaphors are not a matter of thought and concepts in the sense of Lakoff/Johnson. First, there is no reason for positing metaphorical, as opposed to literal, concepts (cf. chapter 6). Second, Lakoff/Johnson's case for positing metaphorical concepts in addition to metaphorical *expressions* is weak (cf. chapter 7). Metaphors are not a matter of thought in yet another sense: Neural connections of the sort described by Narayanan (1997) and Lakoff/Johnson (1999) do not constitute metaphors (cf. 8.3). Finally, metaphors are not a matter of thought in the sense of Lakoff (1993: 209): On close scrutiny, the various expressions Lakoff/Johnson assign to conceptual metaphors like LOVE IS A JOURNEY are *not* examples of a single metaphor (cf. 8.4).

Chapter 8.2 has reviewed various recent proposals designed to clarify or improve on Lakoff/Johnson's framework. Psychologists have found no compelling evidence supporting Lakoff/Johnson's key claims. No study has offered persuasive evidence for the view that a great number of conceptual metaphors are stored in our conceptual system. Future studies might test the plausibility of my alternative to conceptual metaphors as developed in chapters 7 and 8. It appears that all studies that have been cited as putative "evidence" of conceptual metaphors could more plausibly count as evidence in favor of my view – the more so since critics have been skeptical of cognitivists' interpretations of the relevant experiments (cf. McGlone 2001). But this is a matter for future research.

Psychological studies might also put to the test the distinction between metaphor and metonymy suggested in this book. One might try to find out whether there are recognizable processing differences between pure cases of metaphor and pure cases of metonymy as outlined in chapter 2. ("Pure" here relates to the familiar fact that figurative expressions can be combinations of different kinds of semantic extension, e.g. metaphor and metonymy). Given that most psychological studies did not detect significant processing differences between literal and figurative language, however, it is not clear whether it is possible to find such correlations.

It is to be hoped that future studies rectify the major shortcomings of Lakoff/Johnson's approach mentioned in this and other critical works. One

promising avenue for future research is to place far greater emphasis on paths of metaphoric and metonymic extensions that recur in many unrelated languages. This might lead to more balanced accounts of the cognitive utility and importance of certain metaphors and metonymies. Comparatively few cognitivist studies take into consideration data from several unrelated languages (but see Yu 1998, for example). A far greater number of such studies is needed. A major source of inspiration here is Traugott/Dasher (2002). It is by uncovering recurrent paths of figurative extension that we can approach the goal of uncovering the cognitive underpinnings of figurative language.

What is needed to complement my general account of analogous figurative extensions in chapter 8 is a perspective from language use as provided most forcefully in the writings of Traugott (e.g., Traugott/Dasher 2002). This kind of approach – which looks at the contexts that give rise to semantic shifts – holds out the hope for more compelling and detailed explanations of figurative mappings than are provided in Lakoff/Johnson's works.

Lakoff/Johnson tend to attribute the greatest importance to their own works. On the evidence of the preceding investigation, there is little to warrant such unbridled enthusiasm. This should not be construed as a wholesale rejection of cognitive linguistics, a movement which encompasses a great number of scholars, including some whose work bears only comparatively superficial similarities to Lakoff/Johnson's writings (cf. chapter 1). Several cognitivists have offered groundbreaking contributions to linguistic theory. Still, with Lakoff/Johnson representing the most widely read and influential of all cognitive linguists, much of the groundwork underpinning this approach turns out to be shaky.

Appendix: ARGUMENT IS WAR in Lakoff (1987)

This section provides a collection of examples of recurrent argumentative strategies in Lakoff (1987). Its main purpose is to document the prevalence of such strategies, which have also been noted elsewhere in this book.

A major problem in Lakoff's argumentation is his tendency to adopt misleading and ill-defined terminology. Lakoff's reference to "directly meaningful" (Lakoff 1987: 268, 292) or "inherently meaningful" (Lakoff 1987: 273) structures falsely suggests that he has discovered the basis for a novel theory of meaning and understanding. Even the key concepts *meaning* and *meaningfulness* are ill-defined (cf. chapter 5).

