

The Body in Literature

Mark Johnson, Metaphor, and Feeling

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Abstract

An inadequate grasp of the role of imagination has vitiated understanding of human cognition in western thinking. Extending a project initiated with George Lakoff in *Metaphors we Live By* (1980), Mark Johnson's book *The Body in the Mind* (1987) offers the claim that all thinking originates in bodily experience. A range of schemata formed during our early experience manipulating a physical world of surfaces, distances, and forces, lays the foundation of later, more abstract modes of thought. In presenting his argument, Johnson lays special stress on the qualities and dynamics of the image schemata, the (generally unnoticed) metaphoricity of the transformations underlying abstract thought, and the new significance that should be attributed to the imagination, which is the general term Johnson wishes to claim for the mental processes he expounds.

In this paper I draw attention to the importance of Johnson's insights for understanding literary response. In particular, I will show how a typical procedure of literary texts involves bringing to awareness image schemata of the kind that Johnson describes. At the same time, several problems in Johnson's account which limit its usefulness will also be examined: an undue reliance upon the spatial properties of schemata; a conflation of dead with live or poetic metaphors; and a neglect of other bodily influences on thought, especially kinaesthetic and affective aspects. These problems, for example, limit the usefulness of Johnson's attempt to build on Kant's theory of imagination. In comparison with Coleridge, who also attempted to build on Kant, Johnson is unable to overcome the formalism of Kant's theory. Coleridge's account of imagination, I will suggest, provides a better foundation for examining the bodily basis of meaning, while remaining compatible with Johnson's intentions and his more valuable insights.

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Introduction

An inadequate grasp of the role of imagination has vitiated understanding of human cognition in western thinking. According to Mark Johnson, an "objectivist" tradition of thought from Descartes, through Kant to Frege has overlooked the pervasive structuring of our thought by a range of underlying metaphors. Extending a project initiated with George Lakoff in *Metaphors we Live By* (1980), Mark Johnson's book *The Body in the Mind* (1987) offers the claim that all thinking originates in bodily experience. A range of schemata formed during our early experience manipulating a physical world of surfaces, distances, and forces, lays the foundation of later, more abstract modes of thought. By extension and transformation such "image schemata," as Johnson terms them, determine the processes of rational and propositional thinking. In presenting his argument, Johnson lays special stress on the qualities and dynamics of the image schemata, the (generally unnoticed) metaphoricity of the transformations underlying abstract thought, and the new significance that should be attributed to the imagination, which is the general term Johnson wishes to claim for the mental processes he expounds.

Johnson's work has been largely overlooked so far by students of aesthetics and literary theory, despite the fact that Johnson centres his claims for a reinvigorated understanding of the imagination on Kant's account in the *Critique of Judgement*. In this paper I will draw attention to the importance of Johnson's insights for understanding literary response. In particular, I will show how a typical procedure of literary texts involves bringing to awareness image schemata of the kind that Johnson describes.¹ At the same time, several problems in Johnson's account which limit its usefulness will also be examined: an undue reliance upon the spatial properties of schemata; a conflation of dead with live or poetic metaphors; and a neglect of other bodily influences on thought, especially kinaesthetic and affective aspects. These problems, for example, limit the usefulness of Johnson's attempt to build on Kant's theory of imagination. In comparison with Coleridge, who also attempted to build on Kant, Johnson is unable to overcome the formalism of Kant's theory. Coleridge's account of imagination, I will suggest, provides a better foundation for examining the bodily basis of meaning, while remaining compatible with Johnson's intentions and his more valuable insights. First, I will offer a brief outline of Johnson's project and point to some of its limitations.

The Body in the Mind

Our bodily interactions with the world around us involve repeated patterns of experience, which, following earlier thinkers such as Kant and Bartlett, Johnson terms *schemata*.² These in turn provide the basis for structuring thought at more abstract levels. "I call these patterns 'image schemata'," says Johnson,

because they function primarily as abstract structures of images. They are gestalt structures, consisting of parts standing in relations and organized into unified wholes, by means of which our experience manifests discernible order. When we seek to comprehend this order and to reason about it, such bodily based schemata play a central role. (Johnson, 1987, xix)

The primary focus of Johnson's discussion throughout the book is on the more abstract level at which the schemata operate: he shows how pervasive such schemata are in everyday thought with examples such as "purposes are destinations," and "theories are buildings" (these phrases are only summary statements of elaborate and extensive

structures embedded within thought).

