

WS 1999/2000

Anglistik HS : Metaphor and Metonymy

Dozent : Prof. Nöth

First – something general and about the structure of the metaphor of the self

Then – it **try** to explain the five primary metaphors of the self

After that – some remarks about how universal this metaphorical system is

I want to end with – a conclusion and questions which could possibly rise when dealing with
the text

METAPHOR OF THE SELF

The study of the self concerns ... the structure of our inner lives

.... who we really are

... how these questions arise every day

There are five kinds of experience that are consequences of living in a social world :

1. the ways in which we try to control our bodies and in which they get out of control
2. the cases in which our conscious values conflict with the values implicit in our behaviour
3. the disparities between what we know or believe about ourselves and what other people know or believe about us
4. the experiences of taking an external viewpoint, as when we imitate others or try to see the world as they do
5. the forms of inner dialog and inner monitoring we are engaged in

We don't have a single, monolithic, consistent way of conceptualising our inner life – instead we have a system of different metaphorical conceptions of our internal structure.

And, as we will see later on and what is perhaps most surprising, the same system of metaphors can occur in a very different culture.

----- SUBJECT AND SELF IN THE COGNITIVE UNCONSCIOUS -----

The general structure of our metaphoric system for our inner lives was first uncovered by Andrew Lakoff and Myles Becker in 1992.

They showed that our system is based on a fundamental distinction between what they called “the Subject” and one or more “Selves”.

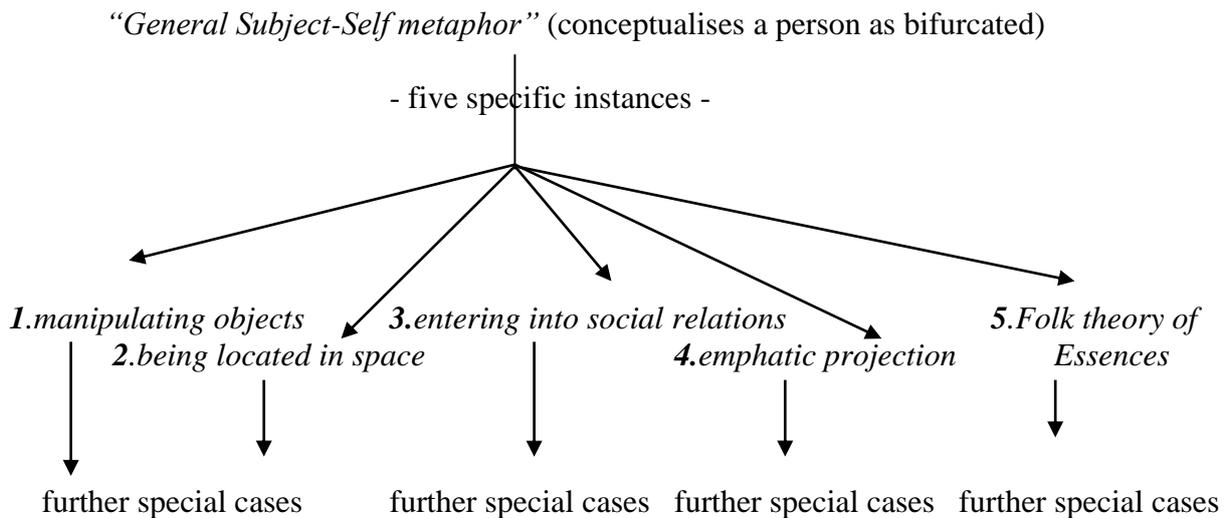
The **Subject** is the locus of consciousness, reason, will and our essence – everything that makes us who we uniquely are.

There is at least one **Self** and possibly more. The Selves consist of everything else about us – our bodies, our social roles, our histories and so on.

What is philosophically important about this study is that there is not one Subject-Self distinction, but many.
 They are all metaphorical and cannot be reduced to any consistent literal conception.
 These metaphors appear to be unavoidable, to arise naturally from common experiences.

----- THE STRUCTURE OF THE SUBJECT-SELF METAPHOR SYSTEM -----

There is a hierarchical structure in our metaphoric conceptions of inner life.



----- THE GENERAL SUBJECT-SELF METAPHOR -----

You can say that this reveals something deep about our inner experience, mainly that we experience ourselves as split (subject & self = split).

Metaphorically the **Subject** is always conceptualised as a person.