Another irritating feature of Lakoff's exposition is his use of rhetorical repetitions, typically of catchwords. Furthermore, causal constructions indicating arguments often resemble substantial explanations only superficially. It is rather striking that there are several passages which tell us "why" something is "meaningful" (cf. Lakoff 1987: 267, 291, 292), but none that really provides a substantial account of that term, i.e., an account which could form the basis of a novel theory of meaning (cf. chapter 5). Compare, for example, the following excerpt from Lakoff (1987: 267):

> Experientialism claims that conceptual structure is meaningful **because** it is *embodied*, **that is**, it arises from, and is tied to, our preconceptual bodily experiences. In short, conceptual structure exists and is understood **because** preconceptual structures exist and are understood. [my emphasis in boldface]

The rhetorically effective parallelism ("conceptual structure exists and is understood ... preconceptual structures exist and are understood") is established even at the cost of producing inaccurate statements. For example, what is meant by saying that conceptual structure is "understood"? Aren't conceptual structures themselves part and parcel of human understanding? In what sense can one say that these conceptual structures themselves are "understood"? What kind of psychological process is Lakoff referring to here?

Furthermore, in what sense are pre-conceptual structures "understood" – given that they are *pre*-conceptual and thus seem to provide a *precondition for* or means of understanding in the first place? How can a means of understanding itself be understood? Again, what kind of cognitive process is

Lakoff referring to? Finally, a question arises once again which is never sufficiently addressed in Lakoff/Johnson's works: How precisely do preconceptual structures allow us to arrive at determinate concepts (cf. chapter 5)?

Let us assume that it does make sense to refer to preconceptual structures as being "understood". In that case, preconceptual structures are "understood" by means of *conceptual* structures. There seems to be no other possibility. Note that Lakoff distinguishes *understanding* from merely *existing*: "... preconceptual structures exist and are understood". Therefore, there should be some *means* of 'understanding' preconceptual structures. This "instrument" for *understanding* preconceptual structures cannot be identical to the preconceptual structures themselves (otherwise it does not seem to make sense to distinguish between existing and understanding). The only possibility seems to be that our *conceptual system* allows us to understand preconceptual structures.

Thus, the causal conjunction *because* in Lakoff's (1987: 267) statement is out of place ("conceptual structure exists and is understood because preconceptual structures exist and are understood"). That preconceptual structures are *understood* is not a reason for the presence of conceptual structure (and the fact that it is understood); it is rather tantamount to it. The double parallelism "exists and is understood ... exist and are understood" renders it impossible to accurately describe the relationship between preconceptual and conceptual structures. Rhetoric takes precedence over accuracy.

Many other examples of unhelpful repetition can be found in Lakoff's works. Time and again, the suggestive repetition of key terms is all that is offered by way of argument. The shortcomings of Lakoff's exposition of *directly meaningful* structures have been adumbrated in chapter 5. Keeping this in mind, we should now examine a number of pertinent passages from Lakoff (1987) which play on the notion of *directness*. Another catchword found in some of these passages is *structure*.

a) Lakoff (1987: 268)

> ... the concepts that are **directly** meaningful (the basic-level and image-schematic concepts) are **directly** tied to **structural** aspects of experience. This makes the account of meaningfulness *internal* to human beings. [my emphasis in boldface]

The idea that certain concepts are "directly tied to structural aspects of experience" is as much in need of clarification as the claim that these concepts are directly meaningful. Even specialists in the study of human experience such as the psychologist Murphy (1996: 190) admit to being incapable of grasping the idea of experience being structured. In other words, the above is an example of an inadequate use of the key term *structure* (cf. also chapter 6).

b) Lakoff (1987: 291)

> The **structure** of language uses the same devices used to **structure** cognitive models ... **Language is made meaningful** because it is **directly tied** to **meaningful thought** and depends upon the nature of **thought**. **Thought is made meaningful** via two **direct connections** to preconceptual bodily functioning, which is in turn **highly constrained**, but by no means **totally constrained**, by the nature of the world that we function within [my emphasis in boldface]

This passage is built around parallel constructions and repetitions of key terms, none of which is sufficiently clarified. Not all of these repetitions are highlighted in the above passage. Characteristically, "because" does not introduce an informative explanation: If the notion of *meaningfulness* is unclear, it is of little help to be told that "[l]anguage is made meaningful because it is directly tied to meaningful thought." In fact, Lakoff does not sufficiently clarify the notion of meaningfulness. Similar to the concept *meaningfulness*, Lakoff's reference to 'direct links' in this sentence is merely repeated, rather than clarified, in the next sentence, where he applies the idea of "direct connections" to the relation between thought and bodily functioning. As in the case of Lakoff (1987: 268) and Lakoff (1987: 292), Lakoff avoids an explanation of the term *meaningful*, telling us instead *why* thought, concepts, and structures are directly meaningful. Note also the infelicitous doubling of the word *structure* in the remark that "[t]he structure of language uses the same devices used to structure cognitive

models": What Lakoff presumably means is that language – rather than the "structure of language" – employs "devices used to structure cognitive models." After all, a structure does not need devices for structuring; rather, it is the result of applying these structuring devices. As in some other cases, the key word *structure* is used even in contexts where it does not seem to fit.

A similar interleaving of insufficiently explained key terms, repetitive patterns and causal constructions is found in the following passage:

> These structures are **directly** meaningful, first, **because** they are **directly** and repeatedly experienced **because** of the nature of the body and its mode of functioning in our environment. (Lakoff 1987: 268 [emphasis mine])

The claim that these structures are 'directly experienced' does not really illuminate the notion of "directly meaningful" structures. How are we to construe the idea of something being "directly experienced"? What does it mean to say that something is "indirectly" experienced? Perhaps "directly" experienced is supposed to mean 'experienced by means of our senses, or body in general'. But would it make sense to say that other experiences are "indirect"? And what kinds of experiences could that be? Given that there does not seem to be a straightforward way of opposing 'direct' and 'indirect' experiences, omitting the term "directly" in "directly ... experienced" might have clarified Lakoff's formulation to some extent. It seems that the repetitive pattern is maintained at the expense of clarity.

Note also that the term "because" again suggests a clarification which is not really provided. For instance, "directly" can hardly mean the same when modifying "meaningful" and when modifying "experienced". But neither sense of "directly" is clearly explained.

c) Lakoff (1987: 303)

> Cognitive models derive their fundamental **meaningfulness directly** from their ability to **match up with** preconceptual structure. Such **direct matchings** provide a basis for an account of **truth** and knowledge. Because **such matching** is 'internal' to a person, the irreconcilable problems pointed out by Putnam in the case of objectivist theories do not arise in experientialist theories.

Again, where we expect an explanation, we merely get a repetition of key terms. The crucial question in the above passage is the following: What is

meant by saying that cognitive models 'match up' with preconceptual structure (cf. 5.3)? Lakoff's account does not go beyond vague and programmatic statements.

d) Lakoff (1987: 297)

> Truth is ... grounded in **direct links** to preconceptually and distinctly **structured experience** and the concepts that accord with such experience. [my emphasis in boldface]

Once again, a question arises which psychologists such as Murphy (1996: 190) confess to being unable to answer: What is a "structured experience"?

Further passages could be cited which illustrate the points made above (e.g., Lakoff 1987: 291). In general, Lakoff's style often creates the impression that the burden of explanation is merely shifted from one sentence to the next. What is common to all these examples is their failure to provide a substantial exposition of a new experientialist philosophy of language.

In summary, Lakoff's mode of exposition with its characteristic repetition of key terms, parallel constructions, and often inappropriate use of terms indicating logical relationships, serves as a stylistic pattern that is strongly suggestive of logical consistency and tightness of argumentation. These stylistic features are apt to obscure the fact that the author's line of reasoning is highly vague, often merely programmatic, and sometimes incoherent. Rhetorical patterns are maintained even at the cost of producing statements that are more likely to confuse than clarify the issue.