Although Johnson offers some account of the origin of schemata in the infant's bodily experience (13, 15-16), bodily correlates of meaning in later thought are not explored. While he discusses abstract thought at one point as having "emerged" from bodily experience, he also describes it in the same paragraph as a refinement upon bodily experience which "ignores much of what goes into our reasoning" (5). Thus Johnson is perhaps ambiguous on this issue, as one of the book's reviewers noted (Wallace, 1988): it is unclear whether he wishes to claim that all meaning remains within the context of bodily experience, or whether meaning emerges from bodily experience by projection and transformation.

Johnson emphasizes that image schemata are figurative, and analog and non-propositional in nature (xx). Schemata should not be seen as either rich, mental images (concrete pictures in the mind); nor are they abstract concepts or propositional structures (23). In fact, his preferred term for understanding how such schemata operate is "metaphor." He argues that the way in which thought is organized is through "metaphorical elaborations of image schemata" which "give rise to form and structure in our experience and understanding" (73). Thus, the OUT or CONTAINER schema which is spatial in origin, projects onto more abstract entities in a statement such as "Tell me your story again, but leave out the minor details" (34). Whereas the original sense of this schema involved a physical object being located "outside," here it is an abstract or logical entity.

Of the specific examples he discusses, almost all appear to involve spatial representations. Johnson defines an image schema as a recurring pattern, but then describes the patterns in spatial terms: they emerge, he says, "chiefly at the level of our bodily movements through space, our manipulation of objects, and our perceptual interactions" (29). Describing his project more generally, he says that he attempts "a kind of 'geography of human experience'" (xxxvii); and the examples of schemata he provides throughout the book (see, for example, the list on p. 126) usually necessitate spatial relationships or are interpreted in spatial terms. As Johnson notes in passing, "having some perspective is part of image schemata" (36), which seems to make the spatial a defining quality. Although he introduces the example cited in the previous paragraph as a "nonspatial" extension of the OUT schema, it seems clear that perspective must be involved here too: the statement positions us on the inside of the story, and instructs us to position the "minor details" on the outside. A similar perspective seems integral to his next example: "I give up, I'm getting out of the race." Other qualities are often involved in image schemata, such as balance, pressure, or force; yet these too are generally construed as acting within a spatial context (see, for example, the spatial diagrams used to explicate modal verbs, pp. 51-3).

The ubiquity of the spatial in Johnson's project makes it seem vulnerable to the kind of criticism that Coleridge brought against his eighteenth century predecessors. Coleridge argued against that "despotism of the eye" before which "we are restless because invisible things are not the objects of vision" (Coleridge, 1983, i.107).³ While Johnson insists that image schemata are not mental images, yet they are usually discussed as if they could be visualized in spatial terms. This prominence of the spatial tends to exclude from consideration other types of bodily experience that may be as significant for understanding the development of thought. The kinaesthetic and affective, I will suggest, are especially relevant to a consideration of literary response. The literary domain is particularly suitable for considering their role in thought, since literary texts

possess an array of features (called foregrounding) that systematically organize affective and kinaesthetic responses in the service of the imaginative reconstruction of experience.

Johnson emphasizes that his project involves reinstating the imagination as central to all human cognition (in Chapter 6 he returns to Kant's account in some detail, and seeks to elaborate and correct it). The kind of imagination he has in mind is not, he says, "merely a wild, non-rule-governed faculty for fantasy and creativity" (xx). Elsewhere he attempts to summarize Coleridge's account of imagination (68-9), but he does not share Coleridge's interest in pointing to the poetic functions of imagination that Coleridge described; indeed, he seems suspicious of it, assuring us that his account of imagination should not be seen as "imagination in the Romantic sense of unfettered creative fancy" (194). This distinction between an everyday and a "romantic" imagination places unnecessary limits on Johnson's approach, as I will argue below.

