

In the image and after the likeness: iconicity and metaphors

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So far, discussion of iconicity has focused on two aspects:

- a) on form and meaning relationship,
- b) more on individual examples than some global character – from a simple “cuckoo” to a more complex “argument is war”, or complex and abstract “conscious is up”. (cf. Hockett 1960, Lyons, 1977, Haiman 1983, Langacker 1990)

The paper suggests to take as point of departure our physical experience, as the only experience accessible to our senses. That experience is in reality limited to perception of objects. Such a radical and simple view is supported by Kotarbiński’s *reism*, the analysis of the model called the Great Chain of Being. To a certain extent this view is also supported by Langacker’s distinction of *conceptually independent* THINGS, and *conceptually dependent* RELATIONS. All those three different positions point to the primacy of objects; other aspects are *object-dependent*. It is always the structure of ... (an object), orientation of ... (an object), etc.

In Kotarbiński’s *reism* and in the Great Chain of Being there is no place for abstract entities: relations (both temporal and atemporal) and elements of non-physical worlds. Those other worlds, mental and emotional, being abstract in nature, have been modeled on our view of the physical world. They have been conceptualized as consisting of physical-like objects, with all the other properties of objects inherited. E.g. THOUGHT is conceptualized as an object first, and all other properties like CONTAINER, ANIMATE, HEAVY, CLEAR, BRILLIANT, DARK, SOBER, etc. are naturally **inherited** with it.

In consequence, orientational and structural metaphors are a consequence of ontological metaphors; in other words, any non-physical concept has to be *objectified* first, before structure, orientation and other properties can be assigned to it. I call this process *objectification*. *Objectification* involves not individual cases, but is a global process embracing all non-physical phenomena.

Lakoff and Johnson hold that “... social, political, economic, and religious institutions and the human beings who function within them are no less real than trees, tables, or rocks.” (1980: 181). A similar general view seems to be implicit in Langacker’s distinction between THINGS and RELA-

TIONS. This is probably true in human adult life, but in view of Kotarbiński's *reism*, the analysis of the great Chain of Being, and evidence from studies on touch, objects schema, etc. (cf. Szwedek 2000, 2002, 2004), the primacy of objects seems incontrovertible, leading directly to the problem of the primacy of experience, i.e. the problem of "coming from". The present paper shows that the non-physical worlds have the same conceptual structure as the physical worlds

All that demonstrates that the non-physical worlds are iconic to the physical world, that they have been created in the image and after the likeness of the physical world of objects.