

The Postmodern Metaphor: A Double-Blind

By

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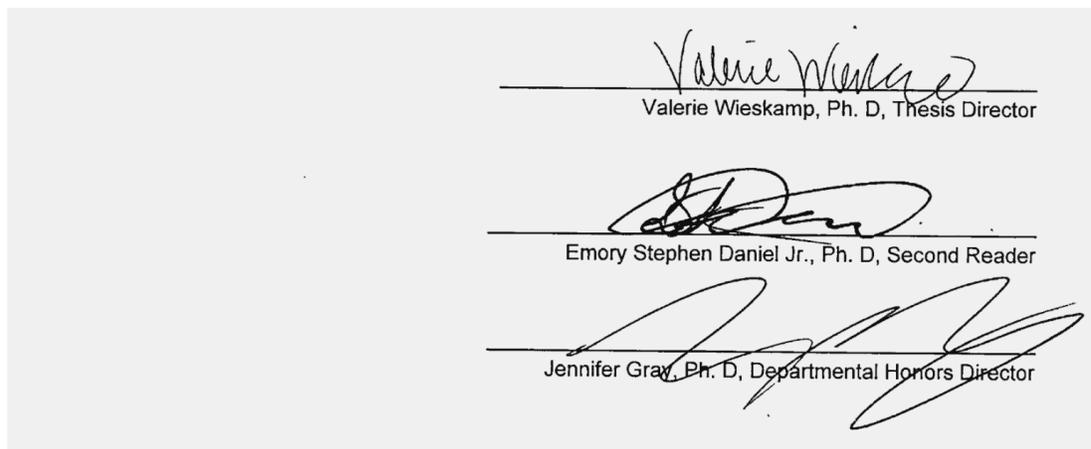
Departmental Honors Thesis
Appalachian State University

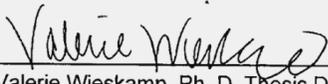
Submitted to the Department of Communication
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Science in Communication Studies

May, 2019

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to orient the conflict of postmodernism and democracy to the conventions of language and the ways in which individuals are lead to mistake metaphor for truth. As the content of this argument is centered around the concept of truth, the metaphor is exposed as a device that both helps and hinders ordinary means of coping with feedback as the line between art and analysis is drawn thicker over time.

Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of "world history," but nevertheless, it was only a minute.

– Friedrich Nietzsche

Nothing, perhaps, ever got nowhere with so much fascinating ado.

– Alan Watts

Introduction: To Starve a Cold, Feed a Fever

The human intellect is driven towards truth insofar as there is an untruth to be proven otherwise. The 21st Century human, with all the communication and knowledge known to the universe, is thought to be closer to truth than any predecessor. What could have changed between generations to make us consider this one to be extraordinary by comparison? We hardly consider the inquiry without a smirk, for what a strangely frivolous question. Not long after, however, we grow dumb by intuition as few elements of the present are known to be grounded by truth. In debt to our loss of words we snatch the first thought that comes to mind and flaunt our diction as if we knew the answer all along. And so it seems that the intellect is so unamused by the exploration of truth, and truth itself, that the only way to answer this question without pandering is to point towards what amazing products of truth we now have; our technology, the vehicle of truth measured by profit. If such is the case, then the answer to our question—what makes us think we are *so* special?—is not that we are any closer to truth, but that we have much more reason to withhold it from ourselves and others; and in this way we are special

because no public has ever been so steered towards confession, as the evidence of this assumption follows.

(1) Given that the public is comprised of individuals, and the individual intellect is driven towards truth, the public, by magnitude, will absolutely objectify the truth in technology and come across tremendous profit. As long as the profit is evident, there may be no apparent untruth to prove otherwise. (2) Given that technologies are mere objects and not the truth itself, however, the dissatisfied individual, driven by untruth, will come to reject the sincerity of public motives. In rejecting the public motive, the individual must develop their own motive, their own truth in lieu. (3) Yet, in order to communicate with others, which is imperative, the individual is obligated to use the conventional technologies and maintain their untruth, resulting in a contradicted population that more or less unknowingly dissimulates into a cultural apprehension known as the postmodern condition. This apprehension might have been left unnamed (therefore, unnoticed) if it were not for the democratic practice that seems to side with truth over untruth by popular vote, and bounds our apprehension to the polar surface of civic life in doing so. (4) Thus, in order for the intellect to overcome the anxiety of the postmodern condition, and rest in truth after all as is the will of the individual and public alike, we must acknowledge the opposition without influence from language, democracy, or any other technology.

To begin, we may see that our gadgets are clearly just so, and so we may try to separate the truth from technology only to realize that the two are quite inseparable. Then we may suppose that if the two may not be separated, then our reason to criticize truth must come from the technology itself. At which point we comfortably resort to causality, according to Alan Watts, with a "curious need to put down human culture and intelligence by calling it a fluky by-product of blind and irrational forces" (12). In this way or another, we may victimize ourselves and blame our technologies for apparently making our lives so annoyingly superficial, and we forget that this problem is an antique in doing so. For even

the hind-sighted are exploited by the present in believing that every case, action, or thought may only be the effect of *something* else by assuming that “there must be causes for all of them going back into an indefinite past. If so, I can’t help what I do” (Watts, 30). Respectively, we charge technology for causing untruth and determine that truth is better off elsewhere, though “elsewhere” is likely just another source of technology that would be sure to “cause” this apprehension in new and unexpected ways.

Moreover, one will wonder why the truth may not be removed from technology, for there must be a more authentic agent, but to seriously consider the scheme is to extend the definition of technology to language; the original vehicle of truth, but not the truth itself. The trouble with language as a tool for extending truth is the same with all technologies; that things are categorized and made useful through a binary system; as everything is to be or not to be. For example, when we speak of something we are ultimately not speaking of anything else, but in order to communicate we must assume that this something represents the total of things, if only for a moment (Burke, 8–9). Confined by language in this way, however, the moment may last a lifetime if we come to value the something as if it were the everything and mistake this for the truth; thus reducing the relevant conflict to untruth. For this reason we may candidly claim our opinion and call it truth, which satisfies the crusade, as Friedrich Nietzsche would claim, insofar as we remain “indifferent toward pure knowledge which has no consequences” (3). But such a truth is essentially defined in opposition to things untruthful, and so the intellect has merely chosen a position to defend as the most rational and, therefore, superior point of view.

In considering those opposed, however, one may wonder about the incoherence of truth—insofar as it must be defined differently from one individual to the next—and may so become seriously threatened by the thought that their truth and perceptual foundation cannot be *the* truth; reality. In taking time to choose a side for the sake of truth, as truth is the drive of the intellect and opposition the

function of language, the issue, then, is that we find ourselves “boxed in some special in-group which defines itself, often with the most elegant subtlety, by the exclusion of an out-group” (Watts, 119). From this point forward, the public is necessarily divided between those in and those out, where each party must be fully convinced of their own position in order to live with “truth,” as such is the trouble with democracy. Now fundamentally opposed, we may reject our intuition, our *sense* of untruth and apprehension, by narrowing our mindness until the trouble objectively appears, as such is the position of our dueling candidates. For this reason, language, democracy, and mere technology alike, Watts suggests, “can, instead of liberating us into the air like birds, fix us to the ground like toadstools” (44).