However, Johnson also wishes to claim a Coleridgean, transformational power for the image schemata, but he does so by obscuring an important distinction between the metaphoric function of schemata as instruments of everyday thought (what might better be called dead metaphor), and the functioning of poetic metaphors. Johnson's insight is that such metaphoric projections are fundamental to our thought; but to argue that the same projections "make new connections, and remold our experience" (169) is to confuse two different levels of functioning which call for different explanations. As Johnson suggests, the distinction between literal and figurative is perhaps misleading: the literal may be merely what is "conventional" (30). Yet the distinction corresponds to an important psychological distinction between an instantiation of semantic meaning and an awareness of semantic change; or, to put it differently, a distinction between familiar meaning and the defamiliarization of meaning that occurs most notably in literary texts.⁴ For example, the spatial implications of "rear" or "front" are common in everyday discourse. We no longer notice their figurative origin in such uses as "She was at the front of her class in math"; "He kept at the rear in conversation." If these uses are metaphoric, as Johnson would claim, they have become domesticated, dead metaphors. The process of comprehension clearly differs when the words are used in a context such as this poem by Emily Dickinson: "Remembrance has a Rear and Front -- / 'Tis something like a House --" (Dickinson, 1970, 524). In the first examples, the words "rear" and "front" serve merely to locate position on an existing dimension: either eminence in a math class or degree of participation in conversation. In the poem, on the other hand, the words being used figuratively create a dimension for the concept "Remembrance" which is novel. In so doing, Dickinson enables us to see aspects of the concept that we have probably not noticed before.

The Clerk's Tale

Johnson's primary interest, however, is in the role of image schemata in constructing everyday thought and reasoning. In this respect he provides impressive documentation for their power and pervasiveness. In Chapter 1 he begins his detailed analysis of their presence by examining the schemata underlying a specific passage, taken from the report of a legal clerk discussing his response to a certain type of woman. The passage provides important insights into the impulses that may result in rape. The clerk's account reads in part as follows:

Let's say I see a woman and she looks really pretty, and really clean and

sexy, and she's giving off very feminine, sexy vibes. I think "Wow, I would love to make love to her," but I know she's not really interested. It's a tease. A lot of times a woman knows that she's looking really good and she'll use that and flaunt it, and it makes me feel like she's laughing at me and I feel *degraded*. I also feel dehumanized, because when I'm being teased I just turn off.

The clerk then reflects on the double bind this imposes on him, and comments: "Just the fact that they can come up to me and just melt me and make me feel like a dummy makes me want revenge" (6; cited from Beneke, 1982).

Johnson's discussion of the underlying logic of the passage is illuminating. As he points out, the dominant idea motivating the clerk's understanding of his response turns out to be metaphoric: Johnson states this as "PHYSICAL APPEARANCE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE." Johnson shows how this metaphor, and derivatives from it, shape the clerk's discourse. One implication of the clerk's account is the notion that "ANYONE USING A FORCE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EFFECTS OF THAT FORCE" (8). This and other hidden assumptions of his response propel the clerk towards a violent construal of his predicament. Either it requires an act of violence towards himself, suppressing his feelings of sexual desire, resentment, and humiliation -- which is the path he actually seems to adopt -- or it requires a sexual assault upon the offending woman.

Johnson's discussion in Chapter 1 shows both the strengths and the weaknesses of his approach. While he brings to light a complex metaphoric structure underlying the clerk's discourse, several important questions that have a bearing on Johnson's project are left unconsidered. The analysis overlooks the clerk's motive for construing his response along the metaphoric pathways that Johnson has described, as well as other types of bodily experience that also underlie the clerk's response. Johnson might argue that he is concerned only with the linguistic structuring of the clerk's story, but there is nothing inevitable in the construction given to it by the clerk. Other forces are at work beside the metaphoric which help to determine his discourse. In his book, Johnson sometimes gives the impression that the metaphoric structures that he analyses constitute the basic level at which thought is shaped (for instance, the last part of his discussion of Kant, p. 169, or the definition of non-objectivist meaning given in italics on p. 174). But to understand why particular metaphoric structures appear in thought requires Johnson's account to be supplemented by an examination of the forces that bring them into play in a given context. This in turn bears on Johnson's interest later in the book (in Chapter 4) in how metaphors are created and understood. The clerk's tale illustrates this basic problem.

How does the clerk come to construe his experience in this way? Why is he impelled along the metaphoric path of seeing physical appearance as a physical force, with all its consequences? While we cannot interrogate the clerk himself, it seems probable that the instantiation of this "metaphor" depends upon a specific configuration of bodily feelings. The precipitating cause lies in the clerk's feeling of anomaly: he experiences sexual arousal within a context where expression of such feelings is impermissible. It is an anomaly that calls for metaphor production. Experiencing a force that operates within him to create a conflict between two feelings (sexual arousal and social inhibition), he projects the force on to the woman who appears to be its cause. Locating the force within her (she has "sexy vibes," etc.) instead of within himself, he then sees that force as impacting on him from without. While Johnson is right to note the "logical" shape of the clerk's construal of his experience and to suggest that much of our

everyday reasoning shows a similar structuring by metaphor (11), the power of the clerk's tale and its resulting metaphors depend upon its originating feelings. Feeling is, no doubt, a major determinant in the instantiation of many of the metaphoric construals that Johnson discusses.

The power of feeling is indicated in the clerk's case in particular by the number of times he refers to his self-concept. Remarks such as "I feel *degraded*," "I cease to be human," and "they . . . make me feel like a dummy," show that his encounters with such a woman call into question the clerk's image of himself. The passage could be said to enact a conflict between two directions in which his sense of self can develop: either an enabling, aggressive exercise of sexual expression; or an emasculating impairment of his status.⁵ The forcefulness of the feelings arises from the significance of the issues raised by the encounter. Another dimension of such feelings is apparent in the clerk's use of the term "really clean and sexy." While the narrative is obviously about bodily experience, one important construction not noted by Johnson involves the construct "clean vs. defiled." The clerk's idea of intercourse includes, among other matters, the prospect of degrading the woman's purity. Being physically degraded himself calls for despoiling her physically in revenge. As Ricoeur (1969) has pointed out, the sense of defilement is itself figurative, being based on the literal meaning "stain" or "unclean." But more important, defilement evokes a sense of dread: dread "of a danger which is itself ethical and which, at a higher level of the consciousness of evil, will be the danger of not being able to love any more, the danger of being a dead man in the realm of ends." With such dread, Ricoeur notes, comes the "primordial connection of vengeance with defilement" (Ricoeur, 1969, 15, 30). Thus the clerk's narrative shows how our body image, the maintenance of purity, is a potentially powerful source of feeling: here it is called into question by the mere presence of a "pretty woman."

This complex of feelings, with its potential consequences for the self-concept, seems to constitute the origin of the clerk's response. And it is from the feelings that the metaphoric dimension of the narrative is constructed: the narrative shows the clerk explaining, justifying, and acting upon such feelings in defence of the self. The metaphoric structuring of his discourse (PHYSICAL APPEARANCE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE) comes from the ready availability of this construction in the culture: as Johnson points out, such expressions as "She's *devastating*" and "He is *strikingly* handsome" are common. The clerk's is, one might say, an unthinking, clichéd way of construing experience. It seems likely, indeed, that the clerk himself is unaware of using such a metaphor: for him, the force of the woman's appearance constitutes his reality, which in turn determines how he will understand the alternatives that confront him.

The purpose of the discussion so far, then, has been to show that beneath the metaphoric structure of the clerk's discourse articulated by Johnson, lies a deeper level of structuring, formed by the clerk's feelings and their implications for his self concept. Its metaphoricity is a product of the central anomaly sensed by the clerk; but the specific metaphor he deploys is a "reach-me-down" construct, as Max Black (1954-55, 290) put it, available from the culture. I have been concerned to show in particular that the urgency of the clerk's predicament springs from a level more fundamental than the metaphor described by Johnson. The unlawfulness of his desire, and the defilement it incurs, results in the clerk's projection of agency onto the woman, as Johnson shows. The critical issue, however, is how the clerk's metaphor comes to be chosen or produced. Here Johnson's account bypasses important evidence for the role of the feelings and the self -- evidence that would help to extend and enrich our understanding of the bodily basis of meaning.

If the clerk's discourse is examined as an example of the structuring of conventional meaning, it is so primarily because the metaphor for which he reaches is a cultural commonplace. The distinction which Johnson claims for his approach involves the major claim that it will rehabilitate the imagination, not in a Romantic sense, but in the sense advanced by Kant, that imagination is an essential power at the basis of all human thought. Yet one significant contribution that imagination can make to human thought is to enable us to transcend conventional meaning, including the automatic (and potentially dangerous) assignment of bodily feelings such as defilement to everyday situations. Unlike the example of the clerk's tale, conventional meaning conveyed through image schemata may be challenged or even overthrown in more powerful kinds of discourse. Specifically, I have in mind the kind of discourse available in literary texts.

Coleridge, whose theory of imagination receives only brief mention in *The Body in the Mind*, argues that at its best imagination "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate" (Coleridge, 1983, i.304). To account for a power of this order requires more than the modes of imagination described by Johnson. I will first illustrate the issues by reference to a specific poem. Here, a spatial metaphor, of the kind discussed by Johnson, plays an interesting role; but so do several other features that involve affective and bodily dimensions of meaning. I will then turn to consider the wider implications of the discussion by examining the use to which Johnson puts Kant's aesthetic theory.

