



# CONSCIOUSNESS

## The Metaphor as Metaphor

*This article examines how the constructs of metaphors to describe portions of reality are more than embellishments; that they fundamentally describe a recursive pattern of dualism as a double reference to themselves. In this sense the metaphor is not only used as a linguistic tool, but as a means to interpret cognitive responses to inner dialectic sensory programming.*

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## Consciousness

Dualistic theories attribute a double reference to metaphor: the literal sense of the metaphorical expression is not completely deleted but instead remains as a semantic background for the figurative meaning and creates a semantic conflict with it. (Mooij, 1975). Obviously, a house is merely a house on the physical plane, however, phenomenologically it is the projection of the representation of the house within our prefrontal cortex (Dietrich, 2004). Metaphorically, it could stand for quite a few other objects, concepts or literal images. The form of the house (sign) itself is the vehicle (signifier) for the transference of the message (signified). The metaphoric action takes place at the point after transference when the literal significance, the semantic encoding or the message, is altered, distorted or replaced with additional layers of symbolic meaning. The substitution of an image of a bird for the representation of a house is the metaphoric transfer, which stimulates the tenor of the relationship. Why a bird though? Why not a dragonfly, or an airplane, or just a geometrical construction of a crystal? It is a corresponding relationship between the intentions of the creator, the “poetic gesture”, and the perception of the perceiver, the “poetic reverie”. Essentially the house does not contain the semantic qualities of a bird other than the perception of the spreading of its “wings”, but its intention and perception is what creates the metaphoric tension. The missed perception of the intention disconnects the sign from what it metaphorically signifies.

In this sense the metaphor is not only used as a linguistic tool, but as a means to interpret cognitive responses to inner sensory programming. It is also true that the term “house” is a sociologically linguistic tool for imparting a sense of shelter, security and the permanence of a place for human dwelling. The term “house” is semantically different from the term “office” even though the same building could be used for both. Even more so, the term “home” would impart additional layers of meaning to the term “house”. The term “house” implies accommodations for living, eating and sleeping. “Home” denotes a warmer abode, a place where the heart resides.

The question must be raised whether a buildings form changes its derived meaning. I define form to mean size and shape, use of materials, and interplay of light and shadow. These are formal, literal experiences; some subtle, some more drastic, changes to our perceptions of them. Certainly the form changes our perception of them but would it be false to say that physically we could experience two unlike buildings in the same way. Neurologically, they are represented the same within our neuronal circuitry, but to say their essentiality would be experienced the same would be absurd. Green is experienced different than red. “Experience” is defined as “the apprehension, or understanding, of an object, thought, or emotion through the senses or mind”. This must be compared with the term “perceived” which means “to become aware of directly through any of the senses”. One implies comprehension, one implies sensing. Similarity is the distinction between consciousness and cognition. One is of the mind, one is of the brain.

Much research has been done on the physical and mental influences that places can have upon our neurology (ANFA). However, a house does not become a home until further psychic projections are placed upon them. We tend to fasten meaning to each only in terms of their function or station in our

lives, or certain cognitive content or emotional embedment, and not necessarily to the form. Further, functionality is a sublimation of intention. We utilize spaces for their functionality based on needs and situational requirements. I have seen people live in abandoned churches, and people working out of their houses. Function, therefore is transitory and is not reciprocally fixed in form.

I struggle with the premise that consciousness must involve intention. (Chalmers, 1997) Intention implies direction, movement and thus time. Am I to believe that the intention of an action must be present in my thought processes for me to be conscious? What of daydreaming? What of meditation? Both are outside time in the physical sense. My body continues temporally but the experience inside of my self contracts towards an experience outside of time. Space exists, but time evaporates into a singularity. My focus switches from outside to inside my mind or imagination, but I do not lose consciousness as if I were dropped on my head and knocked unconscious. I suppose that this focus to an inside reality is no different than a focus on an outside reality. Phenomenologically, they can be seen as the same. (Wilber, 1979)

This subtle manipulation of terms, of redefining definitions to suit our philosophical needs, is exclusionary of other modes of consciousness that we “experience” in our everyday lives. My intention of mediation is not unconsciousness; in fact it is for mindfulness of nothingness. Daydreaming? I don’t see any intention in daydreaming. I slip in and slip out. I am not unconsciousness. I have memory of the dream. Day dreaming is more akin to imaginative thinking without the intent of creativity, more so than to non-consciousness. I go back to Bachelard’s “threshold of being”, to the onset of the image where the poetic image emerges into consciousness as a direct product of the heart, soul and being of man. (Bachelard, 1969) I would not call this a metaphysical process but as Bachelard states, a “phenomenological determination of images”(Bachelard, 1969, p.xiv), and further proof of the “explanatory gap” between physicality of the brain and its neurological functioning, and the indefinable aspects of the mind and the phenomenology of the soul. It is an ontological study in truth, and perhaps for some, faith.

Not to imply that the “spiritual” aspects of mind are indemonstrable or that the origins of the soul are untraceable, we just do not have the tools or abilities to prove their existence as nothing more than neurological operations of the brain. Either way, however, they exist, or until further investigation and evidence is achieved, both frames of reference are valid. God thus lives, for the moment. This argument is similar, or rather, metaphorical, for the argument as to whether consciousness requires an intention of action. In the perceptual field, reality lies not in the event but in the phenomenon of the individual’s experience of the event. (Combs, 1999) That is to say, my experience is just as valid as yours, even though they may be different. Perhaps we must discuss the difference between consciousness and cognition. One full of magic, the other rooted in science. One set in space, the other in time.

This phenomenology of time must be taken out of the equation so that we are left with a still-life composition which we can more easily decipher. We seek silence. Not auditory silence but momentless, intentionless being; an experience of our internal “space” “where” time is suspended and we experience the phenomenon of our creative selves. Time is but the distraction from our experience

of true consciousness, of our ability to allow the emergence of the poetic image into the salient field of our inner space.

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