Hitherto one will hopefully wonder, “is there, then, some kind of a lowdown on this astounding scheme of things;” could there be a trick about truth (Watts, 7)? Perhaps, rather than assuming truth to be some sort of key that solves the puzzle, the truth may be understood within the search itself. As simple as this solution may be, the trouble is, however, that the “matter” of truth remains unaddressed (therefore, unattended) by the intellect, as it is “so obvious and basic that one can hardly find the words for it” (Watts, 12). For the tacit form of truth excludes its content, and no one will ever come close without mentioning the unmentionable; without acknowledging the nothing as much as the something. As such, the truth is taboo, where “the difficulty in realizing this to be so is that conceptual thinking cannot grasp it,” because we do not have words that fit (Watts, 13). Consequently, in order to evaluate truth, we must begin with critical thought in our loss of words and conceptualize that “what lies beyond opposites must be discussed, if at all, in terms of opposites,” as such is the function of metaphor (Watts, 151).

Hence, the purpose of this argument is to explain how the structure of language implies that it is perfectly fine for the truth of one individual to contradict the truth of another, which gives us the gift of conscious attention, intelligence, and expertise, but altogether negates the foundation of language where all elements are inherently connected, and thus the tolerance that constitutes democracy. The

ignorance of which is the limit of truth, the aggravator of disunity, and the foundation of our cultural doubt known as the postmodern condition. To reach this thesis, I review theoretical scholarship guided by the following question: As we assume the truth in language by the disguise of metaphor, could the postmodern condition be more so a symptom of language than a matter of truth? Moreover, how does democracy affect our diagnosis?

To articulate a response, I primarily draw from the theories of Friedrich Nietzsche and Alan Watts, as a couple of revolutionary philosophers who criticize the use of language in speech and culture. I utilize Nietzsche's essay *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense* (1873) to explain how the formation of metaphor is forced by our truth drive, but we often misunderstand the metaphor and conceptually replace the essence of a term with the term itself and the object that comes to mind. From Watts, I apply the lessons within *The Book: On The Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are* (1966) to explain how people of Western culture are compelled by oppositional language to separate their experience from the whole, which produces the taboo of truth and thus the postmodern condition. In the following sections, I begin my analysis by exploring the concepts of postmodernism and metaphor as they relate to this thesis through these and other theorists.¹

Postmodernism: Uncommon Sense

Postmodernism is a contemporary period of social history prompted by critical analysis, though characterized by a problematic relationship between the intellect and the notion of "art" (or critical thinking) as it contradicts the evidence of truth. With this shift in focus to the technical sciences, Michael Calvin McGee found that critics of truth were introduced to "a new way of asking questions that centered on understanding the methods rather than the substance of their academic practice" (274). In normalizing the method of discovering truth, the truth became an element to measure by objectives

¹ As a caveat, the content of this paper is theoretical and meant to be plausible, not definitive. As the primary objective is to export both the trivial and nontrivial influences of language on culture, I highlight only the parts of postmodernism and democracy that pertain to this thesis.

rather than an experience to imagine through platforms like myth, religion and metaphor. Determined in this way to define truth and thus to hold the truth, postmodernism may better be expressed as “the age of analysis and specialization when we lost our vision of the universe in the overwhelming complexity of its details;” for the necessary particularities of science have since replaced the troublesome peculiarities of creation (Watts, 147). This favoritism induced a naturalization of the mechanical practice, the articulation of technology, and a normal worldview of its product as truth.

Given this pressure to translate truth into reason, the truth remains repressed by experts who would rather compare notes with others in order to refine their own ideas, than combine speculation and risk being caught in a paradox. Hence, the environment as expressed by the academy (and those who ought to know better), is translated to the public as a sum of fragments rather than anything that resembles a coherent truth (McGee). In order to discover by analysis, however, Watts contends that the trouble lies in that the whole *must* be ignored, as “perception thus narrowed has the advantage of being hard and bright, but it has to focus one area of the world after another, and one feature after another” (31). Hence, without this conscious attention nothing would have ever been figured to matter, but in this same manner we separate the element of analysis from its ecosystem of the universe. Likewise, the more we figure, the we more know about the elements of the universe, the more clear our picture develops of the total universe. But this picture is just a picture—definitely not an understanding of how the elements universally interact with each other—and in this common misunderstanding we appropriate an idea of common experience that resembles something like “common sense.” The result, however, is more so an individualistic and overgeneralized understanding of shared life, also known as conventional wisdom or *culture*.

Culture, unlike common sense, is not all that common by sense; for with culture we “exist in a matrix of rules, rituals, and conventions that we ‘take for granted’ by assuming their goodness and truth and accepting the conditions they create as the ‘natural order of things’,” and so we do not naturally

relate these conventions to commonality between citizens (McGee, 280). The obstacle, here, with the definition of culture is that citizens may be offered few spaces in which they are invited to consider the role of our total environment. Given that the truth is apparently present (though silenced by the “natural order of things”) with technology, we categorize our experience into “natural order” by habit and without seriously considering the relationship between ourselves and everything else. As such, we act as if everyone were operating under similar conditions, or as if one perspective fits all, and in so doing we take our culture out of context. The concern remains as McGee declares that “discourse,” like culture, “ceases to be what it is whenever parts of it are taken ‘out of context.’ Failing to account for ‘context,’ or reducing ‘context’ to one or two of its parts, means quite simply that one is no longer dealing with discourse as it appears in the world” (283).

Before the postmodern period, by contrast, the matter of truth was relatively straightforward. For example, McGee best summarizes the social physics of the preceding era:

Except for everyday language, discourse within a particular language community was produced from the same resources. Further, all discourse found its influence on the same small class of people who comprised the political nation. And it was the same small class that received the benefits of a homogenized education. There was little cultural diversity, no question that there was in every state a well-defined dominant race, dominant class, dominant gender, dominant history and dominant ethnicity. The silent, taken-for-granted creed of the all true-blue Americans (Frenchmen, Englishmen, etc.) could have been articulated by any one of them who had been conditioned by the education system and admitted as a member in good standing of the political nation, even those who fancied themselves revolutionaries (284).