Imagining the Self: Wordsworth and the Man of the World

Wordsworth's sonnet "The world is too much with us," first published in 1807, has often been reprinted; it has evidently been considered a powerful poem, hence it can be seen as offering a challenge to conventional or familiar modes of thinking. The poem as a whole offers a reflection on the relationship we have lost with nature, but an analysis of the first four lines of the poem will be sufficient to show its imaginative power.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

In certain respects, the poem seems to depend upon a ready understanding of the term "world," which has a sense similar to its meaning in a phrase such as "man of the world." The poem invites us to participate in an act of imagination in which any approval we may feel for the "man of the world" is overthrown. It is possible to see a spatial metaphor, in Johnson's sense, helping to organize a reader's understanding of this shift in sense. A comment that something is "with us" implies physical proximity; but "too much with us" seems to connote the breaching of some boundary of the self, suggesting that "The world" has impinged on the inner terrain of the self. A corresponding idea is offered in the fourth line, where the heart transfers out of the self in being "given away." In this sense the poem deploys Johnson's CONTAINMENT metaphor (21-3) to striking effect: we see the self as a container whose integrity we have violated. Similarly, "Getting and spending" implies a transfer of goods inwards and money outwards across the boundary of the self. The poem alerts us to the endangered integrity of the self through its imaginative and novel use of the metaphor: we find ourselves implicated in an act of self-betrayal in which "we" (all readers of the poem) have participated.

One significant function of a poem may lie in bringing to consciousness the hidden spatial metaphors that, as Johnson points out, determine the structure and assumptions of much of our everyday thinking. Our normal assumption is perhaps to think of ourselves as "in the world," or to approve of the "man of the world," whose interchange with the material and social aspects of the world is managed in a competent and urbane manner. Wordsworth unsettles this familiar notion by telling us that this world is in us, with harmful consequences; in other words, the container shifts from being the world to being the self. And in this way the poem also seems to suggest that a proper distance of self from the world would protect the self's true interests, although this notion is not explored in the poem explicitly (in the remainder of the poem Wordsworth is more concerned to rehabilitate our relationship with nature).

It is possible to see the container metaphor, then, with its implied derivation from bodily experience, as fundamental to understanding how these lines of the poem function. Other modes of bodily experience, however, are also likely to play a significant role in response to the poem. In this respect, Johnson's account of imagination falls short: being based primarily on spatial accounts of "embodied" thinking it cannot encompass the sensory and affective dimensions that also influence literary response. Yet these aspects of response have as much right to be considered a part of imagination as metaphoric schemata, if the views of Coleridge (perhaps the most important exponent of the imagination) are accepted. Nor does this richer view mean imagination "in the Romantic sense of unfettered creative fancy" (194). As Coleridge argued, poetry is organized and systematic: it has "a logic of its own, as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive causes" (Coleridge, 1983, i.9). Among other aspects, the diction and the affective structuring of poetry contribute to its imaginative power in the sense claimed by Coleridge.

Thus in Wordsworth's lines the meaning of the spatial metaphor I pointed to above is amplified by several other important effects. The parallelism of the construction, "late and soon, / Getting and spending," enforces the temporal dimension of our self-violation; the assonance of *e* and *ing* sounds in the second pair of words helps confirm the ceaseless reciprocity of its cause in our material preoccupations. These features, together with the position of the parallelism across the line ending, help create a rising gradient of affective intensity which comes to a focus in the next phrase of the second line, "we lay waste our powers." Here we find assonance, with mutually reinforcing *a* sounds, which both echoes the *a* of "late" and anticipates "away" in the fourth line. As well, in the metrical patterning of the line, there are perhaps two adjacent stressed syllables if emphasis in reading is placed upon the word "lay." This serves to emphasize the two *a*-vowels in "lay waste" and hence intensifies our affective response to the idea of wasting the powers of the self. The set of meanings added here include a sense of debasement, which takes on a particularly physical connotation when Wordsworth describes the bargain we have made as "sordid."

As Coleridge's statement on the logic of poetry suggests, the rich meaning of this poem depends upon a range of complex and fugitive causes. Not every reader will be equally sensitive to all of them, no doubt. Yet, as our analysis will have suggested, such effects experienced over several lines of poetry seem to converge on the same underlying meaning. The effects of such poetic diction are, in Mukarovsky's (1964, 20) terms, systematic and hierarchical. We can claim that assonance and metre in these lines contribute an important sensory component of response: the way the words are articulated in speaking involves subtle physical resonances (Fónagý, 1989) and interconnections that go beyond the effects of normal language use, while the metre

draws upon powerful bodily rhythms that tend to pass unnoticed except within such aesthetic domains as poetry or music. Indeed, poetry puts us in touch with this level of our bodily functioning, and in so doing it defamiliarizes the automatic assignment of meaning to experience. The container metaphor, in this poem, is made troubling and questionable for the reader. What *are* we doing in the world if the world is actually "in" us, as Wordsworth suggests?

Wordsworth's poetic discourse can be compared in this respect with the clerk's conventional discourse. The debasement of the self, the "sordid boon," is perhaps the most important idea in these opening lines of the poem. The array of other features, metaphoric and phonetic, are organized to focus on this key idea, imbuing it with feeling. Unlike the clerk's narrative, however, the poem creates a sense of the self as defiled in an unfamiliar domain: we see defilement where we formerly saw only the familiar realm of our transactions with the material world. Wordsworth helps us to locate this new sense and give it meaning: out of our cloudy dissatisfactions with the material preoccupations of "getting and spending," shall we say, he condenses a specific attitude, perhaps even a specific bodily unease that is carried by the assonance and other phonetic features of the poem. Brought to consciousness in this way, we also see that the cause lies in us. Unlike the clerk, whose response is predicated on the vengeance to which Ricoeur points, our response implies ejecting from the self the destructive workings of the world, a type of cleansing or catharsis of the self (Ricoeur, 1969, 41).⁶ In the remainder of the poem Wordsworth looks, albeit forlornly, to a renewed relationship with nature to achieve this.

The imaginative achievement of this section of the poem, then, lies in reversing our standard assumptions about what it means to be "in the world"; in bringing to consciousness and deploying for unusual ends our spatial metaphor for the self as a container; and, above all, in making felt through a rich weave of poetic devices the debased state of the self. The imagination here, to borrow Coleridge's words, "dissolves and diffuses" the conventional view of our place in the world; it uses poetic devices to defamiliarize it, and to point to an alternative conception of that place. Such an enriched poetic concept, which we have argued is dependent upon sensory and affective meaning, is what Kant calls an "aesthetic idea." However, Kant deals only equivocally with feeling in his third *Critique*, and deals not at all with bodily correlates of meaning. In this respect he provides a questionable basis for building a reinvigorated understanding of imagination. However, the problems that Johnson wishes to resolve in Kant already find an answer in Coleridge: his theory of imagination provides a more powerful and accurate foundation for conceptualizing the role of the body in the mind than Johnson's attempt to build on Kant's formulations in the *Critique of Judgement*.

Kant and the Disembodied Imagination

In Chapter 6, Johnson appeals to Kant's third *Critique*, arguing that in its account of imagination it provides a basis for extending our understanding of imagination which enlarges the first *Critique*. He focuses specifically on Kant's account of the beautiful. What does it mean to find something, such as a work of art, beautiful? According to Kant, this is an example of the imagination working in a non-rule governed way, unlike its role in mediating between the sensory manifold and concepts in the understanding. In Johnson's summary, we judge objects beautiful when

they put our imagination in a playful harmony with our intellect or

understanding Thus, we judge objects to be beautiful by a free (non-rule-governed) preconceptual imaginative activity that has a rational character and can lay claim to the agreement of other judges, since it focuses only on the formal features of the object, which imagination allows us all to experience in the same way. (160)

As Johnson observes, Kant seems to be saying that "there is a kind of shared meaning that is not reducible to conceptual and propositional content alone" (161). This is the product of imagination. Kant proposes that works of art embody "aesthetical ideas," whose signifi- cance lies in offering ideas that cannot be brought under a definite concept: they occasion more thought than can be grasped or made clear (162). Johnson expands on Kant's insight, proposing that such thought is pre-conceptual, involving the metaphoric extension of image *schemata*. In understanding a symbol in a poem, says Kant,

the judgement exercises a double function, first applying the concept to the object of a sensible intuition, and then applying the mere rule of the reflection made upon that intuition to a quite different object of which the first is only the symbol. (Kant, 1968, §59)

In other words, translating this into the terms for metaphor, we transfer the rule of reflection on a vehicle to reconfiguring the tenor. Johnson claims that Kant's account of this operation is close to what he means by metaphorical projection (164).

