

TREASURING THE BEAUTY OF JESUS' PARABLES: STRUCTURE, FUNCTION, AND
THE FALLACY OF ADOLF JÜLICHER'S ONE-POINT OF COMPARISON

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to contribute to current exegetical practices. It will provide clarifying definitions and connect their associated terms to visual models. These models, in turn, will demonstrate the structure and function of metaphors as they are found in the parables. After explaining this method, drawn from the work of cognitive linguistics, and providing examples of its application, it will be argued that Adolf Jülicher's one-point of comparison concept is not defensible. A recommendation will be made to reject both Jülicher's approach and its associated terminology since it does not faithfully exegete the parables and presupposes that the gospel writers were prone to uninspired embellishments.

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus spoke at length in parable. In fact, it is estimated that thirty-five percent of all Jesus' teachings in the synoptic gospels are in parable form.¹ This is a substantial figure, leading one to conclude that understanding and explaining parables would be one of the many competencies that one might need to teach God's word with clarity and accuracy. In an effort to acquire this competency, two key concepts are to be considered, 1) how parables are structured and 2) how parables are capable of creating new meaning. In short, the form and function of parables is the bedrock of this knowledge. Once acquired by an exegete, they would be prepared to perform a thorough analysis of a parable and also be able to explain how they arrived at their conclusions. They would be able to ensure that their interpretation does not go beyond the typical structure of a parable and also safeguard against the converse tendency to under interpret. This tendency toward oversimplification, a reaction to the excesses of allegorizing, is seen in the work of Adolf Jülicher and his *one-point of comparison* approach to parable analysis.² While there is great potential to avoid the extremes of allegorizing and reductionism, variance in interpretation will continue. Structure and function does not resolve all the interpretive issues one encounters in the parables, but it creates a framework for fruitful and thoughtful discussion.

Of course, this goal of demonstrating the structure and function of parables is somewhat narrow. It does not take into account the other information necessary for proper interpretation, that is, the speaker, the addressees, the cultural norms, the setting, the events leading up to the

¹Klyne Snodgrass. *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 22.

² Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 5.

use of parable etc. All of this information is crucial to arrive at a sound interpretation. This thesis, however, looks only to present and encourage the adoption of visual models based on relatively recent work in the field of cognitive linguistics.

This modelling is comparable to sentence diagramming. When grasped and applied, an exegete will be able to account for the significant parts of a parable, labeling them accordingly. One of the strengths of this modelling is found in its ability to reveal when a parable is “deficient” in meaning. These discoveries will provoke important and sensible questions. Where in the model is the missing information? From where can I get information to complete the model? This last question brings to surface the process of importation.

Importation is the borrowing of meaning from another part of Scripture to illuminate the meaning of a parable that is found to be obscure. This happens when a parable presents with a deficiency in the target domain. In these cases, information needs to be imported from another parable, another gospel, or even from the Old Testament. The interpreter’s rationale for importing information from one place or another is essential for determining the interpretation’s reliability. The principles for importation, *coherence* and *reliability*, will be considered only briefly but play an essential role in determining the accuracy of an interpretation. Importation and identifying the rules that govern it is a topic that needs further discussion and research.

Structure, function (creation of meaning), and importation are essential for understanding how parables work and are interpreted. A good understanding of these topics will allow for more accurate and meaningful discussion about parable interpretation and will show that Jülicher’s *one-point of comparison* concept is not merely outmoded but untenable. Each of these categories

will be discussed with some detail. However, before delving into the specifics on these topics, it is important to discuss the relationship between linguistics and theology.

LINGUISTS AND LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS

There appears to be an unnecessary silence between the fields of theology and linguistics. This is especially concerning when one considers the recent work in linguistics on metaphor analysis.

The linguists Mary Descamp and Eve Sweester recognize this very same issue and say,

there has been an explosion in the research in cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics relating to the status and role of metaphorical structures in human thought. To date, little of the evidence brought forward by cognitive analysts of metaphor has been employed in the theological conversation about God.

This article will argue that cognitive linguistics research is indispensable to the theological debate concerning metaphors for God.³

While the Descamp and Sweester essay focuses more narrowly on metaphors for God, they pick many of their examples from parables. An important concept to understand in this conversation on parable is that linguists do not distinguish between parable and metaphor, unless to say that parables are a type of metaphor much like a poodle is a type of dog. For the linguist, parables are essentially metaphors of varying sizes and content.⁴ These findings, of course, come from an unlikely ally. In fact, many of the linguists who have contributed and continue to contribute to

³ Mary Therese Descamp, and Eve E Sweetser. "Metaphors for God: Why and How do our Choices Matter for Humans? The Application of Contemporary Cognitive Linguistics Research to the Debate on God and Metaphor." *Pastoral Psychology* 53 (2005): 207–238.

⁴ Parables consist of metaphors in both a broad and narrow sense. In the broad sense, two conceptual domains are related through various mappings. Take for instance the parable of the sower, the broad metaphor is SHARING GOD'S WORD is SOWING SEED. These conceptual domains make up the overarching (or broad) metaphor. In a narrow sense, a metaphor consists of a single mapping from the source domain and the target domain including all the components that are necessary for this process. In the parable of the sower a metaphor in the narrow sense is THE SEED ON THE PATH IS SNATCHED UP BY BIRDS like THE WORD GIVEN TO THE HARD HEARTED IS QUICKLY STOLEN BY THE DEVIL. In a manner of speaking, metaphor in the broad sense can be seen to consist of one or more metaphors defined in the narrow sense.

metaphor analysis would not affiliate themselves with any Christian denomination. This, however, should not deter anyone from adopting a method that provides greater clarity in understanding Jesus' parables.

The following is some rationale to be considered in support of adopting these methods: 1) Lutherans are not in the custom of going through all their drawers and closets to make sure nothing of use came from the ingenuity of an unbeliever. 2) Current terminology is in need of updating for the sake of accuracy and to be academically conversant on the topic metaphorical language 3) The terms that are frequently used among academics in the WELS, *tertium comparationis* and the *one-point of comparison*, lack the clarity that metaphor analysis provides. These terms are also considered passé by many theologians who argue against the assumptions that these terms embody.⁵ 4) The interests of linguists and Lutheran theologians intersect at a critical point. Both Lutheran theologians and linguists are, at heart, descriptivists.⁶ They both desire to let written documents speak for themselves, using methods that draw meaning out of texts and do not obscure the intended meaning. Both groups take great care not to superimpose understandings that are foreign to the text and though this ideal will, admittedly, forever remain in the realm of impossibility, it is nonetheless a worthy goal and one to earnestly strive to accomplish.

Where the two groups sharply diverge is how the teachings of Scripture are applied in everyday life. Linguists will simply see them as a collection of expressions which unify Lutherans into a distinct speech community. They may also note that this unification is marked

⁵ See the works of Craig Blomberg, J. Scott Duvall, and J. Daniel Hayes.

⁶ In the study of language, description or descriptive linguistics is the work of objectively analyzing and describing how language is actually used (or how it was used in the past) by a group of people in a speech community. (New Oxford American Dictionary)

by a mutual confession in the absolute veracity of these teachings. Lutherans, in contrast, identify these truths as the very Word of God which applies to all people at all times, including the linguist who stands objectively on the sideline.

Though there are some obvious differences between both groups, Lutherans can embrace linguistics without compromising a single doctrine of the faith. Linguists are generally not concerned with matters of faith, unlike biblical critics who often wish to promote heretical theories. Linguists are simply interested in natural human language: how it works and how it is used within a speech community.⁷ They would find Jesus' extensive use of parable to be a fascinating feature of the Lutheran belief system, impacting how Lutheran's think, speak, and teach.

THE REASON FOR PARABLE

Most days, we are fed unremarkably. The food is prepared, consumed, broken down into nutrients, and distributed throughout the body as needed. The gospel also works through everyday means. Similarly, a message is prepared, received, broken down and applied to the lives of believers giving both spiritual encouragement and edification where needed. This all happens in what can be described as normal and everyday processes.

What is miraculous in all of this is not the external features of language but the message it conveys. After all, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek have only what is commonly found in all languages (phonemes, morphemes, syntax, semantics, etc.). Quenstedt articulates this same point in his work *Theologia Didactico-Polemica, Siva Systema Theologicum*.