With the producers of discourse, the experts, united in understanding, their means of influence developed homogenous societal expectations for the public. Presently, however, as knowledge, communication and influence is no longer reserved for those alike, the matter of culture is increasingly

complex and those conventions that we “take for granted” as the “natural order of things” are stretched and stressed without explanation (McGee, 283). Now, with so much diversity in thought and representation, “the only way to ‘say it all’ in our fractured culture is to provide readers/audiences with dense, truncated fragments which cue them to produce a finished discourse in their minds” (McGee, 288). Hence, culture appears, it does not define. Those who wish to understand what culture does, must do so by their own articulation and thus without certainty. Under the circumstances, matters are contemplated without bearing, taken out of context, converted to untruth, and proliferated as truth in oversight. This dynamic, if not by malice, is maintained by the sheer number of things in the realm of consideration, the presumed irrelevance of one subject to the next due to fragmentation, and the pace of evolution in knowledge, given “that much of what one learns in school is already obsolete by graduation day” (Watts, 5).

Amidst the blatant unclarity, the suspicious individual will come to distrust the public, and, threatened by the untruth, they will find solace in the artifice of analysis that produces such matters of truth. Protected and directed with technology, Nietzsche explains how an inattentive person may conclude that, “everything is secure, complete, infinite, regular, and without any gaps. Science will be able to dig successfully in this shaft forever,” without recognizing this thinking to be a matter of isolation rather than consolation (8). Furthermore, Watts explains that because the pace of discovery destabilizes the balance of truth, we cope with untruth by playing “frantic games of one-upmanship,” where those opposed cannot realize that success for all beings is a measure of relativity rather than force (6). Later, he writes that morality among compatriots consequently falters to a “monstrous combination of uncompromising idealism and unscrupulous gangsterism, and thus devoid of the humor and humaneness which enables confessed rascals to sit down together and work out reasonable deals” (132). This emphatic ideology in the individual is brewed by the skepticism of public motives and festers into the divisive “postmodern condition” when left unchecked.

The postmodern condition, though felt and expressed by all kinds of people in different ways, belongs to the silent part of culture—the “natural order of things”— and so those unnaturally, but affected nonetheless, naturally discount themselves from being held responsible for the trouble (McGee, 283). In so doing, our ordinary ways of thinking and feeling become even more literal, and evermore divisive with “deception, flattering, lying, deluding, talking behind the back, putting up a false front, living in borrowed splendor, wearing a mask, hiding behind convention, playing a role for others and for oneself;” all this to conceal the intuition, or anxiety, that the natural order is not grounded by truth, whether or not we think of it in this way (Nietzsche, 2). At which point the contradiction becomes clear: If citizens must develop their own civic attitudes due to the fragmentation of culture, and if people cope with postmodernism by rejecting the public ideology, then the distrust that characterizes postmodernism must be that of the individual who outwardly acts as if “one perspective fits all” in order to protect themselves, but does nothing to live this truth. And in this way, the “apprehension lying tacitly in the back of our minds” becomes so much the matter that we cannot experience authentic unity between citizens (Watts, 12).

Thus, on the surface postmodernism is a name for the current relationship between the individual, the public, and their environment as it relates to truth, though nothing about the way we talk about this relationship will seem relevantly truthful. Now, insofar as we follow these ordinary ways of thinking and feeling, Nietzsche confirms that we will, “under natural circumstances employ the intellect mainly for dissimulation,” but given that we are social animals who must exist among others, the individual eventually “needs to make peace and strives accordingly” from their best interest (2). As common language is the primary link between culture and communication, we make peace with “a uniformly valid and binding designation” for things through metaphor; “and this legislation of language likewise establishes the first laws of truth” (Nietzsche, 2). Considering the significance of the

postmodern condition as an enormous collection of individuals that are evidently allergic to “binding designation,” however, we would be mistaken to think the solution could be so simple (Nietzsche, 2).

The Metaphor: “Common Sense”

The metaphor as a device of language is far more prevalent in our lives than the average person is ready to accept, for the ordinary definition is a practically arbitrary figure of speech that makes our conversation and prose more elegant, and more thoughtful. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explain that the essential grievance to this assumption is that such “figures of speech” are in fact central to communication, as the *“essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”* (5). Given that linguistic communication governs our perception—for what can be known without common language—we consequently notice that “metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but in thought and action” (Lakoff and Johnson, 3). And through the use of metaphor, we come to conceptualize an idea, a concept, based off a thing, an element, experience, or matter of contemplation that brings its essence into perceptual existence. The matter of contemplation certainly exists in the physical world as we see it, but it would not be until its essence is labeled and described, by relating it to other labels that have similar-but-different properties, that we become conceptually aware of its object. At which point the “thing” becomes a metaphorical concept derived from the articulation of its likeness to another thing. And so, “our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature,” and in this way we may hardly notice our own practice of metaphor as “the way we think, what we experience, and what we do everyday is very much a matter of metaphor” (Lakoff and Johnson, 3).

For example, let us further examine the creation of a concept by considering the color blue. In theory, as someone once saw the color and envisioned it in their mind, they made a sound that apparently represented the vision and the sound formed the word “blue.” Each time the person saw the color again, both there and in new circumstances, they would repeat the word “blue” to themselves or

others, and over time “blue” became the requisite description for any combination of light that produces the sight of its color; a concept. “Blue,” however, is a mere representation of the color, and not the color itself, for “the ‘thing in itself’ (which is precisely what the pure truth, apart from any of its consequences, would be) is likewise something quite incomprehensible to the creator of language and something not in the least worth striving for” (Nietzsche, 3). The practice of language, therefore, is not to know or discuss things as they are by themselves, but to compare concepts like “blue” in contrast to other concepts like “green.” As the conceptual indicator is metaphorical, Nietzsche claims that we “possess nothing but metaphors for things—metaphors which in no way correspond to the original entities” (4). Metaphors, Watts suggests, are then “simply ways of ‘figuring’ the world which we agree to follow so that we can act in cooperation, as we agree about inches and hours, numbers and words, mathematical systems and languages” (88). Hence, the foundation of language is fundamentally untruthful, but we classify our perception with metaphor in a common and cultural way, thus the intellect “likewise establishes the first laws of truth” (Nietzsche, 2).

Further, let us consider how the word “blue” is proliferated to point where it becomes a concept. As “blue” appears in countless circumstances, we know that one case of “blue” is never completely the same as another case of “blue;” if not by location, then by value. And so we figure that the concept “is formed by arbitrarily discarding these individual differences and by forgetting the distinguishing aspects” (Nietzsche, 4). Thus, a “word becomes a concept insofar as it simultaneously has to fit countless more or less similar cases—which means, purely and simply, cases which are never equal and altogether unequal” (Nietzsche, 4). We grasp the concept of “blue,” and the utility of the word, “by overlooking what is individual and actual,” and in this way we may use the word to describe any occurrence of its likeness. In practice, our collection of concepts forms a system that designates the relationship between our concepts so that the meaning of one may be checked by the meaning of another, just as the color wheel categorizes “blue” with the other colors and likewise separates “blue”

from happenings of “red,” “yellow,” “green” and so on. “Our concepts,” therefore, “structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people” (Lakoff and Johnson, 3). This is the duty of language, the order of society, and the vehicle of truth, as “to be truthful means to employ the usual metaphors” (Nietzsche, 5).