What Kant describes here, however, involves the symbolic mode of thought: it works to *defamiliarize* its object (or tenor), just as Wordsworth's poem unsettles our standard notion of being "in the world." In Johnson's book, however, he is primarily concerned with the level of thought at which *familiar* objects and processes are construed (purposes are destinations, theories are buildings). In these instances no other terms are available or occur to mind; no novel meanings are intended. All such terms are "reach-me-down" constructions. While Johnson does mention in passing how such conventional constructions can be invigorated, making dead into live metaphors (e.g., "He prefers massive Gothic theories covered with gargoyles," p. 106), he neither distinguishes adequately the two kinds of metaphor (which have radically different effects), nor does he consider the possibility that many poetic metaphors, unlike the "Gothic theories" example, do not spring from conventional metaphor. (As Neill (1989) pointed out, Johnson also has difficulty accounting for some conventional metaphors such as "Sally is a block of ice," or "John is bitter," perhaps because they lack the spatial qualities of his standard examples.)

More problematic, Johnson's appeal to Kant bypasses the issue of Kant's formalism. Central to Kant's *Critique* is the disinterested function of the imagination involved in response to both the beautiful and the sublime. For example, it is a condition of the beautiful, says Kant, that the responder "can find as reason for his delight no personal conditions to which his own subjective self might alone be party" (§6). And in the case of the sublime, the mind conceives its powers in purely formal terms as transcending any powers in nature whatever (e.g., §28). The formalism of Kant's account here is integral, not incidental. Johnson attempts to discount it by denying the problem: there is no gap, he asserts, between the formal and material, the rational and the bodily (168). Where Kant saw an unbridgeable gap, concealing the mystery of how *schemata* come into being (Kant's notorious observation in the first *Critique* is cited on p. 156), Johnson wishes to see a continuum (170). This is to elide the problem, however, not to resolve it.

If a better theory of imagination is to be founded upon bodily meaning, as Johnson proposes, some agency that acts both at the levels of mind and body must be found. Rethinking the disinterest on which Kant insisted offers one possible starting point: it is, moreover, one of the points which distinguishes the theory of imagination that Coleridge formulated, partly out of his dissatisfaction with Kant. In Coleridge's account feelings and the self find a central place.

Imagination and Feeling: Coleridge's Solution

In letters and notebook entries, particularly in the earlier part of his life (up to about 1810), Coleridge frequently referred to the influence of the body on thinking. Analysing his sense of illness in 1802, for example, he referred to "an undue sensibility of the nervous system, or of whatever unknown parts of our body are the more immediate Instruments of Feeling & Idea" (Coleridge, 1956-71, ii.897). Again, in 1805, in a notebook reflection on love, he remarked "the purest Impulse can introduce itself to our consciousness no otherwise than by *speaking to us* in some bodily feeling" (Coleridge, 1957- , ii.2495). And for a while, Coleridge contemplated the possibility that developmentally the sense of touch or feeling lay at the root of the other senses, as well as the growth of the mind (Modiano, 1982).

Thus for Coleridge, unlike in the aesthetics of Kant to which Johnson appeals, there is no dichotomy of body and mind. The body can prompt thought, or can be its instrument. It has a key role in memory: "how imperishable Thoughts seem to be!" said Coleridge, on another occasion; "Renew the state of affection or bodily Feeling, same or similar . . . and instantly the trains of forgotten Thoughts rise from their living catacombs!" (1957- , i.1575) The agent that relates body and mind is feeling: feeling partakes both of bodily states that begin in touch, while at the same time it motivates or even guides processes of thought. The case of the clerk discussed above, whose metaphoric construal is impelled by his feeling of sexual arousal, is a dramatic example of what is undoubtedly a common process. At the same time, this suggests that the role of feeling in the imagination may be of the greatest significance, and that feeling provides the key to the creative power attributed to the imagination by Coleridge.

Johnson's discussions of Coleridge in *The Body in the Mind* do not explore this essential dimension of his theory: rather, Johnson asserts that Coleridge "never supplied . . . an account of the specific nature of this creative, unifying activity of metaphorical imagination" (69). On the contrary, Coleridge provided several accounts in *Biographia Literaria*, his lectures, and elsewhere, of how the imagination works to modify and unify its materials. Two examples will suffice. Images, Coleridge said, "become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion" (Coleridge, 1983, ii.23). From the perspective of the reader the effect of this poetic process when focused on the mundane world of objects, is "to represent familiar objects [so] as to awaken in the minds of others a kindred feeling concerning them and that freshness of sensation which is the constant accompaniment of mental, no less than of bodily, convalescence" (1983, i.81). In the later chapters of the *Biographia*, Coleridge also applies these principles in detailed analyses of specific poems, particularly those of Wordsworth.