Notes

1. See chapter 4 for a justification of this qualification.
2. See Radden/Kövecses (1999: 19), Panther/Radden (1999a), and the papers devoted to this issue in Barcelona (2000c), especially Feyaerts (2000) and Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (2000).
3. Many authors offer lists encompassing different types of metonymy, or have proposed more sophisticated "typologies" of metonymy. At least the following works should be mentioned in this context: Nyrop (1913), Esnault (1925), Stern (1931), Lausberg (1960), Ullmann (1962), Ducháček (1967), Schifko (1979), Lakoff/Johnson (1980), Norrick (1981), Bredin (1984), Bonhomme (1987), Sappan (1987), Yamanashi (1987), Seto (1999).
4. Some scholars prefer the term *resemblances* (cf. Grady 1999: 88–89). I will use the terms *similarities* and *resemblances* interchangeably.
5. The insight is due to Weinreich (1966).
6. For example, in English slang *macaroni* metaphorically means 'nonsense'. The similarity between tenor and vehicle resides in the fact that "**metaphorically** speaking [both have] no firm substance." Similarly, *yo-yo* may denote a 'vacillating person' "in that – **metaphorically** speaking – (s)he does not keep to one position" (Warren 1992: 86 [emphasis mine]).
7. These findings were arrived at by means of lexical decision tests which investigated whether topic and vehicle were related independently of metaphoric contexts.
8. On the concept of *frames*, cf. section 2.2.4.3.
9. Gibbs cites a number of "metonymic models", commenting that "**[m]any** of these models depend on conventional cultural associations, which reflect the general principle that a thing may stand for what it is conventionally associated with ..." (Gibbs 1993: 259 [emphasis mine]). "Many" seems to imply "not all", i.e., not all metonymic models depend on conventional associations. However, Gibbs continues as follows: "This principle limits the use of metonymy to only certain relationships between entities." Now, if Turner's principle does "limit" metonymy in this way, conventional associations constitute a *necessary* criterion for something to be a metonymy, which contradicts both the claim implicit in the observation quoted above that *not all* "of these models depend on conventional cultural associations" and the example of a non-conventional association Gibbs (1993: 260) supplies later in the article.
10. I owe this point to Elizabeth Traugott.
11. For pioneering work on frames, see Fillmore (1977, 1985).

12. See, e.g., Koch's MARRIAGE frame, which includes such concepts as SET UP HOUSE, PRAYER (via WEDDING), TRUST, and ENGAGEMENT (cf. Koch 1999: 149). The account of contiguity advanced by Waltereit (1999: 234) is also telling in this respect.
13. In fact, it is often abstract similarities which are likely to figure in metaphorical transfer. Abstract (relational) similarities have been found to play an important role in human cognition. While young children tend to capitalize on object similarities, adults mainly operate with more sophisticated patterns of resemblances (cf. Gardner/Winner 1982; Gentner 1988; Gentner/Rattermann 1991).
14. This is true of the majority of cognitivist accounts. Readers might turn to, among many others, Taylor (1995), Radden/Kövecses (1999), Blank (1999: 178), Dirven (1999), and Waltereit (1999).
15. Frames are of interest to psychologists such as Barsalou (1983, 1992) precisely because they figure importantly in the construction of *ad hoc categories*, i.e., categories that are created, among other things, by means of metaphorical transfer (according to Glucksberg and Keysar). As already pointed out, Barsalou's findings on *ad hoc categories* are pivotal to Glucksberg/Keysar's theory of metaphor.
16. Keysar/Glucksberg do distinguish between metaphor and metonymy (cf. Glucksberg 2001: 110).
17. This is true at least for novel metaphors (cf. 4.5.3 on "dead" metaphors).
18. There need not even be an *experiential* connection between source and target domain prior to metaphorical transfer. As noted in 2.2.3, psychological evidence shows that metaphors can, in a sense, create links between concepts that are not perceived as being related prior to metaphorical extension.
19. See also Haiman (1980), Langacker (1982: 44), Langacker (1987: 154–158) for seminal discussions of this problem within linguistics. For a philosophical perspective, see Quine (1953) and Putnam (1975c).
20. Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 106–107) contrast the homonymy view with their own account, which gives precedence to general metaphorical mappings.
21. This expression is cited in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 15) as an example of the metaphor HAVING CONTROL OR FORCE IS UP.
22. This sense is attested as early as 1300 (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. fall*).
23. Structural metaphors involve complex source and target concepts (e.g., ARGUMENT IS WAR, TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT), while ontological metaphors are very basic mappings of the type X IS AN OBJECT (cf. 6.1).
24. The very notion of humans "interacting" with ideas is highly problematic.
25. See also Johnson (1992) on the philosophical import of cognitive semantics.

