Do You See What I Mean?

An Introduction to Conceptual Metaphors
What is a Metaphor?

“a word or phrase . . . is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them”

– Merriam Webster
Conventional Understanding

- Literary Devices
- Ornamental & Unnecessary
- Figures of Speech
Examples from Literature

“In the middle of life’s road, I found myself in a dark wood.”
– Dante

“. . . I walked through the wilderness of this world”
– John Bunyan

“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood”
– Robert Frost
A New Metaphor Theory

Individual Metaphorical Expressions

Conceptual Metaphor
Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Domains

- **Abstract Domain**
  - Feelings & Emotions
  - Love & Relationships
  - Life & Death
  - Knowledge & Understanding

- **Concrete (Experiential/Perceptual) Domain**
  - Senses: Sight, Taste, Smell
  - Direction: up/down
  - Location & Distance
Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Abstract Domain:

Concrete Domain (Experiential/Perceptual):

Speaking of and understanding ideas in the abstract domain in terms of the perceptual domain
Let’s Go for a Hike

- Stay on the trail
- Venture off the path and explore
- Wander around
- Choose alternate routes/paths
- Lose our direction
- Take a wrong turn
- Get lost
Living life: (In terms of a pathway)

- Feel lost in life
- Take the wrong path
- Stay on the straight and narrow
- Wander through life
- Feel directionless
- Take a wrong turn, go in circles
- Come to a fork in the road
Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Abstract Domain:
A Lifetime

Concrete Domain (Experiential/Perceptual):
A path or walkway

Speaking of and understanding a lifetime (abstract) in terms of a path or walkway (concrete)
Let’s Make Tea

- Fill up the pot
- Heat it up
- Water boils
- Pressure builds up
- Releases steam
- Pour it out
Feelings and Emotions

- let off steam/cool off
- under pressure
- Feeling empty/hollow inside
- Drained
- Unsettled inside
- Boiling anger
Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Abstract Domain:
Feelings & Emotions

Concrete Domain (Experiential/Perceptual):
A container full of liquid

Speaking of and understanding feelings & emotions in terms of a container full of liquid
How is Your Vision?

- Easy to see:
  - Clear
  - Crystal Clear
  - Bright
  - Brilliant
  - Transparent

- Hard to see:
  - Unclear
  - Murky
  - Cloudy
  - Fuzzy
  - Opaque
  - Foggy
Quality of Understanding:

› Easy to Understand:
  ◦ Clear
  ◦ Crystal Clear
  ◦ Bright
  ◦ Brilliant
  ◦ Transparent

› Hard to Understand:
  ◦ Unclear
  ◦ Murky
  ◦ Cloudy
  ◦ Fuzzy
  ◦ Opaque
  ◦ Foggy
SIGHT IS KNOWLEDGE: A Conceptual Metaphor

- Knowledgeable Person:
  - Bright
  - Brilliant
  - See the big picture
  - Good perspective
  - 20/20 vision

- Lacking Knowledge:
  - In the dark
  - Blind
  - Understanding is clouded
  - Myopic
  - Tunnel-vision
  - Overlooking an important point
  - Blinded by love
  - Rose-colored glasses
SIGHT IS KNOWLEDGE: A Conceptual Metaphor

- To gain knowledge:
  - Shed some light
  - Take a closer look
  - Gain perspective
  - Have our eyes opened
  - Clear it up
  - Scales fall from eyes
  - Lightbulb moment

*google image search for “idea”*
Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Abstract Domain:
Knowledge and Understanding

Perceptual Domain:
Vision and Sight

Speaking of and understanding Knowledge and Understanding in terms of Vision and Sight
SIGHT IS KNOWLEDGE: A Conceptual Metaphor

- Examples from Etymology (the origin and history of words):

  **Illuminate**: from Latin *lumen*, “light”
  
  **Elucidate**: from Latin *lux* or *luc*–, “light”
  
  **Illustrate**: from same Latin root as *luster*, “shine”
  
  **Enlighten**: from Old English, intensifying “light”
“Buddhist Meditation is the Hubble Telescope of self-awareness”
– Dr. David Hargreaves
Combining Conceptual Metaphors

“The young monks have almost reached enlightenment”

SIGHT IS SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

LIFE IS A JOURNEY
Combining Conceptual Metaphors

“The young monks have almost reached enlightenment”
“Metaphor is an integral part of our ordinary everyday thought and language. And it is irreplaceable: metaphor allows us to understand our selves and our world in ways no other mode of thought can”

–Lakoff and Turner
References:

- **Photo Credit:**
  - https://www.google.com/search?hl=en&site=imghp&tbm=isch&source=hp&biw=667&bih=589&q=idea&oq=idea&gs_l=img.3..0i10.941.1406.0.1759.4.4.0.0.0.0.0.69.186.4.4.0.msedr...0...1ac.1.64.img..0.4.183.oE52MkjkUl4
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- **Quotes:**
  - More than Cool Reason, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson