Trinity Western Seminary

Metaphors we sojourn by:
Metaphor in I Peter from the perspective of Cognitive Science

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Exegesis

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Abstract

The question of the nature of metaphors in the Bible has received less attention in Biblical studies than it should have. Many discussions of the nature of exegesis either give short shrift to metaphor or simply repeat the traditional view of metaphor that goes back to Aristotle, that a metaphor is calling a thing something that it is not.

However, there has been considerable work on metaphor in the fields of linguistics and cognitive science in the last century that deserves to be addressed in the area of Biblical exegesis. This thesis is an attempt to describe some of this work, and apply it to the book of I Peter, which contains a number of interesting images that are the subject of some controversy.

The first chapter will deal with some of the approaches to metaphor in the discipline of cognitive science from three perspectives: the relation of metaphor to reality and cognition, the difference between literal language and metaphor, and the difference between so-called 'conventional' and 'novel' metaphor. The contrasts between these models and the traditional view of metaphor will prove significant in discussing the metaphors in I Peter. The second chapter will discuss Paul Ricoeur's view of metaphor. Ricoeur is one of the few who have attempted to address metaphor in the context of both Biblical studies and modern linguistics. We will discuss several responses to his work from Biblical scholars and exegetes, and show how his account of metaphor and its power is significant.

The third chapter will discuss I Peter in the context of the difference between literal language and metaphor. Because this distinction is an artifact of the traditional view of metaphor, this discussion will be used to introduce the traditional views of the metaphors of I Peter in Biblical studies, and we shall argue that some of the images that some consider literal are in fact metaphorical.

The fourth chapter will analyze the metaphors of I Peter from the perspective of the relationship between metaphor and cognition, and the distinction between novel and conventional metaphor. We will demonstrate that various approaches to metaphor taken from cognitive science help us better understand the metaphors of I Peter, and determine how they are linked and organized in the letter. Furthermore, we shall discuss how Ricoeur's view of metaphor's power allows us to examine the impact of the metaphor in I Peter and how treating the Diaspora image as the overall source of the images in I Peter reinforces the ethical and spiritual message of the book.

Chapter 1

Metaphor in cognitive science

> *The fact is, that all language about everything is analogical; we think in a series of metaphors. We can explain nothing in terms of it- self, but only in terms of other things.* — Dorothy Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*

This chapter presents a few aspects of the study of metaphor in the academic discipline of cognitive science that will be of interest for our examination of I Pe- ter. Cognitive science is a term that describes a fairly new discipline that combines linguistics, philosophy, psychology and neuroscience, and addresses itself to the study of human language and cognition in a 'bottom-up' fashion. That is, it ap- proaches linguistic and cognitive phenomena from a physical perspective, rather than an *a priori* philosophical theory. Thus cognitive science examines a much wider range of phenomena than traditional linguistics; rather than focusing on ide- alized examples of language, or assuming some sort of automatic linguistic facility

of the brain, cognitive science addresses areas from messy and hard-to-understand linguistic phenomena, and investigates the physical basis of language in the neurons of the brain.

In this thesis we shall approach the question of 'reality' from the standpoint of critical realism. Thus the first aspect of metaphor that we will examine is the relationship of language to reality. How much does language conform to the ontology[1] and structure of the objective universe, if indeed the universe has such a built-in ontology and structure? How much of language is simply a natural reflection of the universe's structure, and how much is caught up in our subjective cognition?

The second section deals with the distinction between literal and figurative language. There is a wide range of views on this question, from the traditional view that literal language is the only true objective language, and figurative language is somehow a skewing of this objectivity, to the view that all language is metaphorical.

The third aspect of metaphor of interest is the distinction between so-called 'conventional' and 'novel' metaphor. The kinds of metaphors studied by Lakoff and Johnson et al. are basic metaphors that underly a great deal of our everyday language. This kind of metaphor seems to be qualitatively different from the kinds of metaphors we associate with poetry and other 'literary' language.

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[1]Throughout this thesis 'ontology' is used as in linguistics and computing science, to denote a system of categorization.

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1.1 Language and reality

The first major axis around which this thesis will revolve is the relationship of language to reality. In the traditional view of language, language is somehow different from the rest of cognition; rather than being involved in processing our subjective perception of the world, it accurately reflects the objective structure of the universe. After a brief digression concerning terminology, we shall examine the interaction between language and cognition, and language and the objective world.

1.1.1 'Metaphor' and 'simile'

Before we can begin to examine the nature of metaphor, we must address the common English definitions of metaphor and simile. Metaphor is usually defined as "saying something is something else which it is not", which definition goes back to Aristotle, and simile as "an explicit comparison that uses the words 'like' or 'as'. If we take a closer look at these definitions, we will find that the situation is much more subtle and complex. We can illustrate this with a few simple examples.

Consider the simile "John is like a lion". If we were to follow the common English definition, we would analyze this as a straightforward comparison: there are certain qualities of lions that are also qualities of John. This may certainly be true of characteristics like strength or ferocity. But there are other attributes that this simile can be and often is used to convey that are not actually true of lions — whether or not they are true of John — like courage or nobility. Unfortunately,

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in the objective world lions are often lazy, opportunistic scavengers, letting their females do all the hunting, and living off carrion.

This simile proves to be less than straightforward in two significant ways: first, it in fact compares two entities that are not identical, which is the sense of the traditional definition of a metaphor, and second, the thing that is compared to John is not an actual lion, but a *mental image* of a lion: the qualities of courage and nobility come from our cultural definition or folk theory of a lion, which does not always correspond to reality.

This first point serves to show that the distinction between 'metaphor' and 'simile' in English is simply syntactic, and its use is largely a matter of style, with little bearing on the meaning of any particular example. If we say "John is a beanpole", we attribute to John two qualities of beanpoles, namely tallness and thinness, that happen to be qualities of actual real-world beanpoles. Thus the metaphoricity of any particular figure of speech lies not in its syntax, but is related to how well our mental processes correspond to reality.

The second point above, along with this example, illustrates the idea, which we will explore in greater depth in the following sections, that our understanding of metaphors is not so much a matter of objective logic, but a subjective cognitive process.

1.1.2 Language and cognition

The emphasis on syntax over semantics has to a large extent limited the ability of linguistics in the latter half of this century to examine fully more fundamental

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linguistic phenomena like figurative language. As Fauconnier (1997) points out, the Chomskyan narrowness of focus on syntax is merely description of the form of language without an examination of the content. It is like studying mathematics by learning formulas by rote without learning any of the underlying set theory.

Furthermore, concentrating solely on syntax precludes any discussion of the relationship between language and cognition. This is one of the major themes we shall explore in this thesis. In the history of the study of language, there has been a shift from the analysis of language as bound up with cognition to purely examining syntax, and recently, back to cognition again, as turner observes:

> Aristotle's goal was to be able to know how *figures of diction* connect with *figures of thought*. Cicero held that rhetoric's beginning...is mental *invention* or *conception*. He explored some processes by which we *invent*.
>
> Rhetoric degenerated (as Paul Ricoeur chronicles in chapter 2 of *The Rule of Metaphor*) when it abandoned thought for style. Inattentive to mind underlying surface forms of language, rhetoric reduced itself to cataloging what it took to be kinds of surface wordplay as if they had no analogues in cognition (1987, 3).

Visual metaphors

One of the most persuasive arguments for the importance of cognition in human linguistic processes is the existence, in fact the plethora, of metaphors that

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are primarily visual in nature (Lakoff: 1993). That is, metaphors that may only be understood by analyzing a "mental image".

If we define a metaphor to be some sort of 'implied comparison', a sort of syntactic shorthand that compares the attributes of two things, we quickly run into difficulties if we move beyond simple metaphors like "John is a lion", and consider visual metaphors. Even the simplest of these pose considerable difficulty. Consider, for example, a metaphor like "The people on the street below were like columns of ants moving along the sidewalk" (Ortony: 1984, 455). If we enumerated all the qualities of the people and compared them to those of ants, the only correspondences we would be able to find would be those that arise from our *mental image* of the people — their smallness, business and foreshortedness. These attributes arise entirely from our subjective mental conception, and they are entirely contingent on our particular situation — someone at ground level would have a far different view of the people than ours, which presumably arises from our being in a high place looking down on the sidewalk.

When we consider Indurkhya (1992, 42)'s discussion of the poem *Seascape* by Stephen Spender, we find that the metaphor of the ocean as a harp involves the juxtaposition of a number of sensory images. The long lines of the waves are compared to the strings of a harp, and the sounds of the ocean waves to its gentle strumming. This implies two things: first, the metaphor clearly does not consist of comparing features of the two objects. The language of the poem does not convey a great deal of propositional content, but instead invokes other non-linguistic areas of our mind, in that it creates novel mental images in both the visual and auditory

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realms, and invites the reader to infer correspondences between those mental images rather than some logical description of seas and harps.

Second, the way in which the metaphor evokes its meaning leads us to another of the themes of this thesis: when we read the poem for the first time, its words evoke new images and relationships in our mind *that did not exist prior to our exposure to the metaphor.* An understanding of the creation of new meaning through what is called 'novel' as opposed to 'conventional' metaphor – the kinds of metaphors we find in poetry as opposed to those we use in everyday speech, for example (Lakoff and Turner: 1989, 80) — has immediate relevance to our examination of I Peter, for two primary reasons. First, we immediately understand the metaphor without any explanation, and second, we can correctly use the metaphor in new speech and structures.

Conclusion

If we think about cognitive nature of language a bit further, it becomes clear that the traditional non-cognitive view of metaphor is actually self-contradictory. In this view understanding a metaphor requires a great deal of extra-linguistic processing to happen. Even if a metaphor were a straightforward correlation between the attributes of objects, we need an enormous store of world knowledge in order to make sense of the metaphor. Thus the traditional view requires much *more* cognitive processing than newer perspectives which hold that metaphor is simply one of the, or even the primary, means of cognition itself. And surely no two people's store of real-world knowledge will be identical, and therefore understanding

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of metaphor is a subjective cognitive process, no matter which way one looks at it.

Thus if we are to discuss figurative language and metaphor in any meaningful way we must examine the so-called "extralinguistic" factors — which would be more accurately called extra-syntactic factors — and examine the role that cognition plays in our everyday understanding of language.

1.1.3   Objective and subjective reality

The second question we must address in any discussion of the cognitive nature of metaphor is the subjectivity of thought and language: *how much* of language and communication is purely contingent on subjective cognition? That is, how much do the objects and structures of language reflect "reality", the objective world, and how much of what we think and communicate is actually defined or even created by our language?

'Objectivism'

The idea that the categories of our language are arbitrary and not directly related to the real world might seem counter-intuitive and and contrary to common sense, but when we examine how we use language we find that a great deal of language, indeed the vast majority, is spent dealing with things other than the prosaic everyday 'objective' world: "For instance, [in] scientific and literary imagination, social interaction, argumentation, proof and persuasion, poetry, swearing, *potential* reference [to reality] is sufficient" (Fauconnier: 1997, 69). That is, all these activities do not so much reflect our interactions with reality, but with our conception

of reality. The essence of science is, of course, the business of describing elaborate mental models that are meant to correspond with the natural world. Our social structures are often arbitrary elaborations on the few fundamentals of human existence. Argumentation makes use of intricate mental maps of possible states of being.

There is, of course, a wide continuum of views on this issue, even within linguistics. There continue to be linguists and philosophers who maintain that language is directly connected to objective reality, such as Searle (1993). However, this view has been much challenged in this century. Sapir and Whorf's famous theory that different languages actually conceived of the world in entirely distinct structures and categories led eventually to the postmodern idea that the universe itself was an arbitrary creation of cognition.

Lakoff (1987, chs 12–13) goes to great lengths to argue against the idea that categories in language reflect objective categories in nature. His first argument is based on so-called 'institutional facts'. These are facts about the universe that are true, and made true, *only* through the agency of human language. For example, many of our social structures are completely arbitrary and are maintained by human communication, as opposed to any natural structure.[2]

In addition to structures that arise from human language, it is extremely hard, if not downright impossible, to find an example of a system of categorization that

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[2]Even kinship, though it arises from nature, is assigned much of its structure in an arbitrary manner. For more on the interaction between cognition and nature, see Indurkhya's view in this section below.

accurately reflects the real world.[3] Our system of biological classification, for example, is in a state of upheaval as the traditional system, based on examining the physical characteristics of particular animals and plants to decide the boundaries between species, conflicts in many areas with newer systems based on evolutionary theory.

As Green and Vervaeke (1997) point out, Lakoff perhaps over-emphasizes the significance of some of his examples, and his case against objectivism is not as clear-cut as he would like. Another example of the difficulty of assigning classes to the objective world that is much noted in this context is the nature of colour. Studies by Berlin and Kay in the 1960's showed that cultures often divide the visible spectrum in arbitrary ways (Lakoff: 1987, 24). This has been often cited to support the idea that language has no objective correspondence to the real world. To those in the physical sciences, this example is rather bemusing. Our perception of colour happens by means of three simple chemicals that respond to specific[4] frequencies of electromagnetic radiation. All humans can perceive the same range of the electromagnetic spectrum, and how they divide up that absolute range, and what they call those divisions, have no effect on their perception of a particular frequency of light (Campbell: 1996, 1034).

However, studying language it quickly becomes obvious that pure objectivism cannot be sustained. If we maintain that language is purely objective, we quickly

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[3]Even trivial systems of categorization, like the integral numbers, are less than straightforward. We can see that integers accurately describe various numbers of objects in the world. But what is an object?

[4]Absolute!

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begin to encounter metaphors that are almost impossible to interpret. Searle, for instance, has problems with even apparently simple metaphors like "Sally is a block of ice", used in an emotional context (Searle: 1993), and must develop an extensive and convoluted explanation of how the objective qualities of a block of ice may be interpreted as other qualities which may then be applied to a woman named Sally or compared to her objective qualities.

If we posit that the metaphor in question does not function on the level of the objective physical world, we can understand it much more readily. If we consider the metaphor as comparing our mental images of a block of ice and of Sally, and understand that we often make use of combinations of metaphors, we can see that another common metaphor — that of comparing temperature to personality traits — we immediately see the connection between the coldness of the block of ice and Sally's unfriendly nature. This correlation of personality and temperature is not some objective fact about the universe, but a subjective perception that happens to be common among many speakers of English, and thus allows us to understand the metaphor.

Language as subjective

If, then, language is subjective, to what degree is it so? Is the external world a creation of our minds? The fact that we can and do communicate and cooperate with other people suggests that we do indeed have some sort of connection to the real world. There does seem to be a commonality to human experience that allows us to communicate by means of language and translate between language

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and cultures.[5]

Some have attempted to define a set of 'universal' semantic primitives (Goddard: 1996, 145). While it is impractical to attempt to define such a set that is totally complete, certain basic things — food, shelter, kinship, etc. are universal in human experience and find expression in all cultures and languages. Though the categories and expressions we use to deal with those things vary widely, the underlying phenomena remain the same.

Lakoff, Johnson and those who build on their work would say that all thought that is not directly concerned with such basic physical phenomena is metaphorical and makes use of the vocabulary of the basic to talk about higher-level concepts (Lakoff and Johnson: 1999). Others would not necessarily go so far as to maintain that all thought is built up from purely physical phenomena. But the correspondence of language to the world is still an important concern. If our language does not precisely reflect the objective world, then how much does it correspond in part? Why is it that different cultures have such widely different systems of categorization and organization of the world? How is it possible for linguistic and conceptual systems to be both arbitrary and flexible and yet be governed and constrained by the objective world?

Our cognition is indeed constrained by the real world. As Turner (1987, 9) notes, our metaphors do seem to be structured, and this structure seems to be in some way independent of just culture. We do have a very well-developed ability to determine which metaphors make sense and which do not — viz. Turner's pair

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[5]Not to mention sending space probes to crash with pinpoint accuracy on distant worlds.

of metaphors "death is the mother of beauty", for which we are immediately able to think of an interpretation, and "death is the fraternal twin brother of beauty", which is opaque: any explanation we might make for its interpretation seems contrived and artificial.

A middle ground

One approach that seems to make a good deal of sense is given by Indurkhya (1994), building on the work of Piaget, Black and Ricoeur. In his view, it is human cognition that imposes an ontology on the world — what the definition of an "object" is, for example, and how various types of objects relate to each other in the world. Then once this ontology has been imposed on the world, and a structure drawn from it on the basis of that ontology, it is the real world that determines how that structure works, and how changes in the world affect cognition.

The example that Indurkhya uses to illustrate this idea is the system of latitude and longitude. This is a completely arbitrary system, derived entirely from human cognition and artificially imposed on our model of the world. However, once this ontology and structure have been imposed on the world, it is the world that determines how the structure applies to human cognition. It is the real world that determines whether two locations are on the same line of latitude or not, for example.

This approach is a good compromise between the two extremes of objectivity and subjectivity. It is related to the idea of how scientific theories work — a scientific theory is an invented approximation that seeks to explain the world in terms

of human concepts. However, it is the real world that determines how useful these theories will be, inasmuch as their internal consistency allows them to match the real world.

1.2   Literal and figurative language

The second major axis around which our discussion will revolve is the distinction between literal and non-literal language. This distinction is so convenient and commonly used that at first glance it seems obvious. "The man at table seven wants a cup of coffee" is a literal sentence. "The ham sandwich wants a cup of coffee" is not.[6] However, the validity of the distinction has direct bearing on the study of metaphor as a particular example of non-literal language. In this area there is likewise a continuum between two theoretical extremes.

1.2.1   The traditional view

To the proponents of the traditional 'objectivist' approach, the distinction between literal and non-literal language is obvious and necessary – our everyday language is strictly literal, and the use of non-literal language is exceptional and extralinguistic in nature. Searle (1993, 83) asks, "Why do we use expressions metaphorically instead of saying exactly and literally what we mean?"

In this view, literal language is seen as the 'obvious', 'right' meaning of an utterance, and figurative language to be some sort of skewed, anomalous usage.

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[6] It could be interpreted as a metonymy, if the man at table seven had ordered a ham sandwich.

The distinction is based on objectivism, that is, that literal language is language that best reflects the objective categories of the world.

The process of understanding figurative language, and metaphor in particular, is then a process of elimination, so to speak. In order to understand a sentence like 'John is a lion', one must first construct a literal interpretation of the sentence. In this case, that interpretation will be contradictory, since the natural class of humans, of which John is a member, does not intersect the natural class of lions. Therefore, the sentence must be figurative if any meaning at all is to be drawn from it, and one must then enumerate all of John's qualities, and a lions, and find appropriate correspondences (Fass: 1997, 135).[7] This step-wise model of understanding metaphor is what Gibbs (1994, 82) calls the 'Standard Pragmatic Model'.

Thus a non-literal utterance can be understood only by first attempting to derive a literal meaning for it, and when that process fails, a figurative meaning must be searched for. There are, however, studies that cast doubt on this idea from the standpoint of actual physical processes. Many studies have shown that it makes no difference in the time to process an utterance whether that utterance is literal or metaphorical (Gibbs: 1994, 87).

1.2.2   Lakoff *et al.*

Quite a different position from the traditional one is held by those who come out of the school of thought inspired by the seminal book *Metaphors we live by*, by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). In their view, there is a more or less functional dis-

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[7]The process is, of course, more complicated than that.

tinction between the literal and metaphorical, but the distinction is drawn in quite a different manner from that of the traditional approach.

Lakoff et al. present an extensive array of counter examples to the idea that metaphors or other figures of speech are merely some kind of skewing or anomalous usage of a preexisting 'literal' meaning of an utterance, in that there are utterances that have no possible literal interpretation, and there are also utterances that have *both* literal and metaphorical interpretations.

Lakoff's definition of a metaphor is more or less as follows: a concept in a particular domain, such as the realm of physical experience, is metaphorical, rather than literal, when it is used to structure a concept in another domain, such as the realm of emotion (Lakoff and Johnson: 1980, 45). That is, when the second concept is thought of in terms of the ontology and structure of the first. The only literal language, therefore, is that dealing with fundamental physical phenomena related to our experience as beings in the physical world. All thought that does not directly deal with these concepts, that is more abstract, consists of metaphor upon metaphor built up on the foundation of those few fundamental phenomena. Thus from the basic metaphor ANGER IS HEAT OF FLUID IN A CONTAINER (Lakoff: 1987, 384), for example, Lakoff discovers the motivation for dozens of English expressions of anger like "She got *all steamed up*" or "I *blew my stack*".

This definition underlies Lakoff's entire theoretical framework, and is closely tied in to his many and diverse arguments against objectivism: since so much of our thought is metaphor, the notion of universal objective categories must give way to the realization that the categories that describe a particular non-physical concept

must depend on the particular metaphor used to describe it.

Idealized Cognitive Models

Lakoff extends these ideas into a model of cognition that makes use of what he calls Idealized Cognitive Models, or ICMs (Lakoff: 1987, 68). These are cognitive structures that represent the 'cluster' of concepts that we usually think of as a category. By examining the various ways that these structures are organized, we can do away with many of the seeming paradoxes that are found in the objectivist view of categories: for instance, the proverbial question of whether a penguin is a bird. In a more serious example, Lakoff cites an Australian Aboriginal language one of whose noun classes includes "fire, women and dangerous things." In the traditional account there would be no explanation for how such a category could be analyzed.

Lakoff's ICMs are structured in several ways, and in several different patterns or topologies. The structures can be organized in terms of propositional content: "a bird has feathers and flies". They can be organized by means of image-schemas, like those derived from Langacker (1986)'s cognitive grammar. A large part of the organization of such concepts is made up of metonymic and metaphorical relationships. There is usually one 'prototypical' concept that tends to be associated with the whole cluster — a metonymic relation — and the conflict between this prototype and the real world is what gives rise to problems (Lakoff: 1987, 70–71, 79).

Lakoff's account solves them by recognizing that the concept cluster is just that: a cluster of related but not necessarily identical concepts. They may not necessarily all be related to every other concept in the cluster, but may be organized linearly

or radially or in more complex fashions. It is also important to recognize that while more peripheral concepts may not be *predicted* by more central ones, they will always be *motivated* by them

1.2.3   The interactionist approach

In general the so-called 'interactionist' approach to figurative language, which draws on the work of Piaget, Black (1981) and Ricoeur, takes a rather middle-of-the-road approach to the distinction between literal and metaphorical language. Although some like Kittay (1987) maintain the need for a distinction between literal and figurative language, their distinction is more practical rather than reflecting some kind of fundamental difference between the two kinds of language.

One general approach of interactionists is to view the metaphorical process as an interaction between mental states that represent, to a greater or lesser degree, some aspect of the real world (Indurkhya: 1992, 86). Thus the idea of 'literal language', while still useful as a convenient heuristic, may simply be seen as the limiting case of the more general machinery of cognition, where a mental structure corresponds in a culturally accepted way to the real world.

1.3   Conventional and novel metaphor

The third major axis around which this thesis will revolve is the distinction between the so-called 'conventional' and 'novel' metaphor. This distinction is an important one, for two reasons: first, because it introduces the element of time into

our discussion of metaphor. When we examine a metaphor, and particularly its effect on the reader, it is important to determine whether or not this metaphor has a 'history'; whether or not readers will have seen it before. Second, examining the process by which a novel metaphor becomes transformed into a conventional one sheds considerable light on the nature of metaphor as a fundamental cognitive process.

1.3.1   Metaphors we live by

A 'conventional' metaphor is a metaphor of the kind to which Lakoff and Johnson (1980) first directed their attention: a metaphor that has become so much a part of a language that its understanding and use are unconscious and automatic. This kind of metaphor is not 'dead'; this is not the kind of frozen idiom exemplified by phrases like "kick the bucket", which has a physical historical origin. Rather, conventional metaphors form a large part — if one follows Lakoff et. al., the greater part — of cognition itself.

Lakoff (1987); Lakoff and Johnson (1980); Lakoff and Turner (1989) identify a number of basic metaphors that motivate a large number of figurative usages in English. For example, the metaphor ANGER IS HEAT is the basis of such phrases as "Don't get *hot under the collar*", "Billy's a *hothead*", "They were having a *heated argument*", etc.

These basic metaphors are often combined in various relations to derive many more idiomatic expressions. The metaphor ANGER IS HEAT may be combined with other emotional metaphors to produce the generalization EMOTION IS TEM-

PERATURE, and thus we speak of 'warm' or 'cool' personalities. EMOTION IS TEMPERATURE may be combined with another basic metaphor TEMPERATURE IS COLOUR to produce the conjunction EMOTION IS COLOUR: "I'm feeling blue today", "I saw red".

It is one of the central axioms of Lakoff's approach that these basic metaphors are all the result of immediate physical experience. Thus ANGER IS HEAT derives from the fact that one's face may grow hot and red when angry, and TEMPERATURE IS COLOUR comes from observing the colours of cold things like water and ice and hot things like fire and hot metal. These basic physical perceptions are then used in metaphors to describe abstract concepts: EMOTION IS COLOUR is not as directly related to physical experience as its more basic constituents.

In Lakoff's view, there are a great many possible combinations of these basic metaphors. ANGER IS HEAT, for example, may be combined with another basic metaphor THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS to produce ANGER IS HEAT OF FLUID IN A CONTAINER: "She got *all steamed up*", "I *blew my top*" (Lakoff: 1987, 385). It is worth noting, however, that such metaphors are linked to their own particular language and culture. Indeed this is reasonable: since there are so many possible human interactions with the environment, each language and culture has 'chosen' a certain subset of those interactions for its basic metaphors. For example, in certain cultures in West Africa, a predominant metaphor for emotion is EMOTION IS PHYSICAL POSTURE OF THE LIVER (H. G. Tisher, personal communication). Thus one would say "My liver fell down" instead of "I'm feeling blue". Or "My liver is lying down at ease" instead of "I'm

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really up today".[8]

1.3.2   Poetic metaphor

The second kind of metaphor we will examine is what is called 'novel' or 'poetic' metaphor. This is what we usually think of when we examine metaphors in literature. Novel metaphors are just that — they are new metaphors that do not already exist in the relevant culture or language. Novel metaphors are the kind of metaphors which we speak of when we talk of the metaphorical richness of a particular piece of literature; they are what make poetry interesting — indeed, they are the essence of poetry, for if we could say what we meant in a non-figurative fashion, we would probably do so.

The crucial issue we find in examining novel metaphors is the question of how it is that we can immediately understand a novel metaphor, even though it may be completely original. There are two aspects to this question. First, what is the cognitive process by which we understand the metaphor, and can almost automatically derive an explanation of the motivation of the metaphor? Second, given the ability to come up with possible motivations, how do we judge between all the possible explanations of a metaphor, and decide which is right, or even if the metaphor is completely invalid? We shall examine two views of metaphor here, and discuss the idea of the validity of a metaphor in §2.1.2.

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[8]Yet another metaphor in English: EMOTION IS HEIGHT.