26. See Johnson (1981b: 19–20, 24, 26–28) on Black's contribution to the topic; Johnson (1981b: 32–37, 43) on Goodman (1968, 1979); Johnson (1981: 20, 28–29) on Beardsley (1962).
27. "Meaning is **not** a thing; it **involves** what is meaningful to us ..." (Lakoff 1987: 292 [emphasis mine]).
"Meaning is **not** cut and dried; it is **a matter of** imagination and **a matter of** constructing coherence" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 227 [emphasis mine]).
"What's meaningful to me is **a matter of** what has significance for me" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 227 [emphasis mine]).
The last sentence merely gives a synonym – rather than a definition – of meaningfulness as applied to linguistic items. The statements from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 227) and Lakoff (1987: 292) are no less vague.
28. For example, Lakoff (1987: 301) suggests that, to a considerable extent, objectivity consists in "being able to distinguish what is directly meaningful – basic-level and image-schematic concepts – from concepts that are indirectly meaningful." An example of a basic-level, and hence "directly meaningful", concept is *dog*, which is situated at the cognitively most salient level of categorization (cf. Lakoff 1987: 46–57). Basic-level concepts are contrasted with superordinate concepts (e.g., *animal*) and subordinate concepts (e.g., *labrador*). Now imagine a situation in which we want to objectively adjudicate some dispute: Is this a desk or not? Is this a foul or not (soccer)? In what sense could the distinction between basic-level concepts (i.e., "directly meaningful" concepts) and "indirectly meaningful" concepts be relevant here?
29. Whether this is in fact already the case in English is not relevant here; what matters is the example, which could be applied to other cases.
30. Further experientialist arguments against the objectivist approach to truth will be surveyed in 4.5.2.
31. 'Understanding sentences' can be spelt out as 'understanding sentences to be true or false': Putnam is referring to theories of truth here. A good introduction to Putnam's thoughts on this topic is Putnam (1978b) and the papers contained in Putnam 1978a).
32. Cf. again Lakoff's (1988: 122) equation of objectivism and metaphysical realism.
33. Cf. Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 198): "Given the objectivist account of meaning, a person understands the **objective meaning** of a sentence if he understands the **conditions under which it would be true or false**" [emphasis mine].
34. We will be inclined to adopt this position at least if we also reject the idea that metaphors in general (i.e., including novel metaphors) can have a meaning which is distinct from the literal sense of the respective expressions (cf. 4.5.3).

35. Davidson's (1993: 172) remarks are particularly succinct: "When a use of a word or phrase has settled to the point of being listed in the dictionary, that use *can* be treated in a serious account of truth, but that is just because the metaphor has died. Dead metaphors rise from the grave as literal meanings, as I was at pains to point out in my paper on metaphor" [emphasis original]. Here, Davidson is referring to Davidson (1984g [1978]). Davidson's (1993: 172) example of a dead metaphor is *gold mines* in *Davidson's essays are gold mines.*
36. A close look at the wording of Lakoff/Johnson's exposition of this issue illustrates their tendency to use causal constructions which are out of place: "*Since metaphor cannot be a matter of meaning, it can only be a matter of language*" (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 209 [emphasis original]).
37. Lakoff/Johnson use the term *objective meaning* to refer to Fregean sense (cf. 4.5.3).
38. Concerning Lakoff/Johnson's assessment of Putnam's work as objectivist, cf. 4.6.
39. Note the repetitive structure of the passage cited from Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 443–444).
40. Lakoff/Johnson (1999: 443) speak of "sentences express[ing] propositions about the world in itself."
41. Again, several causal constructions suggest, but do not provide, a succinct explanation (see the highlighted expressions in the above quote from Lakoff/Johnson 1999: 443).
42. Cf. Wittgenstein (1958: 5.6–5.641); Wittgenstein (1969: §§ 243–315).
43. Both Putnam and Lakoff are mentioned earlier in the paper.
44. See, for example, Solomon (1983: 66): "Idealism denies the independent existence of the physical world and insists instead that the world is, in some sense, a product of the activity of consciousness."
45. Whether Locke invariably had images in mind when referring to ideas is open to debate. However, following Blackburn (1984: 41–43) he did so in crucial passages of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.
46. There is another forceful argument by Wittgenstein to the effect that mental images – whether of prototypes or not – cannot in principle explain meaning. It is not only the case that the presence of a mental image does not in any sense imply understanding on the part of the person having the image; even if *no* mental image is present, understanding is still possible. For an excellent summary of Wittgenstein's account (*The Blue and Brown Books*: 3) one might turn to Blackburn (1984: 48–50).
47. For an explanation of the term *basic-level concept*, cf. Note 28. Image schemas are structures that are inextricably linked to our physical experiences, such as FORCES or BALANCE (cf. Lakoff 1987: 267). For an interesting account of image schemata, see Gibbs/Colston (1995).