⁷ Adrian Akmajian et al., *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017), 5.

The *formale* (essence) of Scripture is the divine message revealed in it; the *materiale* (the stuff of which it is made) is the letters, the words, the writing ... that which makes it be the Word of God and distinguishes it from any other writing is the inspired meaning of Scripture, which in general is the concept existing in God's mind concerning the mysteries of God and our salvation, a concept that was formed in eternity and revealed in time and communicated to us in writing...⁸

What makes the biblical languages exceptional is that they were chosen to carry the Word of God. In other words, these languages are the pipeline (*the materiale*) by which the will of God (*the formale*) is delivered to the hearts and minds of human beings.

The message that God's Word conveys does not come alone. The Holy Spirit works through this message with the power to convert and change hearts. The message cannot be believed by those who are dead in sin without this regenerative work of the Holy Spirit. In this way, the gospel message is unique from any other message one might hear. It has the power to create something out of nothing, that is, the power to create faith in those who have no power to believe by themselves. How this works, no amount of linguistic, cognitive, or psychological studies could ever reveal. It is simply a miracle, beyond the scope of intellectual probing. While it is true that the human mind cannot grasp this, the same does not hold true for the function and structure of parable. Parables are not in any sense supernatural. They, like all other linguistic expressions, are rule-governed so that the human mind can process them and decode their intended meaning. The question remains, however, why did Jesus use this particular linguistic expression to communicate his teachings?

Jesus employed parables for many reasons: to fulfill prophecy, to hide his teachings, and to reveal spiritual truths.⁹ This last reason, divine revelation (and arguably the primary reason), is

⁸ Quenstedt, Johann Andreas. *Theologia Didactico-Polemica, Siva Systema Theologicum* (Wittenberg, HR: J.L. Quenstedii, 1691), 54.

⁹ Matt 13:34–35 (fulfillment of prophecy), Matt 13:13 (hide his teachings), Matt 13:11 (to reveal spiritual truths)

a task that parable (or metaphor) is uniquely equipped to accomplish. Parables, being a type of metaphor, *map* information from a more well-known source domain to a less known target domain. These mappings are what make parables capable of creating new meanings. Due to this capacity, parables also have the *potential* to reveal things that are well beyond the scope of human discernment, doing it in such a way that the new idea is grounded in something that a person already understands. The operative idea here is that the structure of parables (i.e. metaphors) has only the *potential* to communicate divine truths. This potential is often left latent in normal human discourse. This is what makes the teachings of the prophets, apostles, and Jesus an anomaly in the history of human communication. Their teachings are not simply to be seen as mundane human expressions, but as conduits of divine truth. In the case of Jesus, it logically follows that since he is God, his words often unlock the latent potential of human language to convey spiritual truths. His choice of parable in doing this is not arbitrary but shows plainly that Jesus understands the cognitive needs of his special created beings.

The gospel of John records a conversation in which this very special situation in human history is made clear by Jesus. Nicodemus risked coming to Jesus by night. He knew that Jesus spoke with authority because his words were accompanied with signs. However, Nicodemus did not know the extent of Jesus' authority. In this conversation, Jesus reveals to Nicodemus why it is that he can speak about heavenly matters with such authority.

“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.” (John 3:10-13 NIV)

This last verse expresses the unique situation. Jesus came down from heaven. In other words, Jesus is God. His thoughts are God's thoughts. His knowledge includes divine knowledge. This gives him the very special distinction to speak with all authority on spiritual matters. Conversely, human beings do not have this knowledge and have no way of acquiring it apart from divine intervention. Jesus uses this earthly knowledge to reveal heavenly truths much like parents use comparisons to teach their children about something outside of their child's experience. Parables in the mouth of Jesus become a conduit for sharing divine truth. As will be demonstrated through their structure and function, parables, as said before, are especially suited for this communicative task.

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

Parable is a type of metaphor (or simile). It essentially does two things which can be discovered with a little creative etymology. Firstly, the Greek word for parable is *παραβολή*. When this term is broken down, what is found are the two words *παρα* (alongside of) and the verb *βαλλώ* (I throw).¹⁰ One way of thinking about parable is that it reflects a relationship where one concept is *thrown alongside* another concept. This is precisely what has been suggested by cognitive linguists and many theologians alike, though using different terminology to explain the same phenomenon. In the field of cognitive linguists, these two entities are called the source domain and the target domain.¹¹

¹⁰ Jülicher, Adolf. *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (Freiburg: Mohr, 1899).

¹⁰ Quenstedt, Johann Andreas. *Theologia Didactico-Polemica, Siva Systema Theologicum* (Wittenberg, HR: J.L. Quenstedii, 1691), 54.

¹¹ The concept of metaphorical domains is discussed in greater depth in the works of Lakoff and Johnson. It is also implicitly suggested by the biblical scholar and exegete Adolf Jülicher. However, instead of calling them the



Figure 1.1

The second word to consider in this explanation is *metaphor*, another word of Greek origin, *μεταφερω*. This word is not found in the New Testament. However, it is found in the Septuagint (1 Chr 13:3), where it means to *bring back* or to *carry over*. This is precisely what happens in parables. There is always something being carried over from the source domain to the target domain. This process of *carrying over* is what the linguists Barbara Dancygier and Eve Sweetser call unidirectional mapping.¹² This idea of metaphoric mapping is foundational to understanding how parables function. Dancygier and Sweetser have defined metaphoric mapping, saying that it is, “...a unidirectional relation between two conceptual domains (the source domain and the target domain) which sets up links (mappings) between specific elements of the two domains’ structures.”¹³ The idea that the mappings are *unidirectional* is a key concept. Typically, in metaphor, information in the source domain is mapped over to the target domain. In

source domain and the target domain, Jülicher identifies the domains as the image (Bildhälfte: pictorial part) and the reality (Sachhälfte: objective-half) according to Bernado Estrada.

¹² These ideas are not original to Dancygier and Sweetser but were proposed in the works of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Dancygier and Sweetser provide a more nuanced and polished definition.

¹³ Barbara Dancygier and Eve Sweetser. *Figurative language*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 14.

other words, a more concrete or distinct idea is used to explain a more abstract or less distinct concept in the target domain. Through this process, the mapped information creates new understandings in the target domain. It is important to realize that no information is mapped back to the source domain.

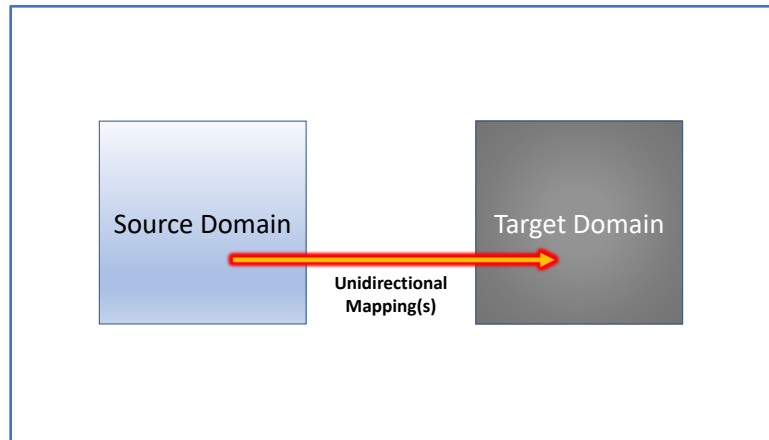


Figure 1.2

Notice that in the definition provided by Dancygier and Sweester, the relation between the source domain and target domain *sets up links*, that is, there can be multiple mapping in a metaphor. These *links* or mappings can be didactic or purely structural. This idea goes against the oft quoted position of Adolf Jülicher that there is only “one-point of comparison” or one teaching per parable.¹⁴

The one-point of comparison concept is still supported, to some extent, by those who have no compunctions with questioning the authenticity of Scripture. One such person is Jack Kingsbury, who praises the one-point of comparison feature of Jülicher’s theory and says, “The upshot of his [Jülicher’s] theory, when applied, is that the interpreter permits himself to identify only one point of contact between the picture-half [source domain] and the reality-half [target

¹⁴ See appendix A for examples.

domain] in any of several types of parabolic sayings or stories of Jesus, so that the meaning of each unit is best rendered in a single, general statement.”¹⁵ Kingsbury agrees with this position being fully aware that Jülicher excludes any parable (e.g. the parable of the sower and the parable of the tares) as accurate accounts of Jesus’ spoken teachings.