Then what exactly is truth, if not language? Nietzsche best explains the motion of metaphor in culture with his discussion on the inherent fiction of language, where he identifies the truth as:

A movable host of metaphor, metonymies, and; anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions—they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer coins (5).

This quote clarifies the point that all language and all thought is untruthful, though not untruthful in the way that we think of as “misinformation.” Rather, language is untruthful because the words, the forms, the objects, do not contain the essence of the “thing” they mean to represent. For example, Watts satirizes this trap by assuming that “one must take care not to confuse image with fact, which would be like climbing up the signpost instead of the road” (Watts, 13). In further explanation, Nietzsche credits the practice of metaphor and the ways in which our language *could* inherit the truth:

Thus, to express [metaphor] morally, this is the duty to lie according to a fixed convention, to lie with the herd and in a manner binding upon everyone. Now man of course forgets that this is the way things stand for him. Thus he lies in the manner indicated, unconsciously and in accordance with habits which are centuries’ old; and precisely *by means of this unconsciousness* and forgetfulness he arrives at his sense of truth. From the sense that one is obliged to designate one thing as “red,” another as “cold,” and a third as “mute,” there arises a moral

impulse in regard to truth. The venerability, reliability, and utility of truth is something which a person demonstrates for himself from the contrast with the liar, whom no one trusts and everyone excludes. As a “*rational*” being, he now places his behavior under the control of abstractions (5).

This quote from Nietzsche shows us how everyone ought to follow suit if we wish to satisfy “that puzzling truth drive,” given that language is inherently untruthful (2). But, as metaphors make up our conceptual system, and as our “conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of,” Lakoff and Johnson explain that “we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines” (3). And when we act along certain lines, Watts argues that we “resort to the convention of using dualistic language as the lines of perspective are used to show depth on a flat surface” (151). In so doing, we take communication at face-value and forget that “the original perceptual metaphors are metaphors and [we take] them to be the things themselves” (Nietzsche, 7).

Hence, the use of metaphor in everyday language is the foundation of what we think of as common sense. In using metaphor appropriately despite the postmodern condition, we may satisfy our seemingly desperate search for truth. However, if the postmodern condition includes the common rejection of public ideology on the basis of inauthentic nature, and metaphor is a necessarily common public ideology that is inauthentic by nature, then it appears that the taboo energizing our condition is a contradiction, in essence, all the more taboo. In short, postmodernism is a double-blind, as Watts explains, “a game with self-contradictory rules, a game doomed to perpetual self-frustration” (73). The symptoms of the matter have us occupied in a circular quest for truth on the public scale, as the truth is defined by illusion and can never be experienced until accepted as such. With the foundation of this argument now settled, the principle assumption from this point forward is that much of our cultural distaste with the public is as much an illusion as it is a metaphor. Furthermore, by identifying the metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson claim that we may begin to break down the conceptual content of

culture—the postmodern condition—through language, as “the concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured, and, consequently, the language is metaphorically structured” (5). With metaphor so oriented as the sly trap of language, we may now reconsider the strain of postmodernism by evaluating some patterns found in everyday life.

The Postmodern Metaphor: A Double-Blind

“Postmodernism,” the “postmodern condition”, “post truth” and “amusing ourselves to death” are metaphors that carry the conceptual relationship between the modern human, the public, and their environment as it relates to truth (McGee; Harari; Postman). As everything has to do with this relationship, the social being of the intellect must address it throughout every conversation and throughout every thought. In broadening our terms to “misinformation,” “hierarchy,” “egalitarianism,” “relativity,” “collective,” “truth,” and so on, we may come to realize that anything we think of is, by extension, a concept of postmodernism. Hence, we hardly notice the use of ubiquitous terms that describe the relationship less clearly; for the concept itself is unclear. And we are misguided not only in that we must use language to share our culture, but more so by the way that the illusory nature of a metaphor contains within itself the silent, “taken for granted” parts of culture (McGee, 283). Take the term “misinformation,” for example, as we generally use it to talk about how news representatives relay inaccurate information for whatever reason, but we do not normally use the term to talk about why the spread of inaccurate information is so prevalent that we have a term for it, as the use of the term excludes the discussion. Or perhaps we ought to consider the term “truth,” for we generally use the term as a noun to categorize things as either genuine or non-genuine, but we do not normally use the term as a verb to describe how the act of categorizing is the more genuine matter of truth, and why would we? If all that “truth” requires is a measure of authenticity, insofar as it appears, then we ought not go any further to explain why. Hence, the function of the metaphor that addresses the taboo, the

concept and truth itself, is lost beneath the surface of its form without suspicion, as “it is hard indeed to notice anything for which the languages available to us have no description” (Watts, 33).

Indeed, as everyday language describes our postmodern condition, the intellect unbeknowingly converses with others about the state of truth and thus becomes weaker to the concept of untruth, for it is much more difficult to hold a bearing on the state of truth without direct relation to its context. In this way, Nietzsche proposes that the individual may only confront the postmodern condition by taking it literally, for “only by forgetting this primitive world of metaphor can one live with any repose, security, and consistency,” with the “invincible faith that this sun, this window, this table is a truth in itself” (7). Thus, in relating ourselves to the public with the literal interpretation of postmodernism, our culture is normalized “into less colorful, cooler concepts,” so that the intellect may “entrust the guidance of [their] life and conduct to them” in contrast to the aspects of culture’s silent, therefore, intrinsic ambiguity (Nietzsche, 5).

For example, the messy, nondescript and modest interpretation of the “postmodern condition” would be so: (1) If the term “condition” is to describe the relationship between the modern human, the public and the environment as it relates to truth, then the status of this relationship must have changed. (2) If the term “postmodern” is to describe a unique era that previous humans did not experience, then our survival techniques should be different than they were before so as to accommodate the “condition.” (3) With critical thinking we recognize the differences not only between ourselves and ancestors, but also between ourselves and others, and we find the foundation of our condition as differences unappreciated as such. (4) Empathetically, we come to terms with the “postmodern condition” by celebrating our differences as truth, and we are fulfilled by realizing what we had always secretly wished would be so. (5) In practicing truth, we find meaning in connectivity and carry on with the purpose of yours as with mine; and in the safety of this sureness, the “postmodern condition”

becomes a landmark of human history where individuals may prosper in sync with the public as both live in the love that was there all along.

Contrariwise, the less colorful, decisive and literal interpretation of the “postmodern condition” follows: (1) If the term “condition” is to describe the relationship between the intellect, the public and the environment as it relates to truth, then the status of this relationship must be critical and potentially dangerous. (2) If the term “postmodern” is to describe a unique culture that ancestral humans did not experience, then we feel obviously unique when defending ourselves for survival from this threatening “condition.” (3) In critical analysis we subtract ourselves from being held responsible for the condition itself and turn hostile towards others in assuming they must be to blame. (4) In so justifying, we grapple with the “postmodern condition” by alienating ourselves from the public project, and we feel honest in practicing what we already suspected from others. (5) Comforted by this “truth,” we find personal meaning in tribalism and carry on with the purpose of mine over yours; and with our guard at bay, the “postmodern condition” secures foothold as the tyrant of taboo—where no family may totally trust another—without so much as an explanation.