Lakoff's approach

This first account of novel metaphor is a bottom-up approach. Given a particular metaphor, can we discover a motivation for its meaning? Lakoff and Turner (1989) devote a whole book to examining how Lakoff's account of conventional metaphor may be used to describe the understanding of novel metaphors. In their account, a novel metaphor is essentially a new instantiation, *mutatis mutandis*, of a more basic metaphor.

Lakoff then extends this concept of basic metaphors into multiple dimensions. The most low-level metaphors — that is, the most generic metaphors: EVENTS ARE ACTIONS is what Lakoff and Turner call a low-level metaphor, as opposed to one less generic like LIFE IS A JOURNEY — have a number of 'slots' or parts whose structure determines the structure of the 'target', the specific combination of things that when interpreted through the structure of the original create the particular instance of the metaphor (Lakoff and Turner: 1989, 80).

Thus the basic metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, when combined with the particular target domain of a carriage ride, provides the main metaphor in Emily Dickinson's poem "Because I could not stop for Death":

> Because I could not stop for Death—
> He kindly stopped for me—
> The Carriage held but just Ourselves—
> And Immortality.

Even though the overall image in the poem is entirely original, the underlying

metaphor is common in English, and there are many other works that have used it to produce other metaphorical images: Robert Frost's

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by

and Dante's

In the middle of life's road,

I found myself in a dark wood.

and even Jesus'

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. — Matthew 7:13–14

Creation of Similarity

Lakoff's approach serves to facilitate an understanding of a metaphor after the fact. It is concerned with the motivation of a metaphor that we have already understood. However, it is also necessary to address the means by which we actually understand the metaphor in the first place, and the means by which we can distinguish good or 'valid' metaphors from invalid ones.[9]

Indurkhya (1992)'s account of novel metaphors, which he calls "similarity-creation metaphors", because they create new similarities in the mind of the reader

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[9]See §2.1.2.

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that did not exist before exposure to the metaphor, considers cognition to operate by means of various layers of structures which have their own ontology and structure, from the objective structure of the actual environment, through our physical perceptual structures whose ontology and structure are determined by physical constraints, such as the particular frequencies of light that activate neurons in the retina, thus producing our concept of colour, to our more abstract concepts and thought. Much of thought and communication consists of various mappings and relationships between these networks.

In Indurkhya's account, our understanding of metaphors is a case of the cognitive relation he calls 'projection'. This is a relation between two concepts where the structure of the first concept is applied to the second, and the ontology — the interpretation of the individual parts and their relations to the real world — of the second structure is varied to maintain the internal consistency of the target concept as a whole (Indurkhya: 1992, 129).

In his account of Spender's poem *Seascape*, already cited in §1.1.2, Indurkhya notes that our combined concept of ocean and harp will be internally inconsistent if we try to interpret all the constituent concepts in their original manner. However, if we change our interpretation of some of the concepts in the text of the poem, we can maintain the consistency of the new concept: for example, we can change the interpretation of the sun shining on waves of the sea so that the waves actually are, in our imagination, plucked harp strings. Aided by the fact that the both waves and harp strings look like a series of parallel lines, and the sounds they make are both regular in time and varied in pitch and produce a soothing effect on the listener, we

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can maintain the superposition of the two images.

This has interesting implications for cognition:

> A perceptual acquaintance with the domain of interpretation is necessary for understanding a metaphor, for it is this perceptual acquaintance that makes it possible to imagine the domain vividly (Indurkhya: 1994, 134).

Thus understanding the metaphor is entirely dependent on both cognitive ability and the objective world: if we never experienced the real-world ocean and harp, we would not be able to combine them in an entirely unrealistic way to form the new metaphor.

1.4 Summary

How does all this tie in with our examination of I Peter? The relationship between language and reality is crucially important to Biblical exegesis. Scripture claims to speak truthfully about both the physical and spiritual worlds, but it uses a staggering range of different linguistic phenomena, in a wide variety of genres and both literal and figurative language.

As scripture was written by human beings, it is important to attempt to understand the interaction between language and cognition in the mind of readers and writers. And the relation of language to objective reality becomes crucial when a text addresses not only the physical world, but also the supernatural; not only temporal causality, but eternity. As even the most prosaic of texts uses figurative

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language to a certain extent, it is important to be able to distinguish between the literal and figurative, if that distinction is valid, or if it is not, to avoid being led astray by falsely discriminating between the two.

The benefit of more recent approaches to cognition and metaphor is that they are flexible enough to deal with paradoxes and 'prototype effects' that traditional systems of classification and understandings of metaphor did not. Thus traditional approaches to metaphor might treat the sudden inclusion of the metaphor of 'living stones' in I Peter 2:4 in a section that is mostly made up of domestic images drawn from the idea of a 'household' as unrelated to them. As we shall see in §3.2.1, this image is in fact a part of the cluster of concepts invoked by the concept of the household.

The interpretation of a text is also influenced by time. Words and expressions change their meanings over time, and metaphors that were novel once become conventional and frozen. If we are to correctly interpret a text, we must not only consider the time when it was written, but whether it contains the first — or a very early — usage of a particular metaphor, because these factors make a crucial difference to the way in which it will have been understood by readers.

Chapter 2

Metaphor in biblical studies

The problem of metaphor has not really received as much attention — in conservative Biblical studies, at any rate — as it should have. There have been very few attempts to analyze metaphor in the context of modern linguistics. A recent conservative work on Biblical interpretation, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, devotes very little space to metaphor, and basically repeats the Aristotelian definition that a metaphor is calling something something else that it is not, and a simile is using the word 'like' to compare two things (Osborne: 1991, 103).

An important study of Biblical interpretation, Caird (1980)'s *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* goes into somewhat more depth. However, as we shall see in §3.1.2, Caird's approach to interpreting metaphor is very close to the traditional step-wise model of understanding metaphor, Gibbs (1994, 82)'s 'Standard Pragmatic Model'.

Therefore, one of the most important recent figures in the study of metaphor

and how it relates to Biblical exegesis is the French philosopher, Biblical critic and linguist Paul Ricoeur. He is a major figure in the Interactionist approach to metaphor in cognitive science and linguistics. His influence on Biblical criticism is extremely important.

As Vanhoozer notes in his extensive analysis of Ricoeur's philosophy and theology, Ricoeur has always been a mediator and conciliator between seemingly contradictory viewpoints, gleaning truth from many areas and opinions, and combining it in new and surprising ways. It is ironic, then, that the two aspects of Ricoeur's life and work, the linguistic or philosophical and the theological, are almost never addressed together. Linguists make use of Ricoeur extensively, but ignore the origin and goal of his work, which is Biblical criticism and exegesis. Biblical critics ignite controversy over his work while ignoring its linguistic language and context (1990, 3).

This chapter will address Ricoeur's view of metaphor, and two responses to it by Biblical scholars, Vanhoozer and Thiselton. As much of conservative exegesis either ignores the significance of metaphor and figurative language (see §2.2.3) or simply holds to the traditional view of metaphor as an 'implied comparison', Ricoeur's work and others' responses to it will be of greater significance to this thesis than the traditional view, as Ricoeur's work addresses more recent philosophical and linguistic thought.

2.1 Metaphor and reality

2.1.1 Ricoeur's approach

The power of metaphor

One of the most fundamental presuppositions of Ricoeur's view of metaphor is the notion that polysemy and figurative language are fundamental characteristics of human language, rather than anomalies or abberations (Vanhoozer: 1990, 58). The validity of this claim is evident even from a merely empirical perspective — the fundamental problem in almost every area of linguistics, from hermeneutics to natural language processing, is ambiguity — there is no language whose syntax is unambiguous and whose words each have one precise and well-defined meaning.

In Ricoeur's view, this characteristic in fact gives language its power. If the defining characteristic of humanity is the ability, or perhaps the propensity, of humans to project their thought into the hypothetical, to make plans and consider possible states of being, then non-literal language should be regarded as the most basic and the most fundamentally human aspect of language (Ricoeur: 1965, "The image of God and the epic of Man"). This is the main theme of Ricoeur's treatment of metaphor: the idea that figurative language, metaphor and poetry give language access to the 'possible'. By this he means that reality is not only made up of what the physical universe *is*, but also what it could be, and is becoming.

Thus poetic as opposed to scientific language is more basic, valid and powerful in its relationship to reality, in that the non-literal gives language the "capacity

for meaningfulness" (Vanhoozer: 1990, 59). Scientific language does not tell us anything new about the world — it is a striking feature of the nature of scientific language, as Kuhn (1970) observes, that major advances in science are most often made as a result of changing the 'paradigm' of a scientific field, that is, the basic metaphor that makes up the predominant model of the particular area of interest. Only when the new metaphor has been developed can new scientific knowledge be uncovered and elaborated upon. Even trivial applications of scientific theory — what Kuhn calls 'normal science' — make use of metaphorical processes, and the cognitive process of metaphor is bound up with science and scientific thought (Bradie: 1998).

The power of metaphor is that it is not restricted to the physical empirical world — that which we already know about — but it refers to an entirely different 'layer' of reality, the reality of what might be. In this, Ricoeur believes, poetic language brings us back to a connection with the world that was lost with Descartes' sharp distinction between subject and object (Ricoeur: 1965, 207). In using poetic language, we become active participants in the ongoing evolution of the universe, since we have the power to redescribe and indeed recreate, at least in part, the physical universe in accordance with and by means of our language.

This approach to the whole area of poetic and metaphorical language tends to effect a dramatic reversal in one's view of the relative value of poetry and science. Ever since the philosophers of the Enlightenment came to regard metaphor as a deviant and even deceptive use of language, scientific and logical language has been sometimes considered the only way to express 'truth' or 'reality' in language.

On the other hand, as Prickett (1986, 204) notes, the Romantic reaction against the Enlightenment that preserved the idea that poetry is not a "retreat from reality", but in fact constitutes and creates it, was informed by Biblical criticism! As scientific language became increasingly more valued over the poetic, Biblical criticism began to question the empirical reality or validity of poetic or figurative passages or utterances in the Bible.

Visual Metaphor

As an aside, it is interesting to contrast Ricoeur's view of visual metaphor with the views we described in Chapter 1. In the view of Lakoff and those who treat metaphors as arising from the human experience of embodiment, visual metaphors arise from the juxtaposition of two or more visual images or memories, which resulting image is then expressed verbally. Ricoeur, on the other hand, views words as primary: the essential constituents of even visual metaphors. In his view, it is the verbal metaphor that produces the image in the brain of the reader (Ricoeur: 1977, 209).

While it is true that the visual images that accompany a novel metaphor are drawn from experience, the whole point of its being a metaphor is that the resulting concept is something new, outside our experience. In the case of visual metaphors, the resulting image is often something entirely impossible and contrary to anything one could physically experience in the real world. The image of the sea as a harp, for example, that we discussed in §1.1.2 is physically quite absurd. Furthermore, the images that are produced by the metaphor need not even necessarily

arise from experience, but from imagination — people often construct mental images of things they hear and read without ever having seen them, or even pictures of them.

2.1.2 Ambiguities in Ricoeur's view of reference

In his concern to determine just what Ricoeur's view of the relation of metaphor to reality is, Vanhoozer (1990) identifies several ambiguities in Ricoeur's account of reference in metaphor: "By 'reference' does Ricoeur mean to say that metaphors correspond to the way the world *actually* is?" (70) This question, of course, is correspondingly ambiguous; what does Vanhoozer mean by the 'actual world'? Does he mean the physical world, or does he include other realities, such as God's, for instance? If metaphors give us access to a level of reality which is different from the physical world, but no less 'real', then the question is not very useful — metaphors certainly refer to the possible part of 'the world'.

However, it seems to be clear from Vanhoozer's further discussion that what he means by the 'actual world' is the *physical* world. The first ambiguity that he addresses is the question of whether metaphors refer to the way the world is, or to the way the world might be. The question is only meaningful if one ignores Ricoeur's multi-layer view of the universe to which metaphors give access. It seems that Vanhoozer's real dilemma is the relation between the two layers of reality. For the next question he asks is whether metaphors actually create the world in their image, as it were. It seems the question really is: how much, and in what fashion, does the possible impinge upon and constrain the nature and evolution of the

physical?

This question is at the core of Vanhoozer's critique of the interaction of Ricoeur's theory with theology and Biblical studies, as we shall see. In addition, Vanhoozer raises another interesting question: if metaphors describe the world as it is, that is, if metaphor can be a vehicle for 'metaphysical' discussion, then what is the status of philosophy (80)? His actual word in this question is 'poetry', which is a bit of sleight-of-hand, given that his previous discussion has been concerned with the specific nature of metaphor. Ignoring the fact that much of philosophy is itself carried out by means of metaphor,[1] and assuming that Vanhoozer means by philosophy the attempt to describe what *is* in a more literal fashion, he seems to be left with a faint unease that poetry, as Heidegger proposed, might replace philosophy.

Ricoeur's approach to the issue is to affirm the two disciplines' complementary roles: philosophy serves to interpret and explicate the meaning of the universe, meaning that metaphor and poetry create. Metaphor, being necessarily 'more' than its interpretation, keeps the meaning alive and powerful, preserving the connection to the dynamism of the world of the possible (Ricoeur: 1977, 302).

Vanhoozer then criticizes Ricoeur for a failure to address the issue of 'bad' metaphors: "Metaphor for Ricoeur can apparently do no wrong." He is concerned with the relationship between metaphor and a theology that purports to describe absolute truth — how are we supposed to tell if a metaphor that is part of such a theology, or is the basis for part of it, actually does describe reality? As we shall

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[1] See Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 543)'s discussion of Paul DeMan's analysis of how philosophy uses metaphors.

see in §2.1.3, where we discuss the interaction of metaphor with theology in more detail, an answer to this question is to a large extent unnecessary. Vanhoozer's criterion for the 'goodness' of a metaphor, as we have seen, is how well it corresponds to reality. However, when we interpret a metaphor it is not the universe to which the metaphor is compared and must correspond and with which it must remain consistent, but rather our own cognitive structures — the presuppositions, beliefs, concepts and experiences that we have built up over a lifetime. We will naturally and automatically reject a metaphor that is not consistent with our pre-existing cognitive makeup. So a Christian like Vanhoozer would reflexively reject a metaphor like "God is a snail", because it would be extremely hard to derive an interpretation for the metaphor that would be consistent with Vanhoozer's beliefs.[2]

Of course, the validity of any metaphor must also be subject to the context in which it is used; a metaphor may be valid in the context of sarcasm or irony that would otherwise be invalid, for example.

It is not so much that Ricoeur believes that a new metaphor must automatically impose a new truth on the world — since a metaphor is a description of the *possible*, its instantiation in the physical must be dependent on extra-metaphorical factors — but that we will recognize that truth when we see it based on our prior experience, even though the particular concept it brings is new to us.[3] The validity

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[2]To a snail, of course, the case would be entirely different. It is worthwhile to reflect on the fact that metaphors that are very meaningful in the context of one culture may very well be invalid for another.

[3]Gödel's Theorem is worth noting here: in any symbolic system it will be possible to express truths that cannot be proven from within the system (Kline: 1980, 260–264).

of a metaphor depends on an interaction between the possible, the physical *and* the nature of the interpreter.

Vanhoozer's primary criticism of Ricoeur's approach to metaphor is in his account of reference, or metaphor's relationship to the physical world, which Vanhoozer doesn't believe Ricoeur addresses completely enough. His source of concern, of course, is the application of Ricoeur's approach to Biblical exegesis. Given the history of the subject, and Ricoeur's prominence in the endeavor of integrating linguistics with Biblical criticism, Vanhoozer cannot be blamed for wishing to establish the nature of Ricoeur's idea of reference. Since Ricoeur's view of narrative is an extension of his ideas about metaphor, his interpretation of the gospels' historicity, which is one of the main areas of controversy in Biblical criticism, in Vanhoozer's view is dependent on the nature of reference in the model of metaphor.

However, as Thiselton (1992) makes clear in his analysis of Vanhoozer's view of Ricoeur, at the level of Ricoeur's interest in the ability of a narrative, or at the most basic level, a metaphor's ability to "provide power, engagement, and transformation for the reader" (359), an answer to the question of historicity or the relationship of metaphorical truth to physical reality is unnecessary. Ricoeur certainly addresses the issue of historicity elsewhere, as Thiselton makes clear. But the metaphorical power of a text is not necessarily linked to its historicity. That is, a text's power to create new meaning, by means of the words and concepts it juxtaposes in the mind, is not dependent on the truth or falsity of any truth-claims the text may make — and obviously, a text may consist of far more than propositional truth claims; it is almost the definition of metaphor that its truth claims are on the

surface anomalous — if viewed from the traditional literal/figurative dichotomy; of course, in Ricoeur's view metaphorical truth just as true as logical truth. Whether or not a reader allows the meaning created by the metaphor to affect judgment or belief or behavior in further thought and life is dependent on other factors than the meaning of the metaphor itself. As we have said before, the metaphor as a whole must be consistent with one's knowledge of the world. But one cannot judge the truth of a text simply on the basis of its degree of metaphoricity.

2.1.3   Metaphor and theology

That said, we must draw attention to the unique power of metaphor in theology, and in particular in Christian theology. As Vanhoozer himself recognizes, because metaphor extends our thought and language into the realm of the possible, "it is ideally suited to be the discourse of a theology that is oriented to eschatology." At the most basic level, it is plain that eschatalogical writing is heavily metaphorical. Since Christian eschatology contemplates the interaction of the physical world with realities that we have little or no experience of, metaphor is perhaps the only way in which it is possible to express such truth.

Christian theology is also a theology of process and potential. The idea of the 'Kingdom of God', for example, is an extra-physical phenomenon that is both presently instantiated in physical reality, in the persons of believers, and also a potential that still resides in the world of the possible. It is almost as if Jesus' use of the phrase created its own meaning in the minds of his hearers, causing them to consider a radically new conception of the world, and created a link between the

possible and empirical, instantiating the new spiritual reality in the physical.

Jesus also used eschatalogical metaphors to make points about present-day reality. Caird notes that he "regularly used end-of-the-world language metaphorically to refer to that which [he] well knew was not the end of the world" (quoted in Thiselton: 1992, 476). Thus he used the metaphorical power of the possible reality to emphasize something about the immediate reality of his listeners.

Another aspect of metaphor's relation to theology that will be of particular interest to our study of I Peter is the idea of a 'latent' meaning in a text, which is not understood by those first hearing or reading it, but becomes plain in some other circumstance. It is a striking feature of Christian Biblical exegesis that the entire Old Testament is reinterpreted in a Christ-centered framework, and entire realms of meaning are induced in the text that would not and could not have been accessible to the original writers and audience. Rather because of the belief that the Old Testament was, in fact, intended by the Holy Spirit to point to, foreshadow and illuminate the life and work of Christ, the specific application of texts to Christ has only been revealed, as it were, by subsequent events.

The most obvious case of this reinterpretation is in prophetic literature, where such revelation of previously obscure meaning is explicitly attributed to the text. For instance, Jesus said that the Isaiah 61's prophecy had been fulfilled in the hearing of the people with him in the synagogue in which he was preaching (Luke 4:21). However, this principle does not only apply to literature that is explicitly prophetic. Psalm 110 is a song of praise referring to a king of Israel, but it is reinterpreted in the New Testament (Hebrews 1:13) as referring ultimately to Christ. This

principle — that the meaning of the 'possible reference' of a particular text may not be immediately obvious but be revealed by subsequent information or events — will bear significant weight in our discussion of I Peter in chapter 4.

2.2   Literal and figurative language in Scripture

2.2.1   Significance

In any discussion of metaphor in Biblical exegesis, the question of the distinction between literal and figurative language is a central one. Some of the most significant controversies and divisions in the church in the last century and a half have been over the degree to which various parts of the Bible should be taken literally or figuratively. From the controversy over the relationship between the first 11 chapters of Genesis to understanding cosmology and human origins, to questions of the reality of the miracles of Jesus, and to the interpretation of the book of Revelation, these questions impinge on some of the most fundamental doctrines of the church.

It is obvious that certain parts of the Bible are poetic and figurative in nature, yet historically some have made the mistake of treating them literally: certain Psalms' descriptions of the sun moving across the sky were taken as support for the Ptolemaic geocentric model of the solar system, for example. The exact nature of other passages is not as clear; the correct interpretation of the first 11 chapters of Genesis has provoked spectacular controversy over the last century and a half. And humor-

ously, an over-literal reading of apocalyptic literature like Revelation and Daniel during the Cold war inspired various fanciful interpretations relating the Soviet empire to the anti-christ, etc. A careful evaluation of the degree of literalness of any particular passage of Scripture is therefore crucial to understanding its message.

2.2.2 Typology and allegory

The distinction between literal and non-literal interpretation of text was not always at issue, however. Prickett (1986, 200) notes that for much of the past two millennia the predominant paradigm for Biblical exegesis has been the *typological*. That is, passages of Scripture — primarily in the Old Testament — were taken to have a sort of symbolic meaning that was often related to Christ or Christian doctrine. Thus the stories of the patriarchs, for example, were taken neither as simply historical records nor mythical culture-hero legends, but as spiritually and theologically symbolic, and careful correspondences were drawn between the minutest of details and the life of Christ or some doctrinal concept. In such a case, as Prickett notes, the degree to which a particular text is literal or figurative is to a large extent irrelevant, since the primary focus of exegesis was on the 'type'. In a sense, the nature of such texts is über-figurative, a different and higher sort of figurative.

Another approach to the Biblical text was to treat certain passages — most notably the Song of Songs — as allegorical, where each character or prominent figure in a text was seen not as foreshadowning or typifying something in the New Testament or doctrine, but as an explicit symbol of that thing. Some have specifically identified allegory with metaphor (Thiselton: 1992, 157), but this is hardly valid.

Allegory is definitely not metaphorical. It is rather a constructed analogy: in an allegory it is not the structure of the source — the traveler in Pilgrim's Progress, for example — that is imposed on the target — the Christian life — but rather the reverse. The structure of the target of the metaphor is imposed on and constrains the source domain. If the allegory has been explicitly constructed as such, then it is a useful literary tool. But imposing an allegorical interpretation on a text whose nature is in doubt is dangerous. It is almost the antithesis of metaphor: instead of allowing the text to increase our store of meaning in to the realm of the possible, it constrains the text to mean nothing more than what we already know, and denies its power to create new meaning and challenge our prior cognitive structures.[4]

2.2.3 A surplus of meaning

There have been some Biblical interpreters who ignore or downplay the importance of metaphor in Biblical studies. Grant Osborne, a popular conservative writer on Biblical exegesis, gives metaphor less than a chapter in his popular book *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Osborne: 1991, 103). The habit of regarding metaphorical language as being somehow insignificant or even misleading compared to literal language, while going back to Aristotle — a metaphor is "giving the thing a name that belongs to something else" (*Poetics* 1457b) — has been more and more prevalent since the Enlightenment. Hobbes, for example, classes metaphor with

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[4]Indurkhya (1992) would characterise allegory as an instance of 'accomodation', where the structure of one's source concept is made to conform to the structure of the target, instead of the opposite. See §4.1.3.

lies and other linguistic abuses (Thiselton: 1992, 353).

The opposite view has only begun to reemerge in the last century. Building on writers like Nietzsche, who said that all aspects of language, from poetry to the very phonemes that make up spoken language, was metaphorical, linguists and philosophers from Saussure and Wittgenstein to Ricoeur and Derrida have emphasized the fact that metaphor is hardly a misuse of language, but is rather its most basic, as well as meaningful and powerful, expression.

That is, metaphor is not a corruption of the literal meaning of language, but rather gives language a surplus of meaning. Ricoeur, though he would hardly go so far as to say that phonemes are metaphorical, considers the 'double meaning' and polysemy the fundamental nature of language (Thiselton: 1992, 347). A word's literal meaning is static and hardly useful for communication; it is only when a word is placed in context and in that relation to other words and concepts that constitutes a metaphor, that it gains its immediate and powerful meaning.

2.3   The creation of meaning

2.3.1   Conventional metaphor

It is this interaction between the world, language and cognition that provides the best framework for understanding metaphor. In particular, the nature of the difference between literal and figurative language relates directly to the examination of the distinction between conventional and novel metaphor.

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Novel metaphor is the means by which we gain access to new meanings, and create new concepts. But most everyday communication does not consist of new concepts! Our quotidian discourse is of necessity concerned with things we already know about. Since in this case efficiency of communication is more important than originality of thought, we need some common foundation of agreed-upon conventional language that facilitates communication about the already-known.

A great deal of this kind of language is what the traditional view of metaphor calls 'dead metaphor'. This category does not precisely intersect with what cognitive scientists would call 'conventional metaphor', but there is a considerable overlap. In fact the transition from a novel metaphor to a conventional one to simply literal language can be observed historically. A recent example comes out of the growth of the internet. The expression 'to surf the Web', which originated as a metaphor for frequently changing channels while watching television, and was adopted with the rise of the World Wide Web as a description of following links in hypertext documents, influenced first, perhaps, by the back-and-forth motion of surfers on the ocean, and later by the explicit visual metaphors of cyberpunk science fiction like John Brunner's *Shockwave Rider*, has quickly become entrenched in the lexicon — to the point where the verb 'surf' has virtually gained a completely new sense, and does not even need the object to disambiguate it: "I was just surfing around at work today".

Thus literal language can be thought of as the 'deadest' of dead metaphors, with one important characteristic: it is the result of the consensus of the language-using community. As novel metaphors are introduced into a language, they are judged

and evaluated by the society that uses them, and if successful they become more and more common and conventional, and eventually insinuate themselves into the lexicon and become literal language.

2.3.2 Novel metaphor

As such, however, these metaphors lose some of their power. Robert Burns' "My love is like a red, red rose" is reduced to being the inspiration for Valentine's Day gifts, and has lost the power and tension of its ambiguity. If we are to continue to grow and learn, and participate in the changing world, novel metaphors are necessary.

As we have seen, the power of metaphor and figurative language is that it constantly stretches the "prior boundaries of our existing thought-systems" (Thiselton: 1992, 9). Metaphor connects us to the world of the possible. For a theology that whose focus is on the future, on becoming, on God's *completing* his work in us, of the *nearness* of the Kingdom of God, of the coming of a new heaven and earth where the present state will pass away, metaphor is central. "If metaphor, therefore, presents *possibility* rather than *actuality* it is arguable that metaphoric discourse can open up new understanding more readily than purely descriptive or scientific statement" (Thiselton: 1992, 352).

2.3.3 The mechanism of the creation of meaning

What, then, is the means by which we gain access to this other 'layer' of reality? How is it that we are able to create metaphors in the first place, and once having created them, how do we distinguish between good and bad, or rather valid or invalid, metaphors? Ricoeur's answer to the first question, though Vanhoozer (1990, 66) scoffs at it, deserves further reflection. In Ricoeur's view, the creation of metaphor is a function of intuition that comes out of an *experience* not of the empirical physical world, but of that second layer of reality. However much the literal-minded may protest, it is inarguably true that intuition, regardless of our inability to analyze or quantify it, plays a great part not only in the areas one might expect, art and poetry, but in science as well. The history of science is full of examples of great discoveries being made not by reasoned deduction from prior models, but by great intuitive leaps of the imagination and strange visions.[5] This is what Gerhart and Russell (1984) in their fascinating comparison of the creation of scientific and religious thought call the 'ontological flash', that new knowledge that arrives out of the blue, as it were, and allows the creation of whole new realms of thought.

Ricoeur does not give any clear account of how we may distinguish between valid and invalid metaphors, however. Vanhoozer himself suggests a possibility, which echoes that of the interactionists who have built on Ricoeur's work in the realm of linguistics and cognitive science. In much the same way that Indurkhya's

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[5]One of the most famous examples is the discovery of the ring structure of benzene, which August Kékulé discovered in a dream (Kuhn: 1970, ??).

criterion for the suitability of a novel metaphor is how well the structure of the metaphor is consistent with the structure of its target domain, Vanhoozer (1990, 66) suggests that the way in which we determine the validity of any particular metaphor is to ascertain how well it conforms to the physical world. Or rather, how well it allows us to function in the world, not only of the inanimate universe, but the universe of social discourse as well, for many of the structures within which we exist are built up by human culture. The best metaphors should not only allow us to function well in communication and thought, they should improve our ability to do so, and expand our knowledge of the possibilities of the universe. It is in this way that an original poem, say, allows us to consider some aspect of the human condition in a new light and with new insight, and a new scientific model allows us to examine and manipulate the physical universe in entirely undreamed-of ways.

In the same way, a theological metaphor should infect the world of the actual with the striving toward the potential. It is striking that much of Christian doctrine is framed in terms of metaphors that are often contradictory and paradoxical. God is a father and a shepherd and a king. The power of such language is that it does not allow us to complacently categorize God in terms of what we already know and have experienced. Instead, we must keep wondering. We must be continually engaged in the effort to understand God better, as well as his word to us.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter we have focused on Paul Ricoeur's view of metaphor, as it applies to Biblical exegesis, and several responses to it. Although others have discussed metaphor in this field, it has always been from the framework of the traditional 'Standard Pragmatic Model' that views metaphor as being a secondary meaning that can only be discovered when an utterance has a contradictory literal meaning. In Ricoeur's view, however, metaphor and polysemy are in fact basic characteristics of language, and give language the power to refer to the world of the possible as well as the physical. It is this characteristic of metaphor that makes it the most powerful way to express theological truth, and gives us a framework from which to discuss the implications of metaphor in primarily theological documents like I Peter.

Chapter 3

Metaphor in I Peter

We have hitherto in this thesis examined some relatively modern approaches to analyzing metaphor in general terms. We have focused on three areas: metaphor as a cognitive act that relates cognitive concepts to reality, whether physical or 'possible'; the traditional distinction between literal and metaphorical language; and the relationship between conventional and novel metaphor. It is now time to examine some of the metaphors in I Peter in particular, in terms of how traditional Biblical scholarship views them.

Inasmuch as the whole notion of the distinction between literal and metaphorical language is an artifact of the traditional philosophical view of metaphor, we shall examine this particular area from the traditional perspective. The next chapter will deal with the same metaphors in I Peter from the perspective of cognitive science. In this chapter we shall speak vaguely of 'clusters' or 'complexes' of metaphorical imagery in a sort of literary fashion. The justification for discussing

the images in I Peter in this fashion comes from Lakoff's ICM model (see §1.2.2), and will also be further discussed in the next chapter (§4.1.1).

3.1 Διασπορά: literal or metaphorical?

3.1.1 Metaphorical

The question of the identification of the primary metaphors in I Peter is closely related to both the question of the composition of the letter's audience and with the nature of its primary theme or purpose. If the book was written to a Jewish audience, then the pervasive Old Testament imagery and Jewish references might well be taken literally. Conversely, if the audience was composed of mainly Gentiles, and if the Jewish references were not strongly linked to the main themes and purpose of the letter, but were simply a reflection of the *author's* personal cultural heritage, they might well be taken as irrelevant to the book's meaning as a whole. However, neither of these neat solutions fits well with the available evidence in I Peter.

It is commonly accepted that I Peter's audience was composed mainly, if not entirely, of Gentiles (Michaels: 1988, xlvi). Grudem (1988, 38) feels that at the time of the letter's writing, there must have been a significant number of Gentile believers in the locations to which the book is addressed, who might have been drawn both from general society and from adherents, or 'God-fearers', to Judaism. Even though the letter is "so consistently addressed...to 'Israel'" (Michaels: 1988,

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xlv), there are too many indications in I Peter to the fact that the audience could not have been Jewish for it to be interpreted as being written primarily to Jews:

> Peter reminds his readers of "the impulses that once drove you in your ignorance" (1:14), and of "the empty way of life that was your heritage" (1:18) (Michaels: 1988, xlvi).

Even writers like McKnight (1996), who resists the metaphorical interpretation of the theme of the letter, must maintain that the audience is not Jewish (23). Therefore, if the audience of I Peter is not Jewish, then the Jewish language and imagery used to describe the audience must be used figuratively, by any definition.

The main theme of I Peter, according to Rendtorff (1951, quoted in Martin: 1992, 147), is that of the ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις, the 'chosen sojourners' (1:1). This theme provides the overall framework and unity to the various divisions of the book. It is the identification of this theme specifically with the Jewish Diaspora that provokes the question of its metaphoricity. If the language of strangers and aliens in I Peter is not used in a Jewish context, as indeed it is not, it could well be perfectly literal. It is true that the terms παρεπίδημος and πάροικος in 2:11, transient and resident aliens respectively (Bauer et al.: 1979), when used together describe non-citizens as a class (Martin: 1992, 192). However, I Peter is addressed not simply to members of that class, but to "ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις *διασπορᾶς*", "called sojourners *in the Diaspora*" (1:1). 'Diaspora', although not yet a specifically technical term in Christian writing at the time of I Peter (Michaels: 1988, 8), was well on its way to becoming one (Hillyer: 1992, 26). The term refers to the scattering

of the Jewish people throughout the Persian, Greek and Roman world, beginning with the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles (Goppelt: 1993, 64). It is used to describe Christians elsewhere in the New Testament (James 1:1, for example), but always plainly in a metaphorical, 'spiritual' sense Grudem (1988); Hillyer (1992), whose impact is derived from its reference to the Jewish experience. Thus it is impossible to separate the theme of the called sojourners in I Peter from its context and background in the Jewish Diaspora.

The image of the Diaspora is a part of a great deal of Jewish literature, from the LXX to Philo and Josephus (Martin: 1992, 150). Although it is not precisely defined, at least at the time of the writing of I Peter, there are some general characteristics of it that can be seen to have had a direct influence on the content of the metaphors in I Peter. Goppelt identifies two: the idea of membership in a people that transcends mere local family ties, and the theme of continuity and connection with a historical and geographical center (65). The first idea can be clearly seen in I Peter. The author explicitly makes the connection between his audience and the people of God: "Once you were no people but now you are God's people" (2:10). One of the primary metaphors in the book, as we shall see in §3.2.1, is the image of the οἶκος, the household, and such unifying familial images and vocabulary persist throughout the book.

Martin, building on Goppelt, expands on the second theme of the focus on a common center by connecting it with eschatology: a significant part of the image of the diaspora is that it is *temporary*, a road to be traveled, whose destination is a common hope (50–51). This idea, of course, had a great influence on other Chris-

tian authors, especially the author of Hebrews, who develops it extensively.

The vocabulary used to describe the audience of I Peter is also linked to the Jewish Diaspora. In addition to the use of παρεπίδημος and πάροικος in a legal or social sense in the general society of the time, they were also used in Jewish writing in connection with the Diaspora (Martin: 1992, 212). The word παρεπίδημος is also used several times in the LXX, most notably to refer to Abraham in his wandering (Grudem: 1988, 48), which image is also a part of the background of the Diaspora image, and also in Psalm 38 Michaels (1988, 9). Thus it was clearly possible to use these terms in the context of the Jewish Diaspora.

In addition, the tone, vocabulary and theme of I Peter are reminiscent of a particular class of Jewish literature, the so-called 'Diaspora letter' (Martin: 1992, 50). Michaels (1988, xlvi) explicitly identifies I Peter as an example of this genre. As Martin points out, the conflict between the "already and not yet" is one of the major themes of such letters (59). The conflict between the Jews' transient, precarious and hardship-filled situation and their self-image as the chosen people of God and their resultant dissillusionment with the people and the faith and the temptation to abandon them were significant concerns in the Diaspora letters, and these concerns are reflected in I Peter as well. Martin describes the exhortations in I Peter as being concerned with two areas: first, how is the audience of I Peter to live while on this journey toward their eventual reward in the eschaton? What constitutes 'good behavior', both in the context of the οἶκος, the household, and also in relation to the non-believers among whom and by whose sufferance they travel and live? Second, how is the author of I Peter to address the effect that suffering has on the believers,

and the resulting temptation to abandon the faith in the face of it? The last part of I Peter (3:13–5:11) is taken up with this issue.

The theme of suffering on the journey to glory is, of course, echoed throughout the New Testament. It is most strikingly evident in the book of Hebrews (Goppelt: 1993; Grudem: 1988, 48, 68). The heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11:13 are described with the same word, παρεπίδημος, as the author of I Peter uses to describe his readers, a term which itself is linked to the Diaspora metaphor.

Some of the differences between the use of the image in Hebrews and I Peter serve to emphasize the importance of the Jewishness of the Diaspora image in I Peter. As Tite (1996, 50) notes, the concept of the Diaspora clearly distinguishes I Peter's account of suffering from the Pauline treatment, thus highlighting the importance of the metaphor in interpreting I Peter. The image of the sojourner in I Peter is quite different from that in Hebrews, in that it is quite lacking the Hellenistic dualism between the physical and heavenly worlds that is found in Hebrews (Martin: 1992, 53). In Hebrews, the journey is from the base, inferior world to the spiritual city made by God. This contrast with the far more Jewish view of the Diaspora as a temporal journey emphasizes the metaphorical nature of the Diaspora image *as it is applied to the audience of I Peter*. Even though the *application* of the Diaspora concept is obviously spiritual in that the Christian believers are looking to their final reward in heaven, this is not explicitly stated in the text of I Peter itself, as it is in Hebrews. This heightens the gap between the source of the metaphor — the earthly Diaspora — and its target, the Christians' journey not simply through the trials and tribulations of temporal life, but to their share in the glory of Christ

in heaven.

In addition, the overarching metaphor of the Diaspora is signalled by references to it at both the beginning and the end of I Peter. The rather mysterious reference in 5:13 to 'Babylon' also makes sense when interpreted as part of the Diaspora theme. To many commentators this reference has seemed to be to Rome, from which the author of I Peter was presumed to have been writing (Michaels: 1988, 311). However, the city of Babylon was always prominent in the image of the Diaspora. It was there that the Exiles were taken from their homeland in Judah, and beside its waters they wept (Psalm 137). There remained a sizable and prominent Jewish population in Babylon well into Roman times, and the reference at the end of I Peter serves as a link to tie the book together under the overall metaphor (Michaels: 1988, 311).

3.1.2 Literal

There are still some, however, who maintain the position that much of what is often understood to be metaphorical in I Peter — the metaphor of strangers and aliens in particular — is actually a literal description of the situation and legal status of I Peter's audience. Against what McKnight calls the "inertia of convention", the prevalent view that the Greek terms $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}\delta\eta\mu\sigma\varsigma$ and $\pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\iota\kappa\sigma\varsigma$ are metaphorical in I Peter, Elliot (1990, 90) proposes that those terms are to be taken in a literal, in fact legal sense, and that I Peter was written expressly to groups of non-citizens both transient and resident in the various regions of Asia minor to which the letter is addressed, and who would have been disadvantaged and 'disenfranchised' both by

their legal status and by the fact that they were Christians, followers of an obscure Jewish cult.

This view is a bit suspect, as it seems to be motivated more by a particular ideological agenda than by a careful and weighted examination of the text. The desire to view the audience of I Peter as disenfranchised aliens forces both an unnatural emphasis on a small part of the text — the words παρεπίδημος and πάροικος — while ignoring their context and linkage with the word διασπορά, and the resulting overall impact of the image of the Diaspora on the book's imagery and structure.

The literalist position would be on firmer ground if it could be shown that the intended audience of I Peter were Jews. Then it would be clear that the references both to παρεπίδημος and πάροικος *and* to the Diaspora were drawn from their readers' direct experience, and were a literal description of their social state. But as we have seen in §3.1.1, there is too much evidence in the text of I Peter that the book's target audience is primarily Gentile to support the literal view on this basis (compare McKnight: 1996, 23).

Therefore, anyone who wishes to maintain that the words παρεπίδημος and πάροικος refer to this Gentile audience's social, as opposed to spiritual, status must deal with the abundance of references to Jewish scripture, culture and imagery that must all used in a figurative sense with respect to I Peter's audience. Indeed, the author of I Peter explicitly identifies his audience with Israel in a plainly spiritual sense.

That the author of I Peter makes heavy use of metaphors drawn from Jewish experience is not at issue (McKnight: 1996, 48). From the first section (1:14–2:10)

that describes I Peter's audience in terms of a household, to the believers' being called 'living stones' in 2:5, the book is full of metaphors drawn from Jewish culture and experience. What is more, the use of these kinds of metaphors takes place in a common Christian context of such use. The same images of life as a journey to glory are echoed in other New Testament writings. These Jewish metaphors are extended and given more weight in combination with new Christian concepts.[1].

The crucial question at issue in this debate is the metaphoricity of the specific words παρεπίδημος and πάροικος, which Elliott takes to be a literal description of the social status of I Peter's audience. It is almost incredible that these two words should be taken as literal given the preponderance of metaphors in the rest of the book which control both its content and structure. In fact the literal interpretation depends on taking παρεπίδημος out of the context of a single noun phrase. The first verse of the letter clearly and explicitly links the image of the sojourner with the concept of the Diaspora. One would have to completely ignore the word διασπορά and the entire complex of cultural associations that it invokes, which is clearly metaphorical when used of I Peter's audience, to maintain that the preceding word is used in a literal sense.

In fact this is exactly what McKnight (1996), for example, does. He acknowledges that the Diaspora is a Jewish theme (51), but rather disingenuously says that it refers to "anyone who lives outside of Judea", completely obscuring the crucial point of the concept: that the Diaspora refers to *Jews* outside of Judea, and that there a clear distinction between Jews and non-Jews and a fierce sense of commu-

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[1]the *Imitatio Christi* in particular; see §3.2.3

nal identity is at the core of the whole image. McKnight does recognize that the Diaspora reference is not to be taken as literal with respect to Christians. Since the metaphor of the Diaspora cannot reasonable be separated from that of the sojourner, since the two are part of a single noun phrase in the Greek text, and the sojourners are specifically identified as being part of the Diaspora, McKnight disproves his own point. The sojourner image cannot be taken as literal if the Diaspora image is not.

Another inconsistency in the literalist position is in the application of I Peter. McKnight suggests that it is the literal description of the audience of I Peter as 'disenfranchised' aliens that makes Peter's discussion of suffering in the last section of the book (3:13–5:11) immediately relevant to them (34). When it comes to applying the meaning of I Peter to other audiences than the original ones, however, he acknowledges that even the sojourner concept must be interpreted hypothetically when applied to, say, the majority of middle-class twenty-first-century North Americans. However, he goes so far as to say that those parts of I Peter that draw their impact from the theme of the sojourners cannot in fact be understood by or applied to such North Americans, who have experienced neither displacement nor social ostracization or persecution, but those passages can only have an impact on or be of benefit to those in less fortunate parts of the world who have experienced such things (34). This is a needless distinction driven entirely by the ideological conviction that the sojourner image is literal. It is not even clear whether the social situation of Christians in I Peter's audience was one of significant hardship, if the letter was written before or during Nero's persecutions in AD 63, as many com-

mentators suggest (Grudem: 1988, 36). In fact, McKnight contradicts himself on this point in the space of a single page (51). If the original readers understood the sojourner image to be metaphorical, coming out of the Jewish cultural tradition, but none the less meaningful, then in the same way North Americans can also gain as much insight and edification from I Peter by studying the Diaspora concept as those who have a more immediate experience of displacement, disenfranchisement and suffering under persecution.

The literal interpretation is also supported by the traditional view of metaphor. McKnight refers to Caird (1980)'s approach to analyzing Biblical metaphor, which is closely related to and derived from the tradition view of metaphor — Gibbs' 'standard pragmatic model'. In his analysis, Caird describes a four-step process for analyzing metaphor: first, if the writer clearly intends a particular piece of text as an analogy and signals it with various syntactic clues like the words 'like' or 'as', then one may clearly take a metaphorical interpretation. If there is something clearly non-sensical or absurd about the literal reading of a passage — I Peter's readers are clearly not "living stones", for example (2:5) — then one should not take it literally. Caird's third criterion is really an extension of the second; the second deals with the self-consistency of an utterance within the scope of its language, and Caird's third test deals with reference to reality, that is, the consistency of an utterance with the 'real world'. If a text doesn't seem to be accurate in the realm of physical reality we are obliged by the principle of inerrancy to assume a metaphorical interpretation for it.[2] Obviously, the line between these two criteria is a blurry

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[2]One might say that we also question our beliefs about the nature of the real world. However,

one. Caird's fourth characteristic of metaphoricity is whether a particular image or utterance is used and drawn out in an extended way and forms part of the structure and organization of the text. Hence the architectural metaphors in 2:4–8.

Unfortunately — for the literalists — the image of the sojourner in the Diaspora is clearly metaphorical by Caird's last two conditions. Obviously the first two do not apply; I Peter does not say "chosen sojourners as if in the Diaspora", and there is nothing inconsistent or illogical with the language *qua* language about saying that a particular group of people is a subset of some other group. However Caird's third criterion does apply. We have already seen that the intended or primary audience of I Peter was probably prominently Gentile, not Jewish (§3.1.1). Since the Diaspora is almost a Jewish technical term that applies specifically to Jews, we do indeed have a considerable inconsistency if we attempt to interpret παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς literally in the physical world. Thus any identification of I Peter's audience as sojourners *in the Diaspora* should probably be interpreted metaphorically.

In addition, Martin (1992) has demonstrated that the Diaspora metaphor is developed extensively throughout much of I Peter, and provides a source for many of the subsidiary metaphors in the letter, as well as a background for the book's hortatory concerns. The precise extent of its development is a subject of debate, which we will discuss in the next section. Notwithstanding, it is clear that the metaphor is drawn out in an extended way in the text. This, by Caird's fourth test, supports the metaphorical interpretation.

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we tend to put a great deal of weight on the evidence of our senses. We no longer believe the earth is the center of the universe on the basis of some of the Psalms, for example.

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It is this particular point that answers the final question that McKnight poses about the metaphoricity of the sojourner image in I Peter. Treating παρεπίδημος as a metaphor, he says, has "little (if anything) to offer on its own behalf" (50). Conversely, as we have seen, treating the reference as literal serves only to support an *a priori* assumption about the audience and purpose of I Peter — that the sojourner image is intended to reflect the social and legal status of the readers and its message is a primarily a social one with limited application to other audiences.

Such a forced interpretation ignores both the nature of the sojourner image's relationship to the development of the content and structure of I Peter and the advantages that the metaphorical interpretation brings to understanding the meaning and application of I Peter. As we have seen, the metaphor, connected as it must be to the image of the Diaspora, provides, at least to some extent, a unifying framework and source for the other metaphors in the letter. Given that I Peter makes almost exclusive use of metaphor as the source of the other images in the book, it is unreasonable to single out one particular image as literal purely on ideological grounds.

3.2   The extent of the metaphor

Inasmuch as both the "inertia of convention" and recent work on I Peter agree that the image of the sojourner is metaphorical, there still remains a debate over how much this particular metaphor controls or influences the structure and content of the other diverse images found in I Peter. As we have seen, Rendtorff suggests

that the theme of the letter is the idea of the 'elect strangers', and Martin builds on this to suggest that the combination of this image with that of the Diaspora is the means through which the theme is developed throughout the letter. Michaels (1988) agrees with the importance of the sojourner image, but feels that it does not necessarily "so dominate the others that it can explain the structure and the varies rhetorical strategies" of the letter (Michaels: 1993). Grudem (1988) treats the Jewish terminology as metaphorical, but approaches the problem from the point of view of the difference between the old and new covenants. Thus the sojourner image as such is not as prominent, but I Peter in general is "applying to the church in the New Covenant age the language which previously had only been appropriate for God's covenant people, the Jews" (38). Goppelt (1993, 18) suggests that the primary theme of the book comes out of I Peter's paranetic concerns — how to live in a world of suffering — and is only fully developed after 3:13 when the book shifts its focus to suffering.

It is interesting to examine the three main sections of I Peter that Martin delineates in his application of the sojourner metaphor to the entirety of I Peter in light of these views. Martin, in fact, relates his structural division of I Peter to the three words used to describe the readers at the very beginning of the letter: ἐκλεκτός, παρεπίδημος and διασπορά (Tite: 1996, 49). Martin links each of these words to a section of I Peter and together they provide the theme for the whole book.[3]

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[3]This is not the only possible way to view the organization of I Peter, of course. Grudem (1988) divides the book into two sections, the first concerned with theological truth and the second with its application to life (1:3–2:10 and 2:11–5:11).

3.2.1 Ἐκλεκτός

The first section, which Martin sees extending from 1:14 to 2:10, is associated with the idea of the 'called', of belonging to a select group. This is, of course, one of the central ideas of the Diaspora, building as it does on the Jewish sense of cultural identification as the chosen people of God. The primary sub-metaphor that I Peter uses in the section is that of the οἶκος: household or dynasty. This is also part of the Diaspora image, the idea of the chosen people as a family, the children of Abraham who travel as a family as Abraham traveled with his household (Grudem: 1988, 48).

I Peter uses a number of images in this section that are drawn from the concept of the household. In 1:14–21 he uses the idea of the new birth to emphasize the audience's intimate connection with their newfound spiritual family. He calls them newborn babies, and thereby points out their dependence on God in their new life.

The second aspect of the household metaphor is the notion that I Peter's readers are children of one father, that is, children of God (1:14–21). In this context Martin invokes the image of the Roman *pater familias* who often had absolute control over his entire family, to the point of being able to condemn a child to death for disobedience (Martin: 1992, 170). This both emphasizes the readers' dependence on God and their need to reference and obedience to God. The *pater familias* was also a figure of strength, protection, wisdom and guidance, and these also contribute to the impact of the metaphor.

In addition to the image of the father, the readers of I Peter are likened to a

brotherhood (1:22-25). This further reinforces the familial idea, and the sense of solidarity and duty that reinforce the ethical lessons that apply to living within one's family.

These kinds of familial images are two steps removed from the Diaspora concept, it is not perhaps self-evident that they are drawn from it. It is certainly true that the image of new Christians as newborns is used quite frequently in the New Testament, as are the notions of Christianity being a brotherhood and of God being Christians' father. If we consider the sojourner image to be the theme of the book, it is clear that the household images can be motivated from it.

An additional interesting metaphor from this section is the one that refers to the readers as "living stones" (2:5). At first glance this metaphor does not seem to have much of connection with either the immediate household image or the overall sojourner theme. Martin, however, relates it to the other by noting that οἶκος can often mean 'temple' as well as 'household' (164). The image of the temple is also part of the complex of associations invoked by the Diaspora image. The Israelites carried their temple along with them in their first wanderings in the desert, and later in the Exile and the Diaspora the temple was an important focus of their identity. When I Peter refers to its readers as living stones being built up into a spiritual temple, this image from the past is powerfully linked to the new Christian concept that it is Christians who are God's temple.

3.2.2 Παρεπίδημος

The second section of I Peter, 2:11–3:12, is more immediately recognizable as being connected to the metaphor of the sojourner in the Diaspora. Martin (1992) associates it with the second word in the greeting of the letter, παρεπίδημος, 'sojourner'. This section is concerned with the nature and duties implied by being an alien and stranger in the world.

This image is obviously, as Martin points out, "another specific image of the Diaspora" (188). The idea of wandering has always been in the Jewish consciousness, even before the Exile and the Diaspora. The Israelites said "My father was a wandering Aramean" (Deut 6:25), and the Israelites' wanderings in the desert after they escaped from Egypt are a powerful underlay to the Diaspora image. In addition, the Jews in Palestine even in the time of Christ still considered themselves exiles, since they had not yet attained their promised glory (Wright: 1992, 268).

The particular words used to describe the believers in this section may not be literal when applied specifically to the readers of I Peter, but their use invokes a legal and social structure that is instructive in interpreting the metaphor in the context of the readers' spiritual sojourn as strangers and aliens in the world. As we saw in §3.1.1, believers are first described in 2:11 as belonging to the class of non-citizens made up of resident and non-resident aliens. There were specific legal implications for such a class, to which most of the Jews of the Diaspora undoubtedly belonged. They would have had little say in the governance of their cities or residence, and perhaps been subject to various kinds of economic sanctions.

Rather than viewing these terms as literal, consider their impact on people who would have been, in fact, citizens. To be told that their status and well-being, which had been heretofore secure in the temporal realm, were contingent and transitory, would have been quite startling. The rising tide of religious persecution would have reinforced this. It is reasonable to suggest that such an assertion would have brought both uncertainty and hope. Uncertainty as they lived in the insecurity of being strangers in the world. Hope as they realized that they were a part of a larger family and that they had a spiritual destiny that would outlast the imminent and perhaps already present persecution and suffering they faced.

3.2.3 Διασπορᾶς

It is this uncertainty and the increasing experience of suffering along the road of life that brings I Peter to its next thematic section, 3:13–5:11. As Martin (1992, 208) notes, there have often been considerable differences in interpretation of this section. Goppelt (1993, 20) distinguishes the third section from the others in that it seems to be addressing a more immediate and perhaps personal experience of suffering that has led some to suggest a separate source for the last section. It is certainly true that this section has a greater urgency in this area, as it is concerned with preventing the all too common result of suffering and persecution: desertion of the faith. How then should this section be tied in with the previous two?

Martin's answer is, of course, that the metaphor of the Diaspora provides the connection. It provides the cultural and thematic background upon which I Peter will build the ethical arguments, combined with the new Christian idea of the

Imitatio Christi, thus combining the final response to suffering of both ideas: that suffering is merely a way station on the road to glory.

The Diaspora, Martin says, was always viewed "as a place of testing, tribulation and persecution of God's people", starting with the Exile, which was a consequence of the people's sins (211). There is a great deal of evidence of this from contemporary Jewish literature (212). Schlier (1970, 142) identifies suffering as one of the defining characteristics of Israel as the chosen people. Thus suffering is not necessarily always the result of sin, but is sometimes the consequence of living as chosen people in a sinful world.

But suffering is only the first aspect of this image of the Christian life. The second is the notion that though the journey may be difficult and characterized by tribulation, it leads eventually to glory. Here I Peter draws upon the established motif of the *Imitatio Christi*: as Christ did not disdain suffering, neither should the believers, and as Christ's sufferings resulted in his glorification, so will the believers join him in that glory if they persevere in the faith.

Michaels (1993, 60) asks why it is necessary to interpret this section of I Peter in terms of the Diaspora metaphor; he considers the *Imitatio Christi* to be a sufficient source for the images involved and motivation for the ethical exhortations put forth. It is true that the connection is weaker here than in the first two sections, and its interpretation almost approaches being a matter of ideology or stylistic preference. If one considers the book in terms of its use of old vs. new covenant imagery, then the Diaspora image serves to connect the old with the new. And the appeal of viewing the Diaspora concept as the overall theme of I Peter is

supported by the reference to Babylon in 5:13, which serves as the structural counterpart to the Diaspora reference in the salutation, thus neatly wrapping up the letter under the theme.

Regardless of the degree to which one wishes to apply the Diaspora metaphor to the whole of I Peter, it is clear that a good deal of the letter is motivated by this theme. So much so that as Michaels (1993) says, "Martin's study confirms the view that such terms as diaspora, resident alien, visiting alien and the like *are* metaphors."

3.3 Summary

In the chapter we have briefly examined the nature of the metaphors in I Peter from the perspective of Biblical studies. We have introduced the debate over whether some of the images in I Peter, in particular the images of the soujourner or alien, should be treated as literal language or as metaphor. Even from the perspective of traditional Biblical studies it is evident that there are good reasons to view these images as being metaphorical.

However, there still remains considerable debate over the extent to which the metaphor of the sojourner, which is drawn from the Jewish idea of the Diaspora, is the overall controlling metaphor of the letter, or whether the various images in I Peter are in fact unrelated. We have seen that there do indeed exist relationships between the subsidiary metaphors and the image of the Diaspora, and that the Diaspora image in fact provides the solution to some of the more ambiguous parts of

the letter. We shall explore the justification for analyzing the relationships between the various metaphors in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

I Peter from the perspective of cognitive science

In this chapter we shall examine the metaphors in I Peter from the perspective of various aspects of cognitive science. In the previous chapter we made statements like "the concept of children is drawn from the household concept" and "the image of the temple is a part of the Diaspora concept". In the first section of this chapter, we will examine the structures and relationships of the metaphors in I Peter with a view to justifying the use of such statements. We shall first consider how Lakoff's views of the structure of concepts allows us to relate the varied metaphors used in I Peter. Then we shall examine how these structures make use of common conventional metaphors. We shall then discuss how the structures of the sources of the metaphors in I Peter are mapped onto the target domains with which the author of I Peter is concerned, by making use of Indurkhya's model of cognitive processes.

In the second section we shall consider the metaphors of I Peter from the perspective of the distinction, or perhaps the continuum, between conventional and novel metaphor, and discuss the metaphors' power to affect the lives of the readers of I Peter, in light of Paul Ricoeur's treatment of metaphor.

4.1 I Peter and cognition

4.1.1 I Peter and the ICM of the Diaspora

As we saw in §1.2.2, Lakoff considers much of cognition to be carried out by means of complex structures of concepts that he calls 'Idealized Cognitive Models' (Lakoff: 1987, 68). These consist of concepts organized in a number of different ways. These can include logical or propositional relations and image- or structure-schematic relationships, as well as metaphor and metonymy. Models can include multiple definitions of concepts that diverge radially, as it were, from the common generality, or 'prototype' (Lakoff: 1987, 70–71), and which can be inconsistent to the point of contradiction, which is one source of what Lakoff calls 'prototype effects', the seeming paradoxes and inconsistencies that arise when the cognitive model of how we believe the world should be conflicts with the cognitive model of the world as it is observed.

An important point to reiterate about this issue is that these kinds of structures are neither arbitrary nor deterministic, but somewhere in between. That is, they are neither added by accretion from unrelated experiences (Lakoff: 1987, 76) nor gen-

erated automatically from the more basic concepts or the central structure of the model. There is clearly a connection between the less central parts of a concept and the outliers, as it were, but it is impractical to attempt to predict what associated concepts will come from the main one. In linguistic terms there is a clear 'motivation' for the secondary concepts, but they cannot be derived in advance. Clearly all the possible concepts that could be related to a prototype are not in fact so generated.

Let us, therefore, consider the metaphors in I Peter in light of this approach and attempt to determine whether there are reasonable motivations for deriving them from the cognitive model of the Diaspora. In this we are, of course, hampered by the fact that our twenty-first century language and culture are quite different from that of the author and audience of I Peter in the first century. However, just as it is possible for American speakers of English to analyze the cognitive structures of Australian aboriginal languages, for instance (Lakoff: 1987, 92), it is possible for us to carefully do the same with I Peter.

The first metaphorical structure we shall examine is the 'cluster' of images in 1:14-2:10 that relate to familial life, what Martin calls the οἶκος cluster. This word has several meanings in New Testament Greek, the most basic of which is 'house' or 'dwelling' (Bauer et al.: 1979). It can also mean 'household' or 'family', and further, 'dynasty'. In addition, the word can be used to denote an important building, such as a King's palace or most significantly, a temple — the 'house of God'. It is clear that these are not simply unrelated senses of the word οἶκος, but all these meanings are part of a cognitive structure that relates them all, for which the pro-

totype remains the concept of a 'dwelling'. It is easy to see how the other senses are motivated from the central one. 'Dwelling' is extended to 'family' perhaps because a family is what usually lives in a house. 'Family' is then extended to include ancestors and the whole family line or dynasty, which were an important part of the cultures of the day. To extend the idea of a 'dwelling' to important people or gods is likewise a natural step, and the idea of the 'house of God' is used throughout Scripture to denote the temple.

Thus all the metaphors in Martin's first section can be seen as being motivated from the central cognitive model of the οἶκος. Most of the images are a part of the extended concept of the 'family'. In 1:14–21 we find a relationship between the 'new-born' believers and their 'Father', the head of their new household. The believers are then admonished to behave as young children should[1] toward their fathers, with obedience and reverence. In 1:22–25 the believers are described as being siblings, and are therefore to love one another. In 2:1–3 the believers are described as 'newborn babies' and are enjoined to desire 'spiritual milk' that will enable them to grow in their lives as Christians.

In 2:4–10 I Peter introduces a new metaphor that is also linked to the οἶκος concept. The believers are there described as 'living stones' who are being built up into God's temple. The connection between this image and the two previous ones reinforces the connection with the overall metaphor. Both the 'living stones' image and the 'newborn baby' image are concerned with growth, and the 'living

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[1]We are, of course, speaking of the culture of the day.

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stones' are acting in unity[2] to further their family, which is God's new dwelling place.

Thus the fact that these images cohere and come from the οἶκος concept is evident. However, how are they related to the Diaspora image, and how are they derived from it? As we have seen in §3.2.1, there are many examples of the household idea in the concept of the Diaspora. The idea of being in a family was a fundamental part of Jewish culture; the Jews were, and are, after all, the children of Abraham. The idea of the family is therefore important in the Diaspora as well. Indeed the image of Abraham wandering *with his household* is an important part of the cultural background of the Diaspora image.

The idea of the dynasty or family line is also an important one: the idea of the royal line of David was highly significant in the Christian account of the birth of Christ, for instance. And the Jews in the Diaspora clung to their familial identity: the Apostle Paul, for example, who was a Diaspora Jew, emphasized that he was from the tribe of Benjamin (Romans 11:1, Philippians 3:5), and certain names of families like Cohen have survived to this day. The temple, of course, was also prominent in Jewish culture, and thus in the Diaspora concept as well. The Israelites in their desert wandering carried their temple with them, and the reconstruction of the temple was one of the first priorities of the returning Exiles, and that temple was the focus of regular pilgrimages by the Jews of the Diaspora.

The second 'cluster' of images in Martin's analysis is quite straightforwardly drawn from the Diaspora. In fact, the words used, παρεπίδημος and πάροικος,

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[2]C.f. Psalm 133:1

are both taken from the Old Testament and in addition are an almost legal description of the non-citizen, which no doubt many of the Jews of the Diaspora were.

Martin's third cluster of metaphors is, as we noted in Chapter 3, the most ambiguous and controversial. We saw in §3.2.3 that the image of the righteous sufferer and the idea of suffering leading to glory are in fact present in the cognitive model of the Diaspora. In this section of I Peter, however, these images are also clearly associated with the suffering and glorification of Christ, and with the Christian principle of the *Imitatio Christi*. Interpreted solely from the Christian perspective, these images are in an apparent contrast to the rest of the letter. This provokes uncertainty in interpretation, and even questions about the authorship of the section and its unity with the rest of the letter. The realization that the concept of suffering and glory are also linked to the Diaspora image, which is a source for the images in the rest of I Peter, provides the conceptual and structural link between the two parts of the letter.

Furthermore, the combination of these two sources lends to the image an increased weight and power that brings to bear both the weight of Jewish history and the impact of the Christian passion story on the moral and ethical lessons being presented in the section.

4.1.2 The schematic structure of the Diaspora metaphor

In order to further examine the nature of the metaphors that are motivated from the image of the Diaspora in I Peter, it is necessary to further examine the structure of the metaphor itself. The basic metaphor of the Diaspora may be described

as follows: A CHRISTIAN IS A DIASPORA JEW. There are two aspects of this metaphor that are of interest to us. It is at once a direct metaphor from experience and an instantiation of a more abstract metaphorical schema.

The part of the metaphor that is a direct mapping from experience is the idea that A CHRISTIAN IS AN ALIEN (or SOJOURNER). This draws upon the immediate physical and social experience of being an alien in society[3] and applies it to the spiritual status of the Christian, in that various characteristics and propositions included in the concept of the life of a πάροικος — a *resident* alien — become a model or template for structuring the believers' cognitive concept of their spiritual status. We shall discuss the nature of this mapping in the next section.

The second aspect of the Diaspora metaphor may be summed up by the phrase THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A JOURNEY. This is the part of the metaphor that gives us παρεπίδημος, *transient* alien, and the idea of the Christian life as a journey through suffering to glory. As it happens, the metaphor of LIFE IS A JOURNEY is an extremely common one that, combined with various ramifications of life and journeys, proves to be the source of a great deal of poetry (Lakoff: 1987; Lakoff and Johnson: 1999; Lakoff and Turner: 1989).

This particular metaphor is not in itself directly drawn from experience — there is nothing immediate about life that corresponds to a journey. Rather, it is an abstract cognitive structure that is built up from a number of more directly experiential metaphors that together produce the more abstract metaphor. The primary

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[3]Even if the readers of I Peter were not aliens themselves (see §3.1.2) they would have been aware of the social status of people who were.

constituents of this metaphor are, says Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 61), PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS and ACTIONS ARE MOTIONS. Lakoff combines these metaphors with the "cultural belief" that "people are supposed to have destinations in life, and they are supposed to move so as to reach those destinations" and the experiential fact that "a long trip to a series of destinations is a journey". In combination we arrive at the metaphor of the purposeful life as a journey, from which we may derive novel metaphors that relate various parts of our cognitive idea of journeys with various aspects of life, which, when instantiated with concrete examples from the source domain of the journey produce new and insightful metaphors. Lakoff and Turner list a number of examples of such individual parts of the journey metaphor: the person leading a life is a traveler; the means for achieving purposes are routes; difficulties in life are impediments to travel; progress is distance traveled.

By instantiating these parts with concrete examples we arrive at poetic imagery as exemplified by Dickinson's poem (see §1.3.2) where the end of life is a coach trip, with Death as the coachman, or Frost's "Two roads diverged in a wood…", or the author of Hebrews's application of the literal journeying of Abraham to the lives of the heroes of the faith: they "make it clear that they are seeking a homeland…They desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one" (Hebrews 11:14, 16).

Thus the author of I Peter uses the concept of the Diaspora to instantiate the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY and reason from the images and concepts thereby invoked. Since in this template or schema persons are travelers, the author refers to the audience using the main social unit of the Jews in the Diaspora, the family

or household, reflecting both the household of Abraham[4] and the strong familial sense among the Jews of the Diaspora. The author then reasons about the believers using concepts drawn from the family or household.

In addition, the idea of the destination of the wandering of the Diaspora — Jerusalem for the Jews; the heavenly city, in the book of Hebrews — is instantiated in I Peter as the idea of glory. As in the physical Diaspora the Jews experienced suffering and tribulation along the way to their destination, so too the Christian believers experience suffering in the process of living the Christian life, which has as its purpose and destination the glory of heaven.

The metaphor of the Diaspora functions on two levels in I Peter. It is a direct metaphor for the Christian as a sojourner, a resident alien, drawing a parallel between the believer's spiritual status and the Diaspora Jew's legal status. It also draws upon the metaphor of life as a journey, which, when instantiated from the structure and constituents of the cultural image of the Diaspora, provides a framework within which the author can reason about the spiritual life of his readers.

[4]Compare Hebrews 11's discussion of Abraham and his family: "he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him" (11:9). "He received power of procreation" (11:11). "From one person…descendents were born, 'as many as the stars of heaven'" (11:12). "Isaac invoked blessings for the future on Jacob" (11:20). "Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph" (11:21).

4.1.3 The mapping from Diaspora to the Christian life

What, however, is the justification for such reasoning? How are we able to be certain that conclusions drawn from reasoning in the source domain of a metaphor is actually valid in the target domain — in our case, how can we be sure that conclusions drawn on the basis of the structure of the concept of the Diaspora actually apply in the realm of the spiritual life of the audience of I Peter?

This is the problem of 'coherence', or how metaphors relate to the physical world. It is ultimately a practical question: "It is the coherency of a cognitive relation that ensures that a prediction arrived at by reasoning from the concept network holds in the environment" (Indurkhya: 1992, 164). Lakoff's answer to this question is brief and simplistic: a metaphor is 'apt' if it plays 'a significant role in structuring one's experience,' — which is almost a tautology — and if reasoning by means of the metaphor agrees with non-metaphorical experience: the metaphor "has non-metaphorical entailments" (Lakoff and Johnson: 1999, 72). Lakoff does not attempt to analyze how aptness is to be understood, nor does he provide a means for judging the predictions of a metaphor before they arise in experience.

Indurkhya, however, attempts to describe the process by which a metaphor relates to the experiential world. As we saw in §1.3.2, he describes coherency in the scope of of three areas: the structure of a concept, the structure of the environment, and the relationship between the two. Indurkhya describes two ways in which 'cognitive agents' maintain coherency between a concept and the environment. The first, which he calls 'accommodation', keeps the relationship between

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the concept and the environment stable, but alters the structure of the concept it-self to make it fit the environment (Indurkhya: 1992, 166). One example of this that Indurkhya gives is map-making: the concepts that make up the map — rivers, mountains, roads — are an arbitrary subset of symbols of what may actually be found in the real world, but it is the environment that determines how they will be related to one another on the map. An example of this in the sphere of Biblical literature is the allegory. The various components or actors in an allegory are cho-sen arbitrarily beforehand, but their relationships are entirely determined by the structure of the concept that they are meant to represent or convey.

The second method of maintaining coherence is what Indurkhya calls 'pro-jection'. In this case, the structure of the concept is maintained, but the corre-spondences between the parts of the concept and the parts of the environment are modified so that the resulting structure in the environment is coherent (Indurkhya: 1992, 168). An example of this is the system of latitude and longitude, which we arbitrarily 'project' onto the environment.

It is this process or operation that underlies metaphor. A coherent concept — the image of a harp, for example — is associated with another image — the sea of Spender's poem (see §1.1.2) — in a manner inconsistent with our experience of the environment. A wave is not a harp string. In order to understand and make use of the metaphor, we must readjust the correspondences between the objects in the two concepts so that for the purposes of the metaphor waves *are* harp-strings, and may be reasoned about *as if* they were.[5]

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[5]Compare Ricoeur's extension of the concept of being into the possible in chapter 2.

This is what happens when we apply the image of the Diaspora to the spiritual life of a believer. The concept of a believer's spiritual life has a number of different parts: the believer has a spiritual existence as well as a physical existence, and there is some kind of relationship between the two, i.e. there are some physical consequences of the state of the spiritual existence and some spiritual consequences of the physical existence. There are spiritual relationships between believers as a consequence of their shared faith. There is some sort of relationship between the believer and God. The believer's spiritual existence evolves and is directed toward some potential state.

As we saw in Chapter 3, when the concept of the Diaspora is projected onto the concept of the believer's spiritual existence, certain correspondences are formed between the respective components of each concept: the believer's spiritual existence is identified with the experience of a person in the Diaspora. The relationship between the believer's spiritual and physical existence is related to the Diaspora Jew's status as a Jew, one of the chosen people, as opposed to their legal status in the external world. Thus the legal and physical consequences of being a Diaspora Jew are identified with the legal and physical consequences of being a Christian, and vice versa. The relationships between the believers are identified with the relationships between Jews in the Diaspora — being in a household — and the relationship between the believer and God is also identified with this household concept. The progress of the believer's spiritual existence is identified with the journey of the Diaspora Jew, and the goal of that spiritual journey is identified with the goal and focus of the Diaspora, the city of Jerusalem.

Once these correspondences have been established, the author of I Peter uses the structure of the source concept, the Diaspora, to reason about the target concept, the spiritual life of the believers. If the believers are a part of a household, with God as their Father and other believers as their siblings, then they are constrained to act in ways appropriate to those relationships, i.e. to revere God and obey him, and to love and support one's fellow believers. If the consequences of being a Jew in the Diaspora include being a non-citizen and an alien in society, the the Christian must partake of the same status, not necessarily with respect to the believer's physical relationship to the state, but with respect to the believer's spiritual status as a stranger on earth. If the Diaspora Jew could expect tribulation and suffering as a consequence of living as such, so too a Christian may expect suffering as a consequence of living as a Christian. And most importantly for Peter's purposes, just as the Diaspora Jew lived in the hope of glory and the vision of Jerusalem, so too the Christian lives in the hope of the glory of Christ and the expectation of heaven.

4.2   I Peter and novel metaphor

4.2.1   The time-dependent nature of novel metaphor

The first factor we must consider in analyzing the metaphors in I Peter within the framework of the difference between novel and conventional metaphor is the process by which novel metaphors are gradually turned into conventional ones. In

Lakoff's view, novel metaphors are most often new instantiations of conventional metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson: 1999, 66–67): thus LIFE IS A JOURNEY, when instantiated by the image of the automobile, for example, gives rise to many novel metaphors: we encounter ruts and dead ends in life, we spin out of control, etc.

No doubt a large percentage of novel metaphors are created in this way. But there are also many examples that do not fit this pattern, many of them visually based, like Spender's seascape and harp strings. There does not seem to be any prior conventional metaphor that could generate that particular metaphor.

What is common about both kinds of novel metaphor is that they, if used often, become conventionalized and eventually simple become literal language, part of the lexicon: "A novel metaphor, through repeated use, becomes a conventional metaphor and eventually fades into polysemy" (Indurkhya: 1992, 249). Therefore, in addition to the attempt to determine whether or not the language in I Peter is literal or metaphorical, we must also consider the question of whether the metaphors are novel or have become conventional.

This is, therefore, largely a question of timing. When did the idea of the Christian as a sojourner traveling to a home that is not of this world first appear, and how long did it take to become widely used and accepted by the church? The latter question is beyond the scope of this thesis, except to say that the metaphor has become quite conventional and familiar in our day, in that we most often interpret Biblical metaphors like those in I Peter and Hebrews 11 in terms of the spiritual life.

It is possible, however, to touch upon the question of the metaphors' first ap-

pearance by determining the time when I Peter was written and comparing that to other uses of similar metaphors, most notably in Hebrews. According to Michaels, there is considerable doubt about the dating of I Peter. If we accept that the book was written before Nero's persecution in A.D. 65 — Hillyer (1992, 3) says, "If the Neronic terror had already struck, the comment in 3:13 that no harm came to good citizens is incredible" — and if we accept the tradition that Peter was killed during said persecution, then we limit the date to no later than 65. However, there is also good evidence for the letter to have been written as late as 80 (Michaels: 1988, lxi).

There is a general consensus that the book of Hebrews was probably written no later than just before Nero's persecution, since there is no reference to it in the letter, and since it makes no reference to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 (Bruce: 1990; Hagner: 1990; Lane: 1985). If we compare these ranges of possible dates we see that the book of Hebrews, which develops the metaphor of the Christian as sojourner and traveler to a great extent, was probably written around the same time or even *before* the book of I Peter was written. This would tend to suggest that the argument that the sojourner image in I Peter was purely literal and was later given its metaphorical sense is not probable, since the image was already being used in a highly developed metaphorical sense to refer to the spiritual life of the believer.

One might even idly speculate that there might be a connection between the two books. It is widely suggested that Hebrews was written to the Jewish community in Rome (Bruce: 1990, 13). Tradition also has Peter residing in Rome at the time of Nero's persecution, and it is also suggested that I Peter was written from Rome

(Michaels: 1988, 311). Perhaps Peter, being a part of the Jewish community in Rome, had read Hebrews and borrowed from its imagery — though in the far more Jewish context of the Diaspora, rather than using the more Hellenistic imagery of Hebrews.

In any case, it is reasonable to assert that the date of I Peter supports the hypothesis that the images in I Peter would have been immediately understood as metaphorical by the church, since such metaphors were being used elsewhere.

4.2.2 I Peter and the possible

As we have seen, in Paul Ricoeur's view, novel metaphor is actually a more basic or fundamental mode of language than the literal. Ricoeur's approach to metaphor has mostly been applied to the Gospels in the past, for two reasons: the Gospels have been of greater interest to Biblical critics attempting to establish the nature of the 'historical Jesus', and Ricoeur's ideas are more directly applicable to the Gospels because he extends his approach to metaphor into another dimension to encompass the phenomenon of narrative. However, we shall examine I Peter briefly in light of Ricoeur's account.

If metaphor and figurative language are indeed the most fundamental and powerful form of language, because they allow language to touch on the realm of the possible, that is, they disallow us to express their ideas in terms of what we already know and force us to consider new and unknown realms of thought, then it makes a great deal of sense to interpret a passage of Scripture that contains a great deal of metaphor, like I Peter, with an awareness of the nature and power of the

metaphorical. Because I Peter is concerned with the physical application of spiritual things — to encourage the believers not to abandon the faith because their spiritual *possible* is much more significant than their physical *present* — we must treat the metaphors in I Peter as maintaining the tension between an imperfectly known spiritual reality and present physical reality.

Thus when the author of I Peter likens the believers to siblings, for example, this does not merely imply that they should behave towards one another as physical siblings would, but also that they have a spiritual relationship that goes beyond the physical. The important point is this: the precise nature of that relationship is *undefined*, where it diverges from the physical. This causes the readers of I Peter to be continually engaged in that relationship, and never complacent about trying to understand what it entails in the physical world. This kind of power is seen most familiarly in the paradoxes of the New Testament — faith and works, predestination and free will, God and human in one person — but it is also a very present part of the metaphors that are used to describe our relationships with our fellow humans and our relationship with God. These metaphors force us to continually interact with them and involve ourselves in the ongoing process of determining how they affect our present existence.

Seen in this light, it is evident that the overall metaphor of I Peter, that the believer is a stranger, a sojourner, a traveler and alien in the world, has an even greater impact than the other metaphors in the letter. It is not only metaphorical in that it in itself connects the reader with the realm of the possible, but the image of traveling *toward an eventual goal* consciously keeps the possible in the mind of the

reader. It is a meta-metaphor, if you will, that reinforces the power of the possible in all the subsidiary metaphors that are derived and motivated from it. It reminds the reader of I Peter — and us — that these metaphors do in fact have a significance that is more than literal, and raises the reader's view, as it were, beyond the present physical reality, with its hardship and tribulation, to the reader's spiritual status as a citizen of heaven, and to the eventual glory to come.

4.3   Conclusion

4.3.1   Metaphors in I Peter

Thus we see that examining the metaphors in I Peter from the perspective of cognitive science enables us to advance our understanding in several ways. First, George Lakoff's views of the structure of cognitive concepts helps us understand how metaphors are organized and how the relationships between various kinds of metaphor work. This provides us with a means of discovering the relationships between the prototype of a particular concept, like the οἶκος of I Peter, and the various concepts that may be related to it in the same structure. Using Lakoff's characterization of how basic conventional metaphors combine with each other to form common metaphorical templates, we can analyze the use of the Diaspora image.

Indurkhya's account of how the mapping from the source domain of a metaphor to its target enables us to further examine this process in the metaphors in I Peter.

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It enables us to distinguish between metaphor, allegory, and other kinds of figurative language, and determine whether the imagery in I Peter is, in fact, used in a metaphorical way.

When we examine the metaphors in I Peter from this perspective, it becomes evident that it is quite reasonable to consider the metaphor of the Christian as a sojourner in the world, which is based on the image of the Jewish Diaspora, as the overall controlling metaphor of the letter. The metaphor itself serves to reinforce the connection that Ricoeur draws between metaphorical language and the possible world. It allows us to contemplate the message of I Peter in deeper terms than those of our physical existence, and look beyond the images into a deeper realm.

4.3.2   Principles from cognitive science

This thesis has focused particularly on the image of the Diaspora in I Peter. It would be interesting to investigate how far some of the other metaphors extend throughout the book. In particular, the concept of the *Imitatio Christi* might be seen as having an influence throughout more of the letter than merely the last section. It might be interesting to examine how much this image contributes to the paranetic purpose of the book.

Of course, there are other more significant exegetical questions about other parts of the Bible that could be further examined from the perspective of cognitive science. Apocalyptic literature might be an especially suitable area for such research, given that it makes use of highly figurative language and elaborate imagery. There are several areas in which the principles of cognitive science might

be used to great advantage in these areas:

First, the realization that language is based in and bound up with cognition encourages us to consider the categories of a language and a text in light of its culture and context, instead of assuming either that its categories and terms must correspond exactly to the physical world, or that ours must, or that another language's categories must correspond exactly with ours.

Second, understanding that the distinction between literal and figurative language is more a continuum than a fundamental difference allows us to take into account both the temporal nature of figurative language – the progression from novel metaphor to conventional to literal language – and deal with polysemy and ambiguity with far greater flexibility.

And finally, we come to understand that metaphors are not simply extensions of basic physical concepts nor meaningless rhetorical tricks, but a means by which to describe and access a more fundamental reality than our physical existence – the world of the possible.

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