The **Self** is that part of the person that is not picked out by the subject (this includes the body, social roles, past states, actions in the world). And there can be more than one Self.
 Metaphorically the **Self** is conceptualised as either a person, an object, or a location.

The basic subject-self metaphor schema :

(is similar to / becomes to)

- A person -> the subject
- A person or thing -> a self
- A relationship -> the subject-self relationship

1. the physical-object self

Holding onto and manipulating objects is one of the things we learn earliest and do the most.

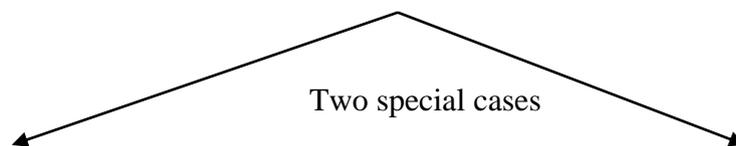
To control objects, we must learn to control our bodies – so we learn both forms of control together.

Therefore a primary metaphor is SELF CONTROL IS OBJECT CONTROL

A person	->	the subject
A physical object	->	the self
Control	->	control of self by subject
Noncontrol	->	noncontrol of self by subject

One of the most common ways to exert control over an object is to move it by exerting force on it.

This gives us the metaphor “self control is the forced movement of the self by the subject”.



SELF CONTROL IS THE FORCED MOVEMENT OF AN OBJECT

A person -> the subject

A physical object -> the self

Forced movement -> control of self by subject

Lack of forced Movement -> noncontrol of self by subject

BODY CONTROL IS THE FORCED MOVEMENT OF AN OBJECT

a person -> the subject

a physical object -> the body (instance of self)

forced movement -> control of body by subject

lack of forced Movement -> noncontrol of body by subject

Control of the body is seen as the forced Movement of a physical object

➔ *I lifted my arm*

➔ *I held myself back from hitting him*

Body is taken as the relevant aspect of Self–You exercise body control to cause the arm to lift

CAUSING THE SELF TO ACT IS THE FORCED MOVEMENT OF AN OBJECT

A person -> the subject
A physical object -> the self
Forced movement -> subject is causing self to act
Lack of forced movem.-> failing to cause the self to act

- ➔ You are pushing yourself too hard
- ➔ It would take a bulldozer to get him going on this job

⇒ Another major way of exercising control over an object is to hold on to it, to keep it in your possession

..... therefore another important metaphor for inner life is

SELF CONTROL IS OBJECT POSSESSION

A person -> the subject
A physical object -> the self
Possession -> control of self
Loss of possession -> loss of control of self

What does it mean to lose yourself in some activity ?
It means to be unable to be aware of each thing you are doing.

The dance may require *you to let yourself go, to lose yourself* in the dance.

The effect can be exhilarating and joyful -> so a very positive experience
But not all losses of control are positive, f.e. you may lose control because of

- negative emotions
- you are drunk

One feels that one's actions are being controlled by someone else, by a hostile being.

⇒ the extended version to include the "possession" of one's body by another subject (typically, the devil, an alien or a spirit)

TAKING CONTROL OF ANOTHER'S SELF IS TAKING ANOTHER'S POSSESSION

A person -> the subject
A physical object -> the self
Possession -> control of self
Loss of possession -> loss of control of self
Some other person -> some other subject
Taking possession -> taking control of self

There are a lot of versions of this possession metaphor :

- in India it is seen as positive to be possessed by a benevolent spirit or god
- around the world trance states are seen as forms of possession of the self by another subject (hopefully a wise and powerful spirit)

- in American culture it is seen mostly as evil and scary, f.e. “Invasion of the body snatchers”
- Alcoholism is typically (That was the rum talking, not me)



2. The Locational Self

The experiential basis for another primary metaphor is that people typically feel in control in their normal surroundings and less in control in strange places

SELF CONTROL IS BEING IN ONE'S NORMAL LOCATION

A person	->	the subject
Normal location	->	the self
Being in a normal location	->	being in control of self
Not being in a normal location	->	not being in control of self

There are two special cases, corresponding to the two most common forms of normal locations.

The first has to do with surroundings : one's home, place of business, the earth and so on. The Self is conceptualised as a container, whatever defines familiar surroundings. Being out of the container, namely, away from home or out of the part of the Self where the Subject is normally understood as residing, namely, the body, the head, the mind, is conceptualised as out of the Subject's control.