48. Cf. 5.5 for a discussion of the relationship between meaningfulness and meaning.
49. To forestall certain objections to my arguments, let us establish the equivalence of images representing the word *cat* and images representing the word *feline*. The following argument adopts Lakoff's perspective in granting his imagistic conception of meaning. The first point to be made is linguistic: All that the word *feline* specifies is that some entity has to be 'like a cat' in some way or other. Hence the image, or at least that part of the image which is relevant to assessing whether an entity in the world is represented by the image, must be the image of a cat. Assume for the sake of argument that *feline* gives rise to images of feline entities that are not cats. These other images cannot be crucial to determining whether something is cat-like (*feline*), since they contain information which is misleading. Suppose, for example, that we want to assess whether the dog in our above example is feline. Suppose we do this by comparing our perception of the dog to a mental image of an animal which has some feline characteristics, but is *not* a cat. By definition, such an animal must have features that do *not* count as feline features. Lions are good examples of feline animals. An image of a lion does not specify which of its aspects, i.e., which features of the feline animal (lion), are relevant to assessing whether our dog is feline or not. The flowing mane of lions, for instance, is not *feline*, but *equine* (a typical feature of horses). Using the image of a lion in order to determine whether our dog is feline can therefore lead to incorrect classifications: The image can falsely suggest that certain features of lions (such as their manes) are feline characteristics. For this reason such images cannot be relied on if we want to determine whether an animal is feline. The only reliable image is the image of the prototypical feline entity, a cat. Note that images cannot contain a specification as to which features of a lion-image are feline – otherwise we would move in a circle: In that case we would *presuppose* the very knowledge of the concept *feline* which is supposed to be acquired on the basis of this image.
50. Cf. Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 123), who assert that different types of chairs count as chairs because they are sufficiently similar to prototypical chairs.
51. For an explanation of the terms *basic level* and *image schema*, cf. Notes 28 and 47.
52. Lakoff's account should entail that certain concepts are invariably basic-level concepts for the following reason: If some speakers "directly understand" a certain preconceptual structure in terms of the concept *labrador* (which for *them* is a basic-level concept), but other speakers "directly understand" the same preconceptual structure in terms of the concept *dog* (which for *them* is a basic-level concept), then these different speakers will derive different *meanings* from the same preconceptual structure (viz. *dog*

vs. *labrador*). In that case, however, preconceptual structures obviously cannot serve the function they are designed to fulfil in Lakoff's account: They cannot solve the problem of meaning, i.e., the problem how we arrive at particular meanings (e.g., at the meaning *dog* as opposed to *labrador*).

53. What I mean by "usual sense of the term" is simply this: Whether a word refers to dogs or labradors amounts to a difference in meaning, so does the difference between *feline entity* and *cat*.
54. This position is common to cognitivists and analytical philosophers.
55. Apart from the arguments given in this chapter, there is yet another reason why experientialism runs afoul of Wittgenstein's philosophy (cf. Wilson 1998).
56. Here, Putnam refers to the case of an ant which "is crawling on a patch of sand. As it crawls, it traces a line in the sand. By pure chance the line that it traces curves and recrosses itself in such a way that it ends up looking like a recognizable caricature of Winston Churchill." This example raises the following question: Did the ant trace "a picture of Winston Churchill, a picture that depicts Churchill" (Putnam 1981: 1)?
57. The term *physical metaphor* used in Lakoff/Johnson (1981: 295) corresponds to what Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 25) label *ontological metaphor*.
58. Note the repetitive effect achieved by Lakoff/Johnson's phrasing in the passage cited: "what we do ... what we are doing ...". The three nominal clauses centering on "we" also complement each other in a rhetorically effective way.
59. Cf. those formulations describing aspects of war that are *not* italicized in Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 79–80).
60. For example, the feature 'continual movement' can be invested with negative or positive connotations.
61. Cf. also the example discussed below.
62. Cf. Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 116): "Madness and journeys give us handles on the concept of love, and food gives us a handle on the concept of an idea." By implication, it is UP that "gives us a handle on" the concept MORE.
63. Two passages from Lakoff/Johnson (1980) lend further support to the view that this is indeed their position, though their exposition is characteristically vague. Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 19) contend that metaphors cannot be understood "independently of" their grounding in experience. Furthermore, Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 20) assert that metaphors can allow us to comprehend phenomena "only by means of these experiential bases."
64. Cf. also Lakoff/Johnson's (1980: 15) explanation of such "experiential correlations" as applied to HAPPY IS UP.
65. "This metaphor" refers back to PROBLEMS ARE SOLID OBJECTS (rather than PROBLEMS ARE PRECIPITATES IN A CHEMICAL SOLUTION): The similarities created by PROBLEMS ARE PRECIPITATES IN A CHEMICAL

SOLUTION are discussed in the sentence immediately following the passage quoted from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 152).

66. A conspicuous example is the idea of ontological metaphors (cf. Saeed 1997: 310; Keysar/Bly 1999: 1565).
67. Black (1981 [1955]: 75) speaks of 'seeing' the tenor (what he calls the "principal subject") 'through' the metaphorical expression.
68. See, for example, Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 54), who claim that metaphorical concepts are "concepts that we constantly use in living and thinking." See also Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 212) on this topic.
69. See Blackburn (1984: 171–180) for a sketch of the conception of metaphor underlying accounts of analytical philosophers.
70. Here, the word *literally* is used as the opposite of *metaphorically*; this conception does not square with some of Lakoff/Johnson's proposals (e.g., Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 53).
71. As noted in a previous chapter (3.2), the idea of "clearly delineated" concepts is integral to experientialism (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 108–109).
72. *Vindicate*: 'to make or set free; to deliver or rescue' (the latter sense is obsolete, but it was common at the time when the "argument sense" of *vindicate* developed; cf. OED 1994: *s.v. vindicate*).
73. The "argument sense" here is 'making a reservation; furnishing a proviso' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. saving*).
74. *Uphold*: 'To support or sustain physically; to keep from falling or sinking'; 'to preserve unimpaired or intact'; 'to support by advocacy or assent'; 'to sustain against objection or criticism'; 'to maintain' a statement (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. uphold*).
75. *Handle*: 'To deal with or treat in speech or writing'; 'to discuss' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. handle*).
76. *Tackle*: 'To grip, lay hold of, take in hand', 'to enter into a discussion or argument with'; 'to attack, to approach or question on some subject' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. tackle*).
77. *Fortify*: 'To make strong'; 'to confirm, corroborate, add support to' a statement; 'provide (a town or its walls) with defensive works; to protect with fortifications' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. fortify*).
78. See Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 46) for further examples of this metaphorical concept.
79. Cf. the literal meaning of *shoot* quoted above: 'Send *forth*' arrows, bolts (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. shoot*).
80. *Effusion*: 'A pouring out'; 'a copious emission of smoke' (obsolete); 'unrestrained utterance' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. effusion*).
81. The source meaning of *gush* is 'a copious or sudden emission of fluid' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. gush*).

82. It is true – on Lakoff/Johnson's view – that the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor structures ARGUMENT only partially. Yet, Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 118) are not talking about the overall structure of ARGUMENT (part of which is held to derive from ARGUMENT IS WAR). Rather, they are referring to the "structure given to the concept ARGUMENT by the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor." Here, the defining relative clause ('structure which is given ..') already serves to single out a specific part of the structure of ARGUMENT: That part which is supposed to be due to the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor. Now, of *this* part of the structure of ARGUMENT (i.e., that which is due to the ARGUMENT IS WAR mapping) it does not seem to make sense to claim that it is "partly" required; and Lakoff/Johnson do not spell out what this could mean.
83. Cf. section 8.3 on Glucksberg/McGlone's (1999) minimalist view of metaphor interpretation.
84. Compare the two primary metaphors posited by Grady, whose target domains are distinct: PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT and ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE.
85. *Sustain*: 'To hold up, bear the weight of; to keep from falling by support from below; to carry, bear' (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. sustain*).
86. *Support*: 'To bear, hold, or prop up'; 'to keep from falling or sinking'; (occasionally) 'to carry' the train of a robe (cf. OED 1994: *s.v. support*).
87. The putative primary metaphor ACTIONS ARE MOTIONS is problematic for different reasons. Most important, it is far too general to tell us anything about the motivation of the metaphorical expression *keep afloat*. If ACTION ARE MOTIONS should underlie this metaphorical expression, we are hard put to tell why one particular series of motions (keeping something afloat) – rather than any other series of motions – should be used for conveying the figurative meaning. Any other motion or series of motions should do as well as a source concept.

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