Now it must be admitted, as previously stated, that not all mappings in parables are instructional. Many of the mappings are used simply to strengthen the connection between the two domains. However, there are many cases in which parables are found with multiple didactic mappings. The overall teaching of the parable then becomes a synthesis of the truths conveyed in all the didactic mappings. Jülicher, instead of synthesizing the teaching, would disregard one of them and try to pick which one he believed to be what Jesus was really teaching. Jülicher thought that this process was necessary to get to the historical Jesus underneath the embellishments of the gospel writers.

Mappings have an additional distinction. They can be seen to be either attributive and relational. The parable of the growing seed provides a good example of an attributive mapping. The seed in this parable is compared to the gospel. Since Jesus emphasizes the attribute that seeds grow, this attribute is mapped from the source domain to the target domain with the resulting idea that the gospel grows.

¹⁵ Jack Dean Kingsbury, “Major trends in parable interpretation,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 42 (October 1971): 579–596.

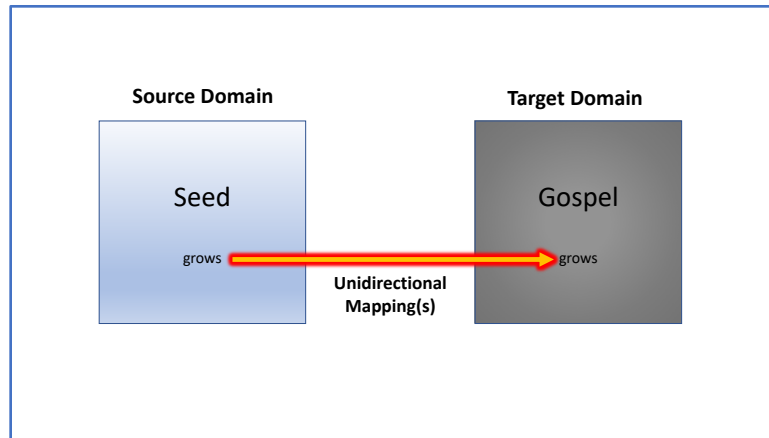


Figure 1.3

What is, perhaps, more common are relational mappings. They occur with great frequency, especially when a parable revolves around human interactions. The relationships between the people in the short story become the linguistic content that is mapped from the source domain to the target domain. In a relational mapping there are five important things to find. The first thing to find is the agent. The agent is the person or object that is performing the action found in the parable. For instance, in the parable of the prodigal son the father would be identified as the agent since he is the one who forgives. The second thing to find is the patient, that is, who or what is the action directed toward. In the parable of the prodigal son the patient is the son who is forgiven by the father. The third thing to find is the relation itself or the action between the agent and the patient.

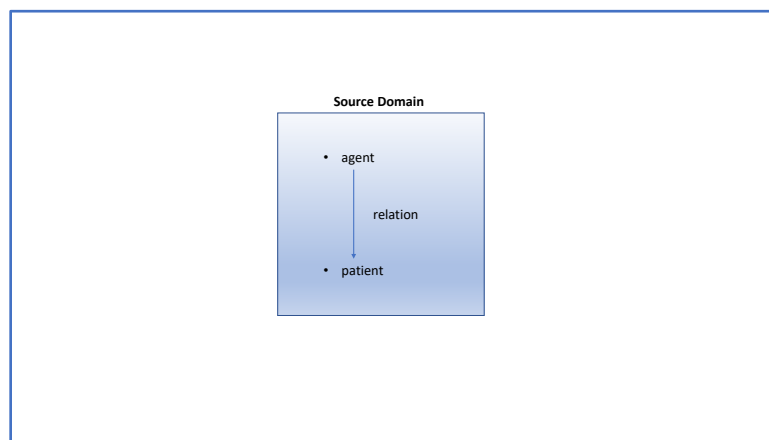


Figure 1.4

Once the agent, patient, and the relation are identified in the source domain, the next step is to find the corresponding agent and patient in the target domain(s).¹⁶ This correspondence between the agents and patients is limited.¹⁷ The majority of the attributes of the agent and patient in the source domain will not be mapped to the agent and patient in the target domain. This will be discussed in further detail in the examples that will follow.

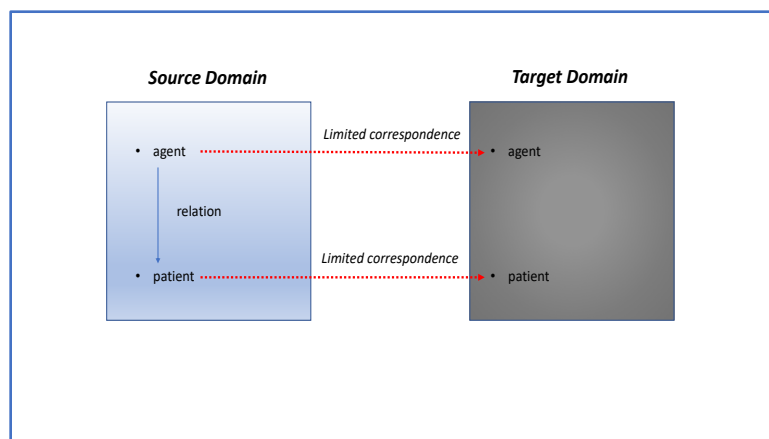


Figure 1.5

After finding the corresponding agent and patient in the target domain (Figure 1.6), there is only one step left in the process. This last step is to *map* the relation between the agent and patient in the source domain to the agent and patient in the target domain (Figure 1.7). This mapped relationship creates a new understanding about how the agent and patient in the target

¹⁶ There is generally more than one target domain to be used in the process of interpretation. The Lutheran preacher knows this intuitively. The first domain is the *immediate* target domain. This is the historically specific context of the parable, that is, those who were listening to Jesus when he spoke the parable (i.e. his disciples, the Pharisees, the crowds). The second target domain is the *universal* target domain. This is everyone who hears the parables today and has the lesson of the parable applied to their daily lives.

¹⁷ See figure 1.5

domain relate to one another. Since target domains in parables are conceptual frames¹⁸ for spiritual truths, once the mapping is completed a spiritual revelation is acquired.

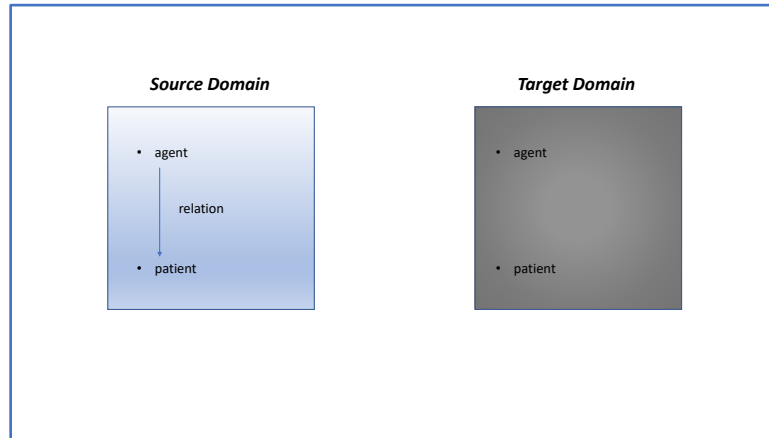


Figure 1.6

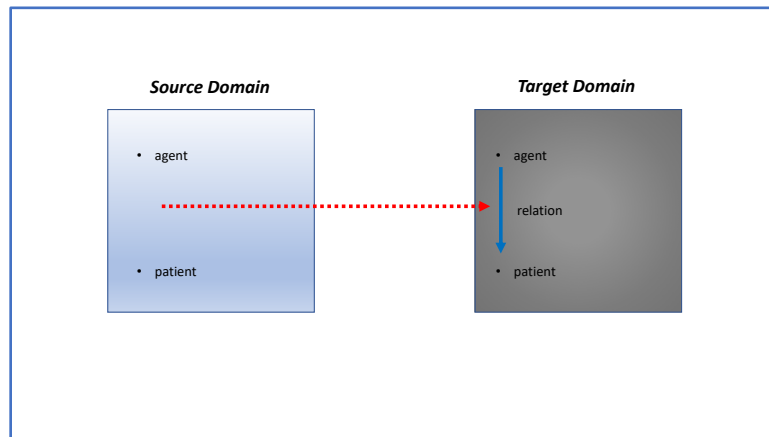


Figure 1.7

Figure 1.6 shows the parable before the mapping is completed. In Figure 1.7 the mapping has gone from the source domain to the target domain and the cognitive process has been completed. The dotted line indicates the movement of the relation from the source domain to the target domain. Take note, once again, that this mapping is unidirectional. No information from