THE SELF AS CONTAINER

A person	->	the subject
A container	->	the self
Located in container	->	control of subject by self
Not located in container	->	out of control of the self

- I was beside myself
- He's out to lunch

The second kind of normal location for us is on the ground.

There we are in control of the effects of the force of gravity (-> *he's down to earth*)

The Subject's lack of control is indicated by such terms as

- ➔ being off in the clouds
- ➔ I kept floating off in lecture

.... which means lack of control over such things as reasoning, judgement or attention.

SELF CONTROL AS BEING ON THE GROUND

A person	->	the subject
Being on the ground	->	being in control of the self
Not being on the ground	->	not being in control of the self
Distance from the ground	->	degree of lack of self control
Being high	->	euphoria

“The scattered Self”

There they say that it is hard to function normally when

- there are a lot of demands on your attention or when
- you cannot focus your attention on any one task.

When the Self is scattered, Subject and Self cannot be in the same place and control is impossible.

A person	->	the subject
A unified container	->	the normal self
The container fragmented	->	the scattered self
Located in one place	->	normal attention control
Not located in one place	->	lack of normal attention control

- ➔ Pull yourself together
- ➔ She's all over the place

“Getting outside yourself”

THE OBJECTIVE STANDPOINT METAPHOR

A person	->	the subject
A container	->	the self
Seeing from inside	->	subjective knowledge
Seeing from outside	->	objective knowledge

There's an important entailment with the metaphor that self-control is being located inside the Self

- > if you are inside, you can't see the outside
- > vision from the inside is knowledge from the inside
- > knowledge from the inside is subjective knowledge

If you want to know how your position appears from the outside, you have to go outside and look

- > vision from the outside is knowledge from the outside
- > knowledge from the outside is objective knowledge

- ➔ You should take a good look at yourself
- ➔ You should watch what you do

⇒ what we have had looked at so far has been based on two basic correlations in everyday experience

1. the correlation between self-control and the control of physical objects
2. the correlation between a sense of control and being in one's normal surroundings

Now there is a third kind of correlation (a third primary metaphor) :

3. the correlation between how those around us evaluate both our actions and those of others and how we evaluate our own actions

3. The Social Self

From birth, we enter into interpersonal and social relationships with other people. And from birth, what we do is evaluated by others (Don't punch your sister, Eat your food, Don't pour your juice on the cat).

We all learn to evaluate our own actions in terms of how others evaluate what we do and what others do.

Throughout childhood, we develop values toward our past actions, our family roles, and our future plans – all aspects of what we have called the Self.

In short, we learn evaluative relationships between Subject and Self on the basis of evaluative interpersonal and social relationships among those around us.

THE SOCIAL SELF METAPHOR

One person	->	the subject
Another person	->	the self
Evaluative social relationship->		evaluative subject-self relationship

A few of the specific social relationships this metaphor applies to :

(Subject and Self act as)

- master / servant : i have to get myself to do the laundry
- parent / child : you need to give yourself some more discipline
- friends : i need to be a better friend to myself
- adversaries : he's at war with himself over whom to caretaker
- caretaker : i promised myself a vacation
- interlocutors : i was debating with myself whether to leave

one particularly interesting case is

- the subject is obligated to meet the standards of the self :

one's social role in the community is part of the self

that social role comes with certain obligations that we have a responsibility to carry out

but since one's judgement and will are part of the Subject

and one's social role is part of the Self

there is a split

In short => the subject has an obligation to the self

and the self has no choice but to trust the Subject to carry out those obligation

"The Multiple Selves Metaphor"

This metaphor conceptualises multiple values as multiple Selves.

Indecisiveness over values is metaphorized as the Subject's indecisiveness about which Self to associate with.

THE MULTIPLE SELVES METAPHOR

A person	->	the subject
Other people	->	selves
Their social roles	->	the values attached to the roles
Being in the same place as	->	having the same value as
Being in different places	->	having different values

➔ i keep returning to my spiritual self

➔ i keep going back and forth between the scientist and the priest in me

4. “Projecting onto someone else”

From earliest childhood we are able to imitate

- to smile when some one smiles at us
- to lift an arm when someone lifts an arm
- to wave when someone waves

Imitating makes use of an ability to project, to conceptualise oneself as inhabiting the body of another.