The role of feeling in imagination is familiar ground to critics of Coleridge, although his attention to bodily aspects of feeling has received less attention. Also little noted is Coleridge's account of how feeling implicates the self. A notebook remark of 1804 provides the most succinct statement:

Poetry [is] a rationalized dream dealing . . . to manifold Forms our own Feelings, that never perhaps were attached by us consciously to our own personal Selves. . . . O there are Truths below the Surface in the subject of Sympathy, & how we *become* that which we understandly [sic] behold & hear, having, how much God perhaps only knows, created part even of the Form. (Coleridge, 1957- , ii.2086)

Considering this statement in relation to Wordsworth's poem, for example, illuminates the constructive role of the feelings activated by the "container" metaphor. Wordsworth obliges us to see the self as a container degraded by the world's proximity -- a feeling that we may not previously have attached "to our own personal Selves." A similar process is at work through the assonance and the metrical organization of the poem. We become, if only for a moment, the self that Wordsworth makes us understand and hear. If our self concept is at stake, as Wordsworth surely intended it should be, then our response is "interested" in a way that Kant was unable to accept.

Coleridge's view of imagination, as reflected here and in a range of other comments, thus shows that he was able to overcome both the disinterest of Kant's aesthetic theory, and his dichotomy of mind and body. Coleridge attributed to the body, to the feelings, and to the self, essential functions in the process of imaginative thought.⁷

Situating Johnson's insights in a Coleridgean context, such as I have (all too briefly) sketched, suggests how image schemata are selected and modified, supplementing Johnson's account of how schemata are metaphorically extended to understand universes of discourse such as the clerk's predicament, or the poem by Wordsworth. As recent feminist moves towards reconstructing knowledge have suggested, incorporating the body into our discourse is both essential and urgent. The rethinking of "objectivism," which Johnson advocates, is also a principle aim of feminist philosophers such as Alison Jaggar and Susan Bordo (1989). Objectivism, they note, has served to create "dualistic ontologies that sharply separate the universal from the particular, culture from nature, mind from body, and reason from emotion." Moreover, "The body, notoriously and ubiquitously associated with the female, regularly has been cast . . . as the chief enemy of objectivity." The importance of Johnson's book lies in showing how, contrary to objectivism, the body lies at the basis of much of our normal thinking. At the same time, Johnson's account must be extended: the imagination, as Coleridge analysed it, shows us how in literary response conventional applications of metaphoric thinking (which form the substance of Johnson's book) are defamiliarized and their sources revealed. Literary texts, in this view, enable us to recover the bodily and affective sources of our thinking, and to challenge within ourselves the old, damaging, dualistic forms of thought of which Jaggar and Bordo complain. A consideration of Coleridge's accounts of feeling and the body thus opens other productive avenues on the central claim of Johnson's notable book. The implications of this wider theory for developing our understanding of literary response may prove fruitful and far-reaching.

Notes

1. More extended analyses can be found in Lakoff and Turner (1989), and Turner (1989, 1991); see also several articles in a recent issue of the *Journal of Pragmatics* 24 (December, 1995).

2. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*; Frederick Bartlett, *Remembering* (1932). An influential modern tradition in cognitive psychology has developed the term schema extensively to account for understanding of conceptual networks, narratives, and many other phenomena; Johnson's use of the term bears little relation to this work, being more comparable with Kant and Bartlett.

3. This criticism of Johnson is also made by Mostyn W. Jones (1995).

4. In a later paper, for example, Johnson states: "metaphorical understanding is so pervasive and so deeply constitutive of our intentional interactions within our environment that we are virtually unaware either of its existence or of its metaphorical character" (Johnson, 1991). This seems to rule out the more radical metaphor that is characteristic of literary texts. Don Kuiken and I have argued that the process of defamiliarization, initiated by metaphor and other linguistic features, is characteristic of literary texts (Miall and Kuiken, 1994).

5. Johnson's analysis of the clerk's narrative has been criticized for overlooking the gender issues it raises (Hayles, 1993), an issue I do not pursue here.

6. In this connection, it is significant that in the manuscript of the poem Wordsworth appears originally to have written "selves" in line 4 instead of "hearts," a reading that emphasizes the need for catharsis (Wordsworth, 1983, 150).

7. Although these components of imagination play a less prominent part in his accounts in the *Biographia* of 1817 than they do in the earlier notebook and lecture remarks: see Miall (1991).

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