¹⁸ Dancygier and Sweetser use the terms frames and domains interchangeably. Croft, Cruse and Sullivan prefer the to use the term *frame* over that of domains.

the target domain is shared back to the source domain. The line descending from the agent in the target domain to the patient in the target domain indicates the new relationship or revelatory information that has been mapped from the source domain to the target domain. This is a rough sketch of how some cognitive linguists demonstrate the process of mapping, a cognitive process they believe takes place in the minds of those who hear and comprehend metaphors.¹⁹

Basic Metaphor Analysis: Forrest Gump

The first metaphor to be analyzed is taken from the 1994 movie, *Forrest Gump*. In what has become an iconic scene, the main character, Forrest Gump, sits on a park bench with a box of chocolates on his lap. As he is sitting, he is joined by a woman to whom he abruptly places the open box of chocolates just inches from her face. He asks her if she would like a chocolate and then says, “I could eat a billion of these.” The woman does not respond to his invitation. Forrest, however, continues to talk to the woman, who shows little interest in what he says as she reads a newspaper. This is the context in which Forrest says, “My Momma always said, ‘Life was like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re gonna get.’” As he says this, Forrest eats some of the chocolates.

How are we to understand this metaphor: “Life was like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re gonna get?” Is an attribute or a relation being mapped in this expression, or both? Since the source domain is found with two objects that relate to one another, a potential agent and patient, it is best to assume that one should start with finding the elements necessary

¹⁹ The visual models provided are a simplification of the models drawn up by cognitive linguists and are modified for working with parables in particular. To see more in-depth methods of modeling, the following titles are highly recommended: *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* by Giles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, “Metaphors for God: Why and how do our choices matter for humans? The application of contemporary cognitive linguistics research to the debate on God and metaphor” by Mary Therese Descamp and Eve E Sweetser.

for the mapping of a relation. An agent and patient for both domains and a relation that can be mapped.

Forrest Gump's mother uses the box of chocolates as her source domain. This is a good strategy since Forrest would have been familiar with this object, being able to experience it. In other words, he could physically open and close it, gaining the necessary experiential information he would need to understand his mother's comparison. This is the tendency of metaphor, of course, to go from a more concrete concept in the source domain and then to have that information mapped to a less known or more abstract target domain. In this case, the more concrete agent and patient in the source domain are the box and the chocolates.

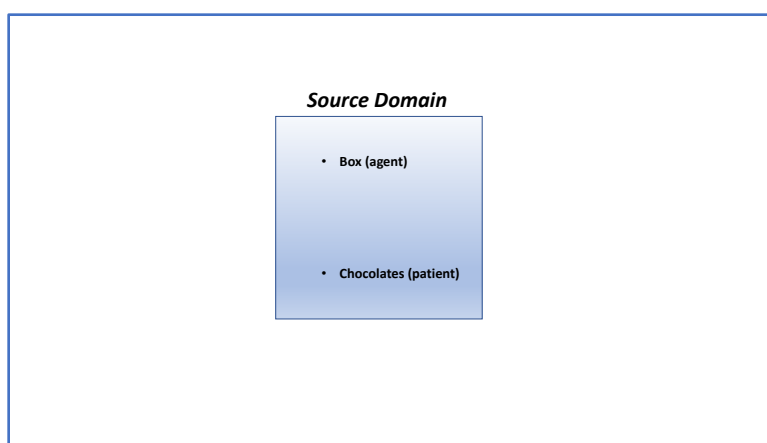


Figure 2.1

Forrest's mother provides the relation she intended to be mapped when she told Forrest "you never know what you're gonna get". The box covers the chocolates, hiding them. It is not until the box is opened (or the chocolates are eaten) that the types of chocolates are revealed. This is when you find out "what you're going to get".²⁰

²⁰ There is a question as to whether the chocolates are revealed based on sight or when they are eaten. It might be a mixture of both, but if it is one or the other it does not affect how the metaphor is to be understood.

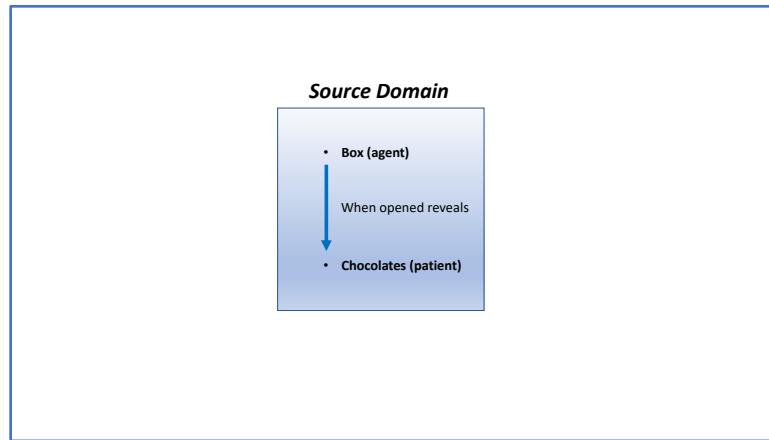


Figure 2.2

In the target domain the corresponding agent is *life*. While the corresponding patient is not so easy to determine. What are the things that are revealed when life is “opened”, that is, when life is lived? Forrest’s mother does not clearly provide this information. It is up to the listener to fill the patient slot in the target domain with an appropriate concept. One good candidate is *Experiences*. It can be placed into this slot since it is congruent with the overarching conceptual metaphor, LIFE is a CONTAINER. In other words, it can be said that life *contains* experiences.²¹ In result, the corresponding agents are *box* and *life* while the corresponding patients are *chocolates* and *experiences* depicted in Figure 2.3.

²¹ For a more in-depth discussion on conceptual metaphor see the works of both George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Comparing abstract concepts to *containers* is a very common conceptual metaphor discussed at length in Lakoff and Johnson’s book Metaphors We Live By.

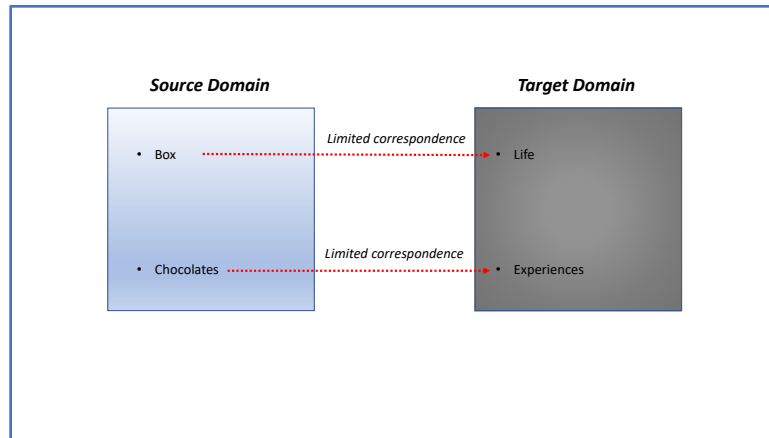


Figure 2.3

With all the essential parts of a relational metaphor now identified, the only step left is to map the relation to the agent and patient in the target domain. This creates the new understanding that Forrest's mother is trying to communicate to her son. In a didactic sense, she wants him to know that life is full of experiences and you do not know what they are until you live your life.