In this metaphor, one Subject is projected onto another in a hypothetical situation, f.e. saying ”If I were you.”

THE SUBJECT PROJECTION METAPHOR

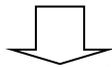
Real situation -> hypothetical situation
Subject 1 -> subject 2

⇒ there are two special cases

ADVISORY PROJECTION

Values of 1 -> values of 2

-> if i were you, i'd punch him in the nose

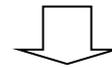


i'm projecting my values onto you so that i experience your life with my values

EMPHATIC PROJECTION

values of 2 -> values of 1

-> if i were you, i'd feel just awful too



i'm experiencing your life, but with your values projected onto my subjective exper.

5. The essential Self

There's a folk theory of essences, according to which every object has an essence that makes it the kind of thing it is.

There's also a version of it which applies to human beings :

You, as an individual, have an essence that makes you unique, that makes you “you”. It is your essence that makes you behave like you, not like somebody else.

The incompatibility between our essence and what we really do is the subject matter of the essential self metaphor.

THE ESSENTIAL SELF METAPHOR

Person 1 -> the subject, with the essence
Person 2 -> self 1, the real self (fits the essence)
Person 3 -> self 2, no the real self (doesn't fit the essence)

There are three special cases of this metaphor :

1. The inner self => “the outer self” : be polite in public, refrain from expressing true feelings
 “the inner self” : acting very differently in private than in public
 metaphorically it hides inside our “outer self” (f.e. it’s fragile or shy)
 it’s the real self, the one compatible with who we really are, with our essence

→ *he’s afraid to reveal his inner self*
→ *she rarely shows her real self*
2. The external real self => it’s a quiet nice self that the public normally sees;
 but inside can lurk an awful other self, which can come out when your guard is down, f.e. when you are drunk or depressed and say something unkind to a friend.
 Then you may apologise, explaining your behaviour by saying “*I wasn’t myself yesterday*”
3. The true self => it means, finding another way to be, finding another self compatible with your essence (f.e. supposed that all your life you have been living was a lie)

→ *he found himself in writing*
→ *he’s still searching for his true self*

HOW UNIVERSAL IS THIS SYSTEM ?

- a japanese professor (Yukio Hirose) pointed out that Japanese contains examples that look like and are understood in the same way as the English examples

f.e. the “scattered self” metaphor :

Japanese -> he pulled and tightened his spirits

English -> he pulled himself together

f.e. the “multiple selves” metaphor

Japanese -> about this problem, i lean toward (my) self as a scientist

English -> I am inclined to think about this problem as a scientist

- what was radically different was the japanese conception of the relationship between self and other, not necessarily the japanese conception of inner life
- very little research has been done on the metaphoric systems of inner life in other languages
- the fact that this system arises from such basic everyday experiences provides a possible explanation for the occurrence of the same metaphors in a language and culture so different from ours as Japanese -> how widespread around the world is this metaphor system ?

CONCLUSIONS & QUESTIONS:

As we have seen there is a wide range of metaphorical concepts for our inner life.

They arise from just five basic metaphors.

One based on the folk theory of essence.

Four growing out of basic correlations in our everyday experience since early childhood.

- ➔ 1. The correlation between body control and the control of physical objects
- ➔ 2. The correlation between being in one's normal surroundings and experiencing in a sense of control
- ➔ 3. The correlation between how those around us evaluate our actions and the actions of others and how we evaluate our own actions
- ➔ 4. The correlation between our own experiences and the way we imagine ourselves projected onto others

These metaphors of the Self appear to be about real inner experiences, and we use them to make statements.

The fact that we can make statements about our inner lives using these metaphors suggests that these metaphors conform in significant ways to the structure of our inner lives.

One of the most important things that we learn is that there is no consistent structuring of our inner lives.

In other words, we have no single, monolithic concept of the Subject or of the structure of our inner lives, but rather many mutually inconsistent ones.

And there is one chicken-egg question :

Does the metaphor fit pre-existing qualitative experience, or does the qualitative experience come from conceptualising what we have done via the metaphor ?

-> when we do something that we shouldn't have done and "*bawl ourselves out*", many of us experience a sense of shame.

-> and when we "*betray ourselves*", we can experience a sense of guilt.

-> it is possible that the activation of the metaphor also activates, f.e. betrayal, which in turn activates the affect associated with it, f.e. guilt ?