The differences between these two interpretations host the foundation of our disgruntled, unproductive search for truth because it hides in plain sight when our “eyes merely glide over the surface of things and see ‘forms’,” as is so often the case (Nietzsche, 2). The communication of truth, therefore, as Lakoff and Johnson propose, is “not poetic, fanciful, or rhetorical; it is literal,” and so we cannot help but understand, discuss, and implement our ideas to the letter (5). For example, if the former interpretation is considered more foolish than truthful—as there is already peace among people, but to talk about it so earnestly implies that there is none—then the latter (in opposition) is considered more vindicated than untruthful, as to talk of peace so gravely implies that there is none and so we rest assured knowing that there may no be none. According to how we act as if truth were literal, we are drawn to the latter interpretation because it follows the form of our feelings: we feel unsure despite the

appearance of sureness in modernity, and to quell this unsureness it prescribes an objective course of action: survival by conquest. In contrast, the former is no more felt than it is apparent, as it requires a practice as intangibly vague as “compassion” or “unity.” In which case, even if an individual was so thoughtful as to claim the former, they could not stand a chance against those imposed to conquer, and by default they heed the opposition. Thus, in order to cut to the chase, Nietzsche grieves that our senses are plainly “content to receive stimuli and, as it were, to engage in a groping game on the backs of things” (2).

On the other hand, it is no accident that we have been lead to conceptualize the truth literally, for the synonyms of “literal” may be “accurate,” “actual,” “authentic,” “unvarnished,” and even “true.” As it stands, a portion of the conceptual network of truth characterizes the concept of truth “and the language follows suit” (Lakoff and Johnson, 7). In this way, we literally understand and experience truth as something to materialize as a “matter of fact,” that can be “written” or “proofed.” Likewise, we understand and experience untruth as the kind of thing that can be “metaphoric,” “figurative” or plainly “false.” With this linguistic orientation, the individual that would be distracted by the possibility of truth beyond form is now relieved and purposed by the truth as it literally appears. That we account for truth in terms of objects and occurrences allows us to distinguish parts of our experience, our culture, and “treat them as discrete entities or substances of a uniform kind,” which is crucial for an organization like the public (Lakoff and Johnson, 26). Moreover, Lakoff and Johnson explain that by taking things literally “we can identify our experiences as entities or substances, we can refer to them, categorize them, group them, and quantify them—and, by this means, reason about them” (26). As such, Nietzsche indicates that the “hardening and congealing of a metaphor guarantees absolutely nothing concerning its necessity and exclusive justification,” and in this way we are nowhere lead to deeper thinking about our circumstance, nor the truth itself (8). With the intellect driven towards truth and thereby vested in objectivity, it becomes absolutely necessary to interpret the postmodern condition literally if only

because everybody else is doing it. Perhaps this is punishment for judging a book by its cover, and the very reason we were told not to in the first place.

The intellect, thus blinded by “truth,” is now clearly threatened by those contrarian and will thrive in a sense of a priori, for great minds think alike and the rest remain in opposition. But, as “human purposes typically require us to impose artificial boundaries that make physical phenomena discrete,” the public opposition would likewise not exist without a unifying source like democracy (Lakoff and Johnson, 26). As such, the difficulty with postmodernism may be that while each citizen is presented with a choice between us or them, as Nietzsche speaks of opposites in general, “there arises a moral impulse in regard to truth,” where one side must be more honorable than the other (5). Upon examining how the structure of truth is organized by language, and given that the intellect is driven towards truth, we recognize a collection of hundreds of millions of individuals that relate to the whole with this inclusive and ruthless fight across opposing sides, “for the thrill of the tale is to find out how the good people will get the better of the bad” (Watts, 16). As distressed and disorganized citizens of “freedom” and “liberty” as the “natural order of things,” what direction we find lies the rule of government, with the weight of truth now located in binary code (McGee, 283).

Democracy: In Loco Parentis

In considering the state of truth through the lense of postmodernism, we find that language intrinsically defines both the content of experience and limitations of experience; and can thereby produce a simulation of truth in contradiction to reality. In sequence, democracy is a system, a technology, a tool, and a metaphor, that extrinsically defines the experience of postmodernism by correlating the truth with power; and with this power it produces a simulation of object truth. For example, in the previous section I discussed how the vocabulary of truth forms a systematic way of talking about, understanding, and experiencing truth, and so if the postmodern condition is described as a generational apprehension that public matters are unbalanced, unfair, and unclear, then the reality

may be that things are very much unbalanced, unfair, and unclear. Where the literal interpretation of postmodernism henceforth claims “apprehension” within the untruth (or silent aspect) of conceptual culture, the democratic practice declares the reality of this apprehension by providing an equitable, yet volatile and deterministic system; the grim reaper or guardian of truth, according to position.

Moreover, if democratic voting comes down to a decision between democrats or republicans, liberals or conservatives, left or right, then the intellect may weigh their concept of truth between definitive options. As such, Scott Welsh supposes that “democracy might be seen as the power of the people—every single one of them—to compete for the power to find or produce a habitable space in which they can protect and build upon what is important to them;” in this case, truth (160). When we are presented with clear options, therefore, we are given the impression that we must compress our truth to fit the bill and hope to choose wisely as Watts jests, “the more people who agree with us, the less nagging insecurity about our position” (10). Several other scholars similarly underscore the importance of persuasion, or rhetoric in democracy (Allen; Farrell; Hariman; Lippmann).

With democracy, in short, the debate between truth and untruth becomes an institutional practice, where choosing truth and conquering untruth is personified in terms of the majority. In this fashion, Welsh explains how the language we use to talk about democracy determines our cultural fidelity to the system, as well as its efficacy in rhetorical terms:

Rhetoric is the production of texts that win support by receiving a range of appropriations wide enough to constitute a voting majority. It creates the democratically essential appearance of coherence out of incoherence that connects institutional authority to cultural authority—the lived experience of democratic legitimacy (161).

With this quote, Welsh explains us how democracy, like language, is more so a matter of persuasion than preference or representation. Democracy as it relates to postmodernism, is, therefore, a device that justifies our need to conquer the truth of others with power, rather than the possessor of the truth,

because the way we talk about it does nothing for the exploration of truth itself. Nonetheless, we trust the operation (as we trust language) because we are not motivated to account for the relationship between sides. Thus, we interact with democracy not only as if it provides truth, but more so as if winning is the only way to obtain the truth (in societal terms), as the evidence of this assumption follows in two parts.

First, when the results of a democratic vote are final, the “truth” aspect of the opposition is temporarily simulated for those who voted with the majority as well as for those who did not, in theory. Those who voted with are satisfied that their truth has been confirmed by the public, and in this way they are encouraged to maintain both the practice and their position in the next time around. Conversely, those who did not vote with the majority may suffer from cultural outcasting as the minority, and in frustration they become increasingly consumed with revenge, thus all the more subordinate to the system. Moreover, if an individual chooses neither side they will remain as an outlier; ineffective to the process and irrelevant to the outcome. In any case, our culture utilizes the democratic vote as a way to determine “truth” by persuading the majority to one side or the other, which flatters the intellect’s sense of balance until the next round.

Second, as democratic elections are repeated every so often, their relevance is maintained through individuals not only by the thrill of the outcome, but more so by the fact that winning requires hard work and creativity. In order to win, therefore, we must invest our attention, time, and artistry to the cause; the more we invest, the higher the stakes, the more convinced we must be about our position. The intellect, now committed to a position, will avert the common ground at all costs, if not out of contempt, then to avoid commonality, therefore, confusion. When the votes are counted, the most persuasive and powerful players will win, and, having gave it their best shot, the underdogs kick the dust the and train their tricks until the next round. In either case, both parties contribute to the system and look forward to competing again with new rules and new players. Given that the situation

appears to be a tragically repetitive cycle, Watts cleverly suggests that democracy could be thought of as “a fight haunted by chronic frustration,” and we will never discover truth in this manner, “because we are doing something as crazy as trying to keep the mountains and get rid of the valleys” (35).

Despite the contradiction, this opposition is so much the way of Western culture that the democratic concept is historically generated within the minds of millions, which “finally appears on the same occasion every time,” and thus acquires “at last the same meaning for men it would have if it were the sole necessary image” (Nietzsche, 8). Following Nietzsche, the paradox between components becomes clear as the anticipation of a nearing election leads people to think that either the truth has since been compromised and so must be redefined, or that the truth is at odds and so must be defended. In either case, the untruth eventually returns, and so truth remains as a debate that may only be publicly settled through democracy. Nevertheless, when the untruth returns, we act as if “the generated image were a strictly causal one,” and blame it all on the system (Nietzsche, 8). Over time, democracy, rather than a metaphor for a method to determine who has the power (and totally unrelated to truth beyond power), becomes personified in culture as a legitimate matter of truth all by its powerful self, and the burden of truth is lifted from the individual. As such, Nietzsche declares that to wonder which side is the correct or more honorable “is quite meaningless, for this would have to have been decided previously in accordance with the criterion of the *correct perception*, which means, in accordance with a criterion which is *not available*” (7). As any individual may freely see through the surface of democracy and understand that this truth-seeking method is simply redundant, the system, as a “thing,” still maintains the cultural notion that all matters of untruth will be objectified and settled by democratic majority thereafter. In motion, and to scale, we seem to have forgotten that Uncle Sam demands personal emancipation in the conquest of others “is nevertheless merely the *residue of a metaphor*” (Nietzsche, 6).

Moving forward, if we are to reach homeostasis with truth we must extract the metaphor.

Perhaps the first step of extraction should be prefaced by Watts as he reminds us that when it comes to truth, “there really is nothing to clutch and no one to clutch it. This is depressing only so long as there remains a notion that there might be some way of fixing it, of putting it off just once more,” as such is the case with language, democracy, and the more trivial technologies (39). In an effort to break this chain, Watts—as a pioneer of universal theory—thusly introduces the quest at hand by interpreting why we ought to sincerely consider the whole in natural terms:

Taking, therefore, a longer and wider view of things, the entire project of “conquering nature” appears more and more of a mirage—an increase in the pace of living without fundamental change of position, as the Red Queen suggested. But technical progress becomes a way of stalling faster and faster because of the basic illusion that man and nature, the organism and the environment, the controller and the controlled are quite different things. We might “conquer” nature if we could first, or at the same time, conquer our own nature, though we do not see that human nature and “outside” nature are all of a piece. In the same way, we do not see that “I” as the knower and controller am the same fellow as “myself” as something to be known and controlled (Watts, 50–51).

As Watts suggests, we must address the taboo point blank; that *nothing* lies beneath the surface of language. For opposites are, beyond a shadow of a doubt, very much dependent on each other, and thus to think of democracy the producer of truth may only appear logical “upon ignoring, or screening out of consciousness, the interdependence between two sides” (Watts, 41). And with this idea we may begin to uncover exactly how the metaphor lead us astray.

Truth: My Country, Right or Wrong

The purpose of this final section is to reorient the intellect to language, technology, postmodernism, and democracy to the way they work through metaphor. As we have seen how

language fosters opposition and the ways in which it affects our culture, we may now consider more seriously how it is that preferring one side over the other is what Nietzsche claims to be “so much the rule and the law among men that there is almost nothing which is less comprehensible than how an honest and pure drive for truth could have arisen among them” (2). In narrowing the critique to those oblivious to metaphor, however, as “man has an invincible inclination to allow himself to be deceived,” we reach the malfunction at once (Nietzsche, 2). For to think, speak, act, understand and experience is to use metaphor, and to systematically comprehend part of a concept in terms of another. And although our conceptual system allows us to find similarities between concepts, it likewise hides other portions of the concept and, therefore, the orientation of the single concept in relation to our system of concepts (Lakoff and Johnson). In this fashion, Watts argues that we are influenced “to regard some bits of perception, or some features of the world, as more noteworthy, more significant, than others. To these we attend, and the rest we ignore—for which reason conscious attention is at the same time *ignore-ance* (i.e., ignorance)” (32). In response, Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate the catch of metaphor:

For example, in the midst of a heated argument, when we are intent on attacking our opponent's position and defending our own, we may lose sight of the cooperative aspects of arguing. Someone who is arguing with you can be viewed as giving you his time, a valuable commodity, in an effort at mutual understanding. But when we are preoccupied with the battle aspects, we often lose sight of the cooperative aspects (10).

Further justifying the previous claims, Nietzsche clarifies how the catch is just as necessary as it is (literally) destructive by articulating how we may not understand the message without shutting out irrelevant concepts, and within the narrowed attention we lose the influence of universality; the most relevant concept of all:

Everything marvelous about the laws of nature, everything that quite astonishes us therein and seems to demand explanation, everything that might lead us to distrust idealism: all this is

completely and solely contained within the mathematical strictness and inviolability of our representations of time and space. But we produce these representations in and from ourselves with the same necessity with which the spider spins. If we are forced to comprehend all things only under these forms, then it ceases to be amazing that in all things we actually comprehend nothing but these forms (8).

In short, when we “lose sight of the cooperative aspects” between things, we mistake the things to be independent instances of their own universe, as such is the trouble with the fragmentation of culture (Lakoff and Johnson, 10). But this is not the way things are, and as we have seen in previous sections the effect of this mistake is anything but arbitrary. Thus, in order to reclaim our senses, and the truth (at last), Watts proposes that, “the ‘single glance’ of our spotlight, narrowed attention, which has been taught to confuse its glimpses with separate ‘things,’ must somehow be opened to the full vision” (107). In being open to the full vision, the metaphor may never be mistaken for truth nor separated from the environment that supports it. But without the possibility for the essence of things—and so too the interconnectedness of everything—to “appear,” opening the vision is certainly not easy for those who must see to believe, as the evidence of this assumption follows in two parts.

First, the problem is not that opposites are merely two ends of a spectrum that express variations of the same thing, the problem is that we do not have ordinary, intermediary language to express how opposites could possibly be variations of the same thing. For example, where opposites find themselves in hard terms like “happiness” or “sadness,” we express the intermediary between the two with more conceptual terms like “ambivalence,” “dispassion,” or “detachment.” These terms may satisfy the expression of being neither happy nor sad, and thus resemble a sort of truth, but more so they “remain nebulous ideas without becoming vivid feelings or experiences,” and for this uncertain reason we do not naturally relate “ambivalence,” “dispassion,” nor “detachment” to the certain feeling of “happiness,” nor “sadness” (Watts, 34). Moreover, because “happiness” and “sadness” are so well

integrated in our culture that it is inconvenient to express the emotions by any other term, we also almost always measure one in contrast to the other; and in this way we think of “happiness” as fundamentally antagonistic to “sadness” (even though the leading synonym would be “unhappiness”).

As sadness is taken out of the context of happiness, and happiness out of the context of sadness, we are left with two entirely separate feelings; one of which is bad, and so the other of which must be good. From there we develop the “correct perception” by conceptualizing the terms—“which,” Nietzsche reminds us, “would mean ‘the adequate expression of an object in the subject’”—without noticing that an “adequate expression” would be impossible without accounting for the underlying unity between opposites; at which point, “happiness” becomes a matter of “sadness” and vice versa (7). And so to favor one is to reject the whole, as Nietzsche suggests, which is surely just as much a shame for the sake of happiness as it is for sadness. Furthermore, when we are ambivalent, dispassioned, or detached, we do not justify the feeling in plain language like “neither happy nor sad,” and in so feeling we confuse the experience to be something more similar to “doubt,” “apprehension,” or “anxiety,” as such is the tone of all sensed-but-not-experienced intuition. With the intellect oriented to the whole in this way, our ambivalence, dispassion, and detachment will always remain as skepticism on the public scale. And without reason to see that “all so-called things and events ‘going together,’ like the head and tail of the cat,” we resolve our uncertainty by sticking to either pole (Watts, 35).

Second, as we locate the problem between opposites we are ever frustrated by obligatorily oppositional terms. Watts explains that the trouble “is not only that language is dualistic, insofar as words are labels for mutually exclusive classes,” the trouble is that the words are “so central and so basic to my existence,” that the intellect may never realize how we handle them as objects rather than tools (Watts, 152). For example, the meanings of “happiness” and “sadness” are so regular that they may be considered to “have an existence independent of people and contexts” (Lakoff and Johnson, 11). This is true of all terms that can be spontaneously used and yet ensured that “all the participants in the

conversation understand the sentences in the same way” (Lakoff and Johnson, 12). For, in addition to oppositional terms like “happiness” and “sadness” (or “life” and “death;” “black” and “white”), consider how common nouns like “music,” “game,” or “road” also provide common understanding by conjuring a “thing” that may be transposed without atrophy. Lakoff and Johnson explain that in these cases “it is far more difficult to see that there is anything hidden by the metaphor or even to see that there is a metaphor here at all,” because such objectivity is “so much the conventional way of thinking about language that it is sometimes hard to imagine that it might not fit reality” (11).

Contrariwise, terms like “ambivalence,” “dispassion,” and “detachment” are much harder to objectify because they depend on their context in order to carry meaning between citizens, as the “words are too slow and too clumsy for describing such things, and conscious attention is too narrow for keeping track of all their details” (Watts, 156). Given that these concepts are already commonly misunderstood beneath opposites, we may not credibly communicate with each other without relying heavily on the provided context. But, given that each individual has built their own conceptual system to orient such terms to said context, and the said context has been decontextualized from the whole, we see how the “very systematicity that allows us to comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another” will “keep us from focusing on other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with that metaphor” (Lakoff and Johnson, 10). In this way, even those who consciously reject the mainstream and turn inwards for truth will preserve the mainstream values, whereas the meanings of “ambivalence,” “dispassion,” and “detachment” may be refined between opposites from person to person, but the concept is still conceptually separated from “happiness” and “sadness;” and in that respect their use will always be “coherent with the major orientational metaphors of the mainstream culture” (Lakoff and Johnson, 25).

As we have identified the obstruction of meaning between the opposites of language, as well as the formation of meaning through metaphor, we may now contend that truth is a matter of perception

and, therefore, an ultimately unified and meaningful public aspiration, as the evidence of this assumption follows. (1) If what we consider to be true is really the manifestation of a metaphor as a “thing,” then this truth, Nietzsche pleases, “is a thoroughly anthropomorphic truth which contains not a single point which would be ‘true in itself’ or really and universally valid apart from man” (6). (2) As the intellect is driven by truth in spite of untruth, which must be all that is left unnamed, then what “the investigator of such truths is seeking is only the metamorphosis of the world into man,” and in doing so the intellect may only assimilate with the conventions of culture, as such is the case of the postmodern condition (Nietzsche, 7). (3) The individual, therefore, operates in search of truth in the same manner as the public, whereas our priorities and definitions may vary, but are altogether “coherent with the major orientational metaphors of the mainstream culture” (Lakoff and Johnson, 25). In this way, when it comes to perception, one point of view *can* fit all.

Basically, yet radically, in same way that conceptual metaphors systemize our universe and, therefore, represent the universe in whole, individuals, as the creators of metaphor, are likewise a matter of metaphor and, therefore, represent the universe (both within and without) themselves. As we reach this pinnacle point, Watts explains that “every individual is an expression of the whole realm of nature, a unique action of the total universe,” and in the same way that we are not motivated to understand metaphors as they are, this fact “is rarely, if ever, experienced by most individuals” (9). Moreover, “even those who know it to be true in theory do not sense or feel it” because they must still use metaphor in consistence with culture—where they, too, must take themselves for objects—and “continue to be aware of themselves as isolated ‘egos’ inside bags of skin” (Watts, 9). Hence, the body of the individual is a metaphor for metaphor (or a meta-metaphor), the object of the universe that operates in the same motion as the solar system. And just like metaphor, language, technology, postmodernism, and democracy, the body can be “considered as a wall, barrier, or boundary which definitively separates oneself from the world—despite the fact that it is covered with pores breathing air

and with nerve-ends relaying information" (Watts, 56). In addition, the body, thus the metaphor, "informs us just as much as it outforms; it is as much a bridge as a barrier" (Watts, 56). Where to sum, Watts completes this thought with a most appropriate illustration:

"Individual" is the Latin form of the Greek "atom"—that which cannot be cut or divided any further into separate parts. We cannot chop off a person's head or remove his heart without killing him. But we can kill him just as effectively by separating him from his proper environment. This implies that the only true atom is the universe—that total system of interdependent "thing-events" which can be separated from each other only in name. For the human individual is not built as a car is built. He does not come into being by assembling parts, by screwing a head on to a neck, by wiring a brain to a set of lungs, or by welding veins to a heart. Head, neck, heart, lungs, brain, veins, muscles, and glands are separate names but not separate events, and these events grow into being simultaneously and interdependently. In precisely the same way, the individual is separate from his universal environment only in name. When this is not recognized, you have been fooled by your name. Confusing names with nature, you come to believe that having a separate name makes you a separate being. This is—rather literally—to be spellbound (69–70).