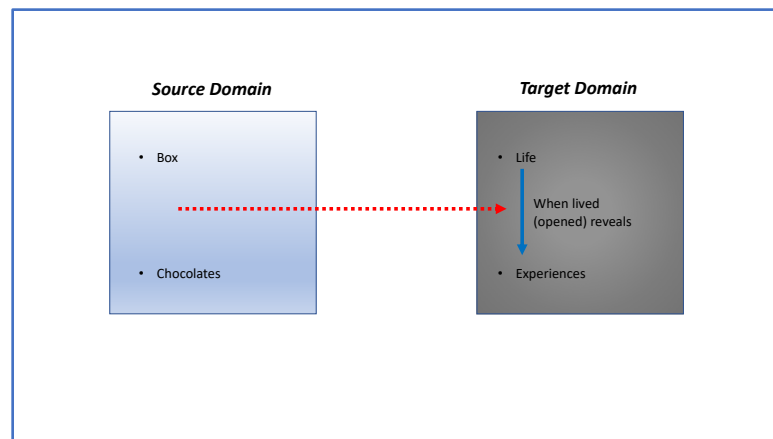


Figure 2.4

The question now remains, was Forrest's mother's only intent to teach the truth that life is full experiences? This seems unlikely. It can be argued that in addition to the relational mapping, there is also a very important attributive mapping that is needed to complete the speaker's intent. The basis for arguing this rests on three points: 1) Objects for metaphors are often chosen for more than one reason and 2) Forrest's mother knew that he liked chocolates, as

Forrest said “I could eat a billion of these” 3) mothers are nurturers, giving their children hope and encouragement. This metaphor should not be understood as a dry didactic statement of a philosopher but as a loving expression of encouragement from a mother to a son. With this in mind, there is structural significance. The metaphor has an additional attributive mapping that can be argued faithfully coincides with the speaker’s intent.

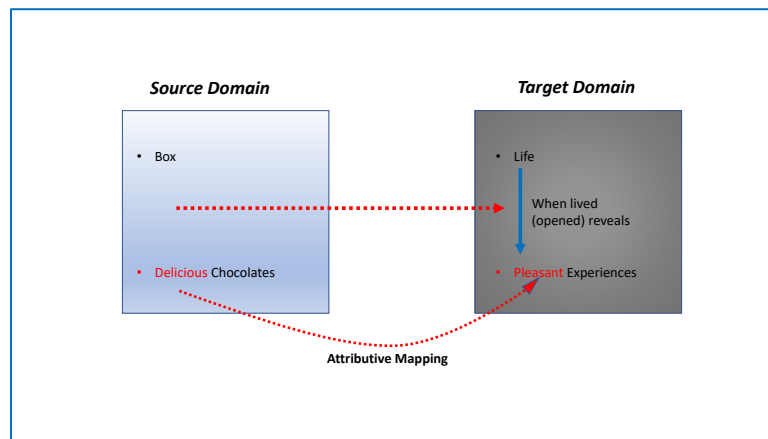


Figure 2.5

Figure 2.5 visually depicts the argument that Forrest’s mother’s primary purpose in telling him this metaphor was simply to encourage her son. She is saying to Forrest, “Son life has some great things in store for you.” Note that this is a presentation of an argument. The goal of this paper is not to create definitive interpretations but to provide a useful model for explaining how a metaphor or parable is being interpreted. The take away here is that attributive mappings need an additional line of argumentation if they are to be included into the interpretation. The exegete who identifies them as essential to an interpretation needs to provide rationale for their inclusion. Providing this type clarity in the interpretive process is essential for building a dialogue about the parables and how they are understood. One can now ask, “Why did the interpreter decide that this attribute should be mapped? How does it affect the overall

interpretation of the parable? Do I agree that this should be mapped? If not, what is my rationale that it should not be?

APPLICATION OF PARABLE ANALYSIS

This section will look at the camel and the eye of needle, the prodigal son, and the parable of the weeds. This analysis proceeds from the least complex structurally to the most complex structurally. These specific teachings have been selected for their diversity in structure. As the process of metaphor analysis is demonstrated, other topics will also emerge. Two such topics are types of mappings and the *importation* of semantic values from one part of Scripture to another in order to create a meaningful expression.

The Camel and the Eye of Needle

The first example from Scripture is not identified as a parable as such but is a good example of a metaphor being used to teach a truth.²² All parables are metaphors, requiring mapping from a source domain to a target domain. The metaphor of the camel going through the eye of needle fits nicely into the grouping of expressions that the gospel writers label as parables.

Jesus used this metaphor after the rich young man walked away from him. He was not willing to set aside his possessions and follow Jesus. Jesus then turned to his disciples and said, “It is easier for camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:25). The Scriptures record that the disciples were astounded by what

²² In Luke 4:23 it says, “Jesus said to them, ‘Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’” The word translated by the NIV as proverb is *παραβολή* which is typically translated as parable. This example is a simple metaphor much like the camel going through the eye of the needle. It is reasonable to consider the camel going through the eye of the needle as parable since it matches the form and function of other parables in Scripture.

he said. They asked Jesus, “Who then can be saved?” What elicited this question? How exactly did they construct the metaphor in their minds? Perhaps, only degrees of certainty are possible for such a question. However, before answering this the nuts and bolts of the metaphor can be assembled.

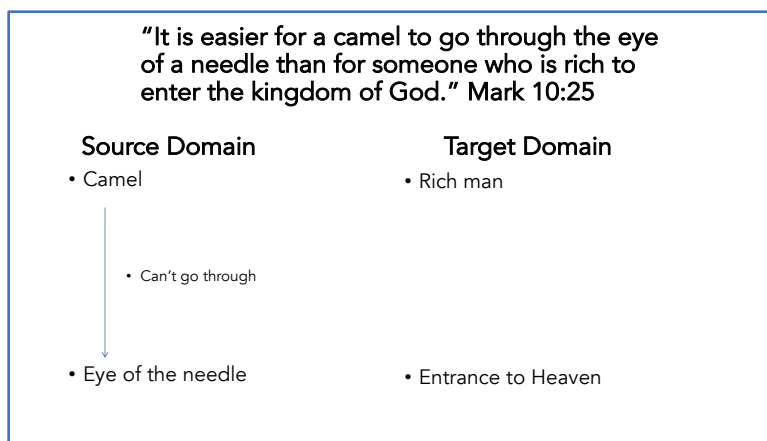


figure 3.1

In figure 3.1 the agent in the source domain is a camel. The patient is an eye of the needle. The relationship between the two is *can't go through*. In the target domain the corresponding agent is the rich man. The corresponding patient is the entrance to heaven.

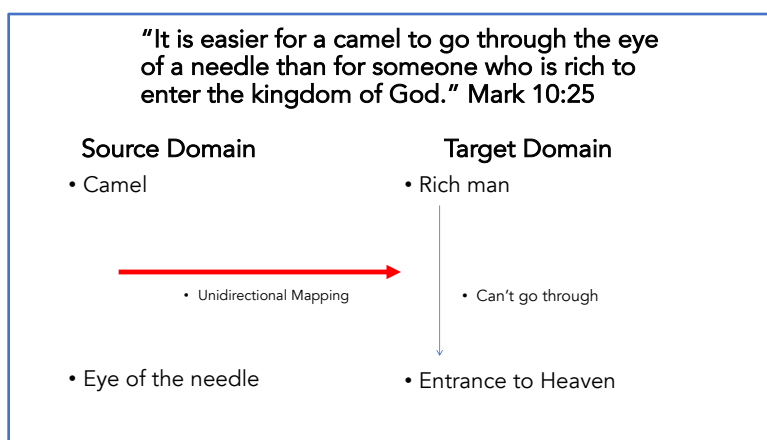


Figure 3.2

After the relation is mapped from the source domain to the target domain the resulting revelatory concept is A RICH MAN *can't go through* THE ENTRANCE OF HEAVEN. Jesus amends

this end result to drive the point home. He says, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” Jesus is not just saying that if a rich man were to change himself he then could enter heaven but that entering heaven apart from God is absolutely impossible for any man, rich or poor.

This conclusion puts into question an interpretation that has garnered some acceptance in recent years among Christian theologians. In this interpretation the claim is made that the eye of the needle should be understood not as a sewing tool but as a small gate that leads into Jerusalem. With this semantic reassignment of the patient in the source domain, it then is conceivable that the camel could enter through the gate. After its cargo has been removed, it could crouch down as if it were kneeling and ever so slowly make its way through the small aperture of the gate. The resulting idea is that a rich man can enter heaven as long as he sheds his wealth and bows down before God, thus emphasizing what the rich man can do and not what God must do. According to France, “This romantic speculation has been repeated so often that it is sometimes treated as established exegesis.”²³ However, this cannot be the interpretation because Jesus makes it plain that it is impossible for man. Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that Jesus was referring to a gate since none of the gospels mention it. It would have been reasonable for Luke or Mark to have provided this information for their non-Jewish audiences and yet, it is not found.

Returning to the linguistic analysis, one essential concept to acknowledge is that there are no attributive mappings to be found in this metaphor. There is nothing about the camel that should be mapped to the patient in the target aside from its relation to the eye of the needle. Certainly, it is not because the rich man is too large like the camel that he cannot enter into

²³ Richard T. France. *The Gospel of Matthew*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 738.

heaven. Similarly, there is no attributive mapping associated with the eye of the needle and the entrance to heaven, that is, we are not to think that spatially speaking the entrance to heaven is very small.

What does need to be explored is why the adjective *rich* was included in the entry for the agent in the target domain. This is to account for the reaction of the disciples when they heard just how difficult it is for a rich man to enter heaven. According to France, “The form of the question [‘Who then can be saved?’] suggests that in the disciples’ view the rich are more, not less, likely to be candidates for salvation since their wealth is a sign of God’s blessing on them; if they are excluded, what hope is there for anyone?” In other words, the rich young man in the eyes of the disciples would have been a prime candidate for eternal life. He had much of what they thought they lacked. He had means. He was a leader. He was a Jew. What else could Jesus desire humanly speaking?

Following the idea that the disciples were seeing the rich young man in contrast to themselves, perhaps feeling inadequate, puts the interaction in perspective. Admittedly, this train of thought comes with some speculation as do many interpretations. It is a natural consequence of trying to pry into the psychology of the moment. Yet, carrying this line of thought through, Jesus words are not a condemnation of wealth. They are a proclamation of a universal truth, that is, there is no one more advantaged than another when it comes to entering heaven. The rich young man may seem like he could be welcomed anywhere in Israel but not even someone with his societal advantages could enter heaven based on his position, merit, inheritance, or birthright.

When understood the other way, Jesus’ words become a mere condemnation of wealth and this deflates the universal truth Jesus was stressing at the end of the parable. This is exactly what happens in Lane’s interpretation when he concludes,

Jesus' comment on the difficulty encountered by the rich in entering the Kingdom of God draws its force from the refusal of this particular rich man to abandon everything and to follow him. This action demonstrated how easy it was to become so attached to wealth that even an earnest man forgets what is infinitely more important. Jesus' warning implies that only in meeting the demand for radical sacrifice and following is entrance into the Kingdom secured, reinforcing the specific instruction of verse 21.²⁴

Lane's understanding, like many who view this as a condemnation of wealth, misses the mark. When understood this way and not in light of Jesus' final analysis ("With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God [Mark 10:27]") one can conclude with Lane that, "Jesus' warning implies that only meeting the demand for radical sacrifice and following is entrance into the Kingdom secured..."²⁵ However, Jesus' words do not indicate that there is some sort of exceptional circumstances but clearly declares that it is impossible for a man, no matter how radical the sacrifice or how faithfully they follow Jesus, to enter the kingdom of God.

What may not be evident in Lane's approach is that he is seeing an attributive mapping from the source domain. The size of the camel is related to the wealth of the young man. In fact, if the rich man would sacrifice his wealth he could fundamentally change the metaphor itself, changing the camel into a gnat or a mite of some sort. This, of course, is denied by Jesus' final interpretation which leaves any attempt at attributive mapping out of the picture. A camel can't go through the eye of the needle because it is impossible just like it is impossible for any person (rich or poor) to enter the kingdom of heaven on their own.

Prodigal Son

²⁴ William L. Lane. [*The Gospel of Mark*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 369.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 369.

The camel going through the eye of needle provided an opportunity to demonstrate a metaphor that has one unidirectional mapping (i.e. one-point of comparison). The prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32), however, gives opportunity to take a look at a parable that has two mappings which are used to teach two different lessons. It should be carefully noted that the writers of the synoptic gospels do not make a differentiation between a parable with a single mapping and one with more than one mapping. They are both simply called parables. This may be good reasoning to refrain from differentiating where Scripture does not.

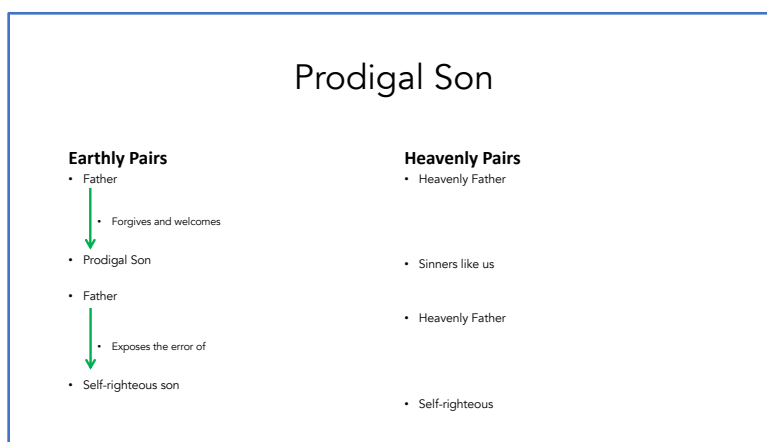


figure 4.1

In this example, it will be argued that there are two personal interactions that require mappings separate mappings. However, there are those who dissent from this claim and find even more than two. For example, J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, who agree with Blomberg's criticism of Adolf Jülicher's one-point of comparison, identify three such teachings in the parable of the prodigal son.²⁶ From the three teachings that they propose, there are only two that appear to be truly didactic in what could be called a revelatory sense. The first such

²⁶ J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 287.

mapping is between the father and the prodigal son. In this metaphor, the prodigal son's father is placed into the agent slot while the prodigal son is placed into the patient slot in the source domain. The relationship between them is *forgives and welcomes*. This, of course, could be said many different ways. There is no need to be dogmatic on what words an exegete might use to express the father's abundant grace and mercy to his undeserving son. The end result with these entries for the source domain is THE FATHER *forgives and welcomes* THE PRODIGAL SON. In the target domain the Father is identified as God and the prodigal son is any believer. The spiritual truth revealed in this part of the prodigal son is that God the Father is waiting to forgive those believers who have gone astray and turn back trusting that the Father will be merciful. God's grace to undeserving sinners is clearly expressed in this part of the parable.

The second key interaction is between the father and the son who stayed home. This son became angry and would not come in to celebrate that his wayward brother had come home. The father comes out and pleads with him to come in and celebrate with all of them. He wants to rejoice "because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (Luke 15:32). The source domain in this metaphor looks similar to the first with the resulting didactic premise: THE FATHER *exposes the error of* THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS SON. The spiritual truth revealed here is that God is not pleased when individuals look with disdain on those who repent and receive his forgiveness. This really is a situation for great rejoicing. Jealousy has no place.

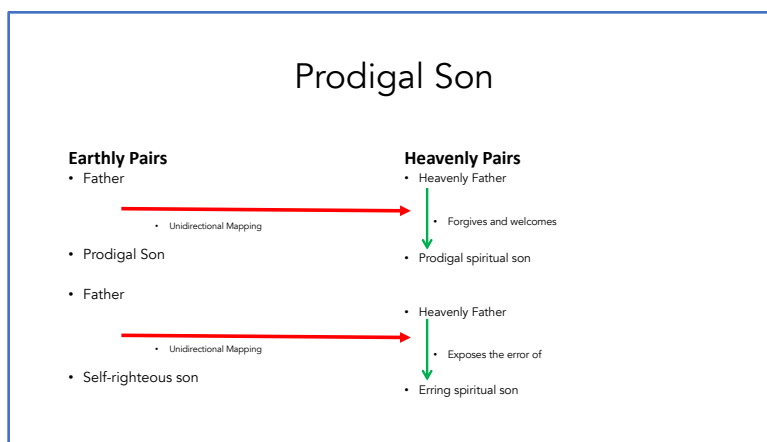


figure 4.2

In this parable it is indisputable that there are two very distinct teachings. Even if someone says that the “one” teaching is a synthesis of the two or the “main” point consists of two points, there is really no way of escaping the plain fact that there is more than one teaching, no matter the amount of verbal gymnastics. When the one-point of comparison is taken to mean that there is only one teaching per parable as Jülicher intended it, then this parable demonstrates how the writers of the gospels are in disagreement. For the gospel writer a parable was simply a figurative expression that had two conceptual fields laid side by side (source domain and target domain) with *at least one* unidirectional mapping from the source to the target domain. This definition can hold up under the various contexts in which the term parable is used by the gospel writers. The one-point of comparison approach, on the other hand, is too limited to effectively define everything that is identified as a parable in the Scriptures without, as Jülicher does, stating that the gospel writers embellished on what Jesus had said.

The Parable of the Weeds

The parable of the weeds (Matt. 13:24–43) has a complexity that surpasses both the prodigal son and the camel and the eye of the needle. It has four separate mappings. Two of these

four can be identified as supportive, while the other two mappings appear to be revelatory and therefore didactic in function.

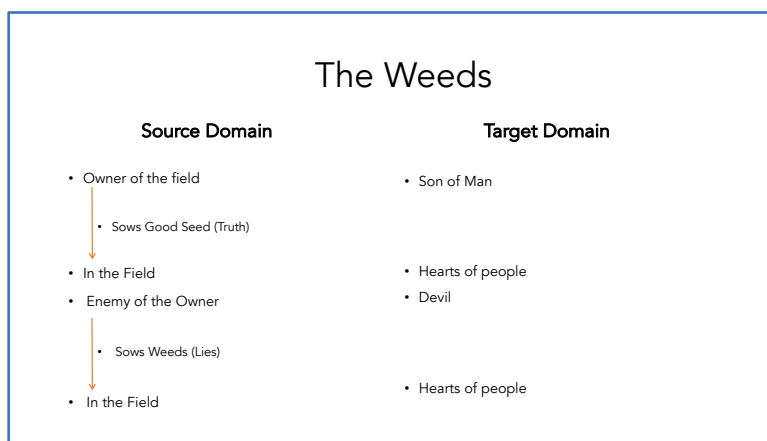


figure 5.1

In the first mapping, the agent in the source domain is the owner of the field. The corresponding agent in the target domain is the Son of Man. The field is the patient in the source domain and its corresponding patient in the target domain is the hearts of all people. The relationship between the owner and the field is that the owner *sows good seed* into the field to produce a crop of wheat.

The second mapping is very similar in entries but more negative in meaning. The enemy of the owner in the source domain corresponds to the Devil in the target domain. The field in the source domain, once again, corresponds to the hearts of people in the target domain. The relation between the enemy of the owner and the field is also nearly identical, except for an additional detail about the type of seed sown by the Devil. While Jesus' seed would become pleasing wheat, the seed sown by the Devil was to grow into a worthless and potentially harmful weed known as darnel.²⁷ Richard France describes the situation saying it, "... is a straightforward and

²⁷ Richard T. France. *The Gospel of Matthew*, 525.

possibly familiar account of agricultural sabotage: Roman law dealt specifically with the crime of sowing darnel in a wheat-field as an act of revenge.”²⁸

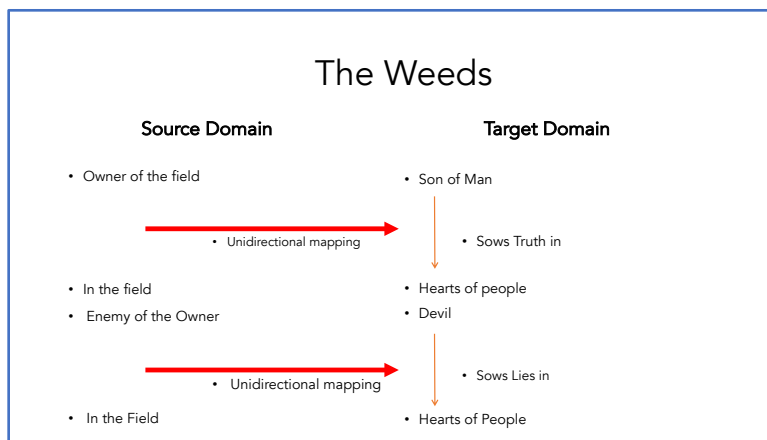


figure 5.2

After the mappings are complete the resultant concepts are THE SON OF MAN *sows the good seed (the gospel)* IN THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE and THE DEVIL *sows bad seed (lies)* IN THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE. There is a question here if these should be understood as revelatory mappings or merely structural, helping to hold the parable together. They do support teachings of God’s Word established elsewhere as do most parables. Jesus’ seed, the gospel, creates believers. The lies of the Devil attack faith and create unbelief. Is it necessary that a didactic mapping be novel or that it simply convey something beyond the grasp of human reason? If they are not didactic in nature, why does Jesus take time to flesh out how the correspondences are to be understood in this part of the parable? It seems farfetched that Jesus would do this arbitrarily. He did it to make a point. However, the idea of how mappings can and should be categorized is still something that could be debated. At this point, suffice it to say that mappings can be didactic and/or structural in nature.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 524–525.

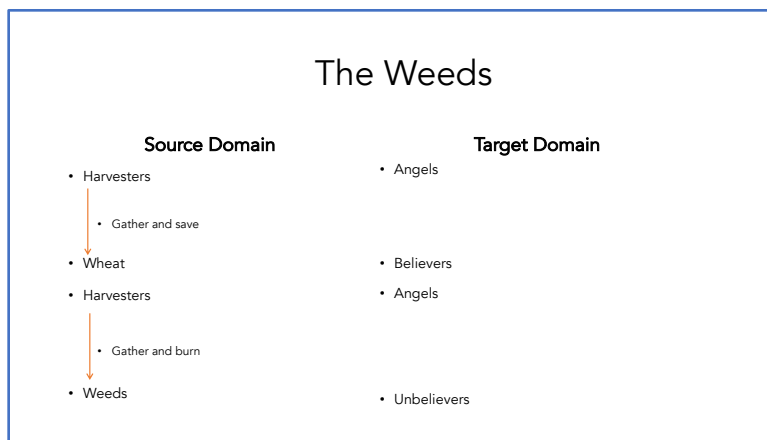


figure 5.3

The second part of Jesus' explanation of this parable clearly states that the harvesters correspond to the angels at the end of the age. The wheat, the patient in the source domain, corresponds to believers. The weeds correspond to the people of the evil one or unbelievers. The relation between the harvesters and the wheat is that the harvesters are to *gather and save it*. In contrast the relation between the harvesters and the weeds is negative one. They are to gather them and then burn them.

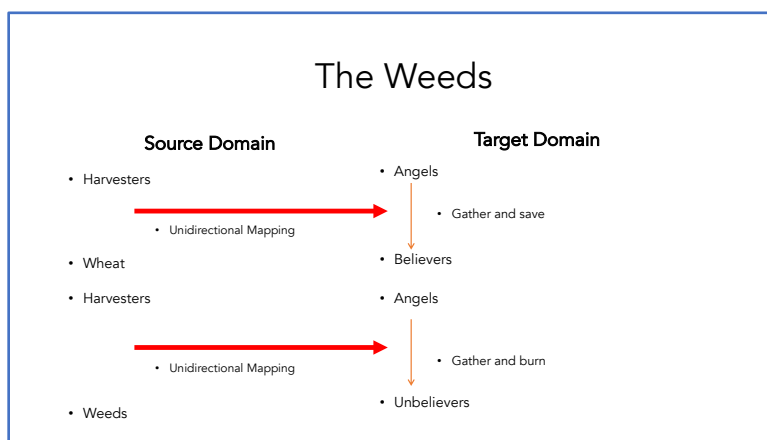


figure 5.4

When the mappings are completed in this portion of the parable, the resultant teachings are: at the end of the age THE ANGELS will *gather and save (bring to heaven)* THE BELIEVERS and THE ANGELS will *gather and burn (put in hell)* THE UNBELIEVERS. These are two unique teachings and if counted with Jesus' first two metaphors, four different teachings can be

identified. Which one is most important? Which one is the main point? Jesus does not say and figuring this out would be a matter of pure speculation.