But, as the previous sections have expressed the quiet ways in which we are prone to spells, the intellect has a very hard time realizing this ultimate truth; and so we resort to untruth by our own definition without understanding "that our most private thoughts and emotions are not actually our own. For we think in terms of languages and images which we did not invent, but which were given to us by our society" (Watts, 70). At last, if the intellect could give up this sensation Nietzsche supposes that our "self-consciousness"—our doubt, apprehension, and anxiety—would evaporate, for between opposites "there is no causality, no correctness, and no expression; there is, at most, an *aesthetic* relation;" a metaphor, "for which I there is required, in any case, a freely inventive intermediate sphere

and mediating force" (7). Thus, what lies between opposites cannot be expressed in form because the mediator is you, the individual (and not the body), the public (and not the opposition), the "being" (and not the "thing"), the universe (and not the matter).

At last, as we near the end of my statement, the answer to our initial question—what makes us think we are *so special*?—should be that after all of this scientific discovery and time spent digging deeper into the compartments of rationality, our era is more disoriented to truth than any other and, consequently, more preoccupied by the object of truth than any other. Following suit, my first thesis question—as we assume the truth in language by the disguise of metaphor, could the postmodern condition be more so a symptom of language than a matter of truth?—is confirmed on my account, because the postmodern condition itself is a metaphor. Though it would also be fair to neither confirm nor deny, because as long as language is perceived literally it is also experienced literally. In this way, we created the postmodern condition just as much as we live the postmodern condition, as "the most fundamental values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in the culture" (Lakoff and Johnson, 24). In either case, the widespread apprehension known as the postmodern condition is logical, for the behavior of language itself is apprehensive!

Thus, the answer to my second question—how does democracy affect our diagnosis?—is to be that democracy personifies the opposition of language and the apprehension of culture in the form of popular vote. In consideration of what we learned about opposites as they relate to the whole, however, we may now reestablish the value of democracy as a matter of equitable self-interest, because "all winners need losers; all saints need sinners; all sages need fools" (Watts, 118; Allen; Welsh). For the outcome of a democratic vote depends on how you look at it, and in each instance the "cause" of winning and losing depends on circumstances of the whole; and so, with democracy, language, and all

other technologies, “it would be best to drop the idea of causality and use instead the idea of relativity” (Watts, 95).

In conclusion, with a lesson in pragmatic relativity, when the essence of an element remains no matter how many components are added, the essence of the element must apply to all components. Thus, “any galaxy, any star, any planet, or any observer can be taken as the central point of reference, so that everything is central in relation to everything else!” (Watts, 29). All things considered, when we see through the illusion of metaphor as an illusion and nothing more, we understand that nothing may be valued without its relationship to every other thing; and likewise, when we see through the illusion of the individual, we may begin to understand that the ego cannot be valued without its relationship to every other ego. Penultimately, when the relativity of metaphor is understood, it becomes “impossible to think of oneself as better than, or superior to, others for having done so” (Watts, 21). Ergo, the conflict of matters, both public and private, is to “be understood, or explained, in terms of situations just as words must be understood in the context of sentences, paragraphs, chapters, books, libraries, and... life itself,” to be sure; “not only because every situation is infinitely complex, but also because the total situation is the universe” (Watts, 97). In conclusion, when the going gets tough, we *may* point fingers wheresoever and save ourselves the burden of guilt for all humanity, but when the tough gets going, we notice that our fingers are definitely connected to our bodies and are, therefore, emphatically relevant to any way in which they point.

Conclusion: The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

So, the intellect is driven towards truth insofar as there is untruth to be proven otherwise. Given the nature of language, there will always untruth to be proven otherwise insofar as the intellect does not take care to notice the metaphor. Thus, the individual that remembers the nature of language is especially free from such trivialities, and with this freedom can produce the most creative and groundless works of art; the product of genuine truth, but not the truth itself. At a time in social history

where the regular is enforced to replace the irregular, albeit for higher pay, we must be cautious that our tendency to replace the truth with things that represent the truth also purges the magic from our individual experience; the wide-eyed wonder that maintains an intoxicating gamble against the ever-changing odds, as such is the case with truth and the meaning of life itself. But, all things being equal, we must not assume a total victory over the will of untruth; not now and not ever. For even if the truth is understood, we must abandon it from-time-to-time in order to meet the superficial requirements of our daily lives; if not to live with the herd, then to merely continue living at all. But, as things come and go, the truth will likewise resurface when we notice that “change is in some sense an illusion, for *we are always at the point where any future can take us!*” (Watts, 47).

Thus, the central meaning of this thesis may be even more general than the superficiality of language and culture, as it comes down to the explicit truth—insofar as the truth may be explicit—for the reality of this conclusion follows in two parts. (1) We will never “arrive” at truth. No matter how many times we divide the universe into comprehensive parts, no matter how many things we know as a “matter of fact,” the proof will never compare to what we can perceive with our own intuition. Moreover, the more things we define as a matter of fact, the more bothered we are by those things left undefined; as Watts puts it simply, “when the outcome of a game is certain, we call it quits and begin another” (45). As such, we may never be totally satisfied by *anything* we discover. (2) Just as we can neither obtain nor control the truth, we cannot do away with our passion for truth. We may lose sense of it, to be sure, but, with Watts’ relative terms, if “every this goes with every that,” then “without others there is no self, and without somewhere else there is no here, so that—in this sense—self is other and here is there” (124). In essence, the truth is just as much the untruth as the untruth is the truth, for the truth is human, as Nietzsche declares, “and only its possessor and begetter takes it so solemnly—as though the world’s axis turned within it” (1). As we move forward, we do so without fear of the taboo, without distaste for the other, and without repeating our humble mistakes, for though we

suffer more deeply and more often when compassioned, we expose the fundamental antagonist and flourish indefinitely for having done so.

Dedicated to my mom and dad, and the beings between opposites thereafter.

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