There is yet another potential teaching in this parable which can be constructed through the process of importation. The idea that the harvesters were instructed to not pull the weeds up before the crop was mature, that is, at the end of the age, indicates God's will for people on earth. In short, until the end of the age believers will be living next to unbelievers. It is not until the end of the age that this will change. It should be noted that Jesus does not focus on this point during his explanation. However, through the process of importation, a method that is necessary for understanding some parables, it can be argued that this parable has a total of five teachings. Jülicher would see it as an elaborated text.

IMPORTATION

Before expressing the final arguments of this thesis, the topic of importation needs to be discussed even if briefly. Importation is the process by which information is brought from one part of Scripture to clarify what could be described as a deficiency in the target domain of a parable. Jesus did not always reveal what the corresponding entities were in the target domain when he told a parable. In cases like this an interpreter is required to import the values in the target domain from another part of Scripture. An example of this is can be seen in the parable of the growing seed (Mark 4:26-29).

In this parable, there is nothing to indicate what the man, the seed, nor the soil corresponds to in the target domain. The entities in the target domain are completely undefined. However, this does not mean Jesus' words are empty and not meant to communicate something of value to his listeners. Jesus' words always have a meaning and a purpose.

This being true, what does someone do when Jesus does not define what he is talking about? How does one avoid an improper interpretation? Importing information is the only way to resolve this conundrum and is the natural response of the interpreter. To ensure accuracy in importation, there are two measures that are essential, *reliability* and *congruence*. Congruence is the easiest measure to satisfy. It merely answers the question: can the information that has been imported into the target domain make sense? Reliability, on the other hand, takes the process of importation a step further. Reliability asks the question, “What is the likelihood that these importations are what Jesus intended?” One possible parameter for this measure could be distance. From where was the information imported? Another question is, does the importation come from the same speaker? The answer to these questions may help in determining the *reliability* of the imported item.

In the case of the growing seed, importation is relatively simple. The only text between the parable of the growing seed and the parable of the sower in the gospel of Mark is the parable of the lamp on the stand. By importing the values given in the parable of the sower for both the seed and the soil into the target domain of the parable of the growing seed, congruence is achieved, and reliability is particularly high in this case. This is because Jesus’ words are used to explain Jesus’ words. Explained another way, Paul may use similar terms in one of his epistles. However, it comes with greater difficulty to assume that when Paul uses a term it is a semantic match with that of a different speaker in another context. Keep in mind, there are times when Paul’s terms are a semantic match because he is either expanding on what Jesus said or is simply explaining Jesus’ words. In these cases, there is no room for concern.

In short, in the process of parabolic importation, it is generally a practical and safe practice to let Jesus interpret Jesus. This does not mean that there should be some sort of

impenetrable semantic wall placed between Jesus and Paul (or John, or Peter for that matter). What is being suggested here, is an order of operation in the process of parabolic importation. In this, the exegete would first appeal to the recorded language of the speaker of the metaphor before drawing from the words of other inspired voices unless there is rationale to do otherwise, a rationale that would need to be provided to explain the exception.

Another factor that makes reliability particularly high in this instance is the close proximity that the two parables have in the gospel of Mark. In fact, it can be argued that both parables were said in the same continuous discourse. Jesus did not need to flesh out the target domain in the parable of the growing seed because he had already provided the values for it in the explanation of the parable of the sower.

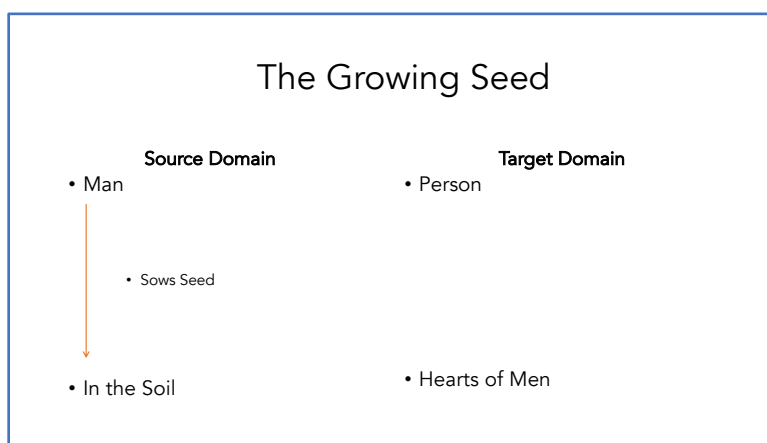


Figure 6.1

By supplying semantic values imported from the parable of the sower, the *seed* is understood to be the *word* in the target domain and the *soil* is understood to be the *hearts of men*. The man does not necessarily need interpretation since in either case the farmer or man is just a generic way of saying any person. No information is needed from the parable of the sower to arrive at this conclusion. The relation is rendered as *sows (i.e. shares) the word* as is revealed in the parable of the sower.

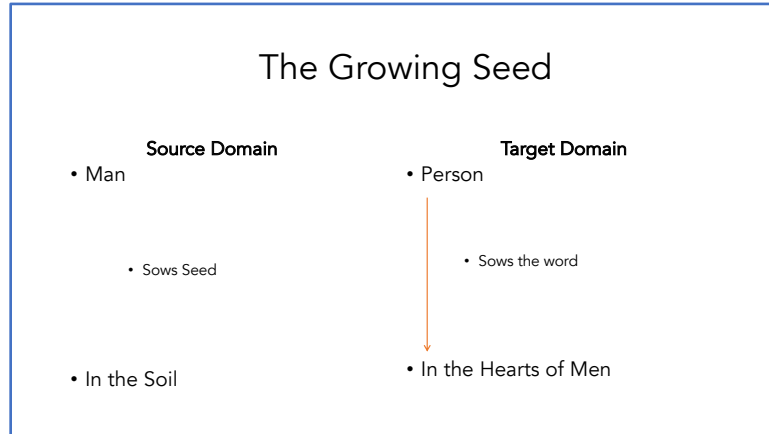


Figure 6.2

The end result of the importation is A PERSON *sows the word* IN THE HEARTS OF MEN.

This idea however teaches very little and can be defined as a structural mapping. The new information provided in this parable is that the person who sows the seed does not need to continuously attend to it to ensure growth. The seed grows in the soil of its own accord, much like the gospel grows in the hearts of those who hear it. An additional concept in this parable is whether the harvest referred to at the end has eschatological significance or refers to the results of the gospel in a more immediate sense. This, however, is not germane to the present topic.

Interpreters often import information to create meaning from Jesus' parables. This is an important concept which needs to be carefully considered when a parable presents with a so-called deficient target domain. If congruence and reliability are not considered carefully this opens up the door for interpretations that, if they are not outright allegorical, closely teeter on the line of good interpretation and allegorizing.

More research needs to be done to determine good parameters for determining the degree of reliability an interpretation might have. A grading system could be particularly beneficial for those who may want to know which interpretations are found to have the greatest degree of coherence and reliability. Of course, it would be assumed that theologians would be good

consumers of these tools realizing their biases and shortcomings. Interpretation is after all still an art to be performed and requires much more than a crass scientific system.

CONCLUSION

Understanding parables is essential for grasping Jesus' teachings. However, there is no formalized approach for understanding metaphor or parable within the Wisconsin Synod. Without a clear teaching on this topic, students may go beyond the scope of a good interpretation. However, what is even more probable is that they will under interpret the parables because they fear that they will go beyond the "one point of comparison". This leads to a reliance on commentaries as opposed to having a competency in metaphor analysis. It is not enough for our students and pastors to depend on the veracity of commentaries to properly interpret a parable. Commentators cannot be fully relied since many of them are also largely inconsistent in their approaches to parable interpretation.

Beyond not having formalized instruction in metaphor analysis, what further complicates parable interpretation in the WELS is that many professors have unknowingly adopted some of Adolf Jülicher's terminology to explain how parables are to be analyzed. Specifically, they use the terms *one-point of comparison* and *tertium comparationis*.²⁹ These terms are used interchangeably and refer to the idea that each parable has only one teaching. Jülicher did, in fact, use these terms in this way. However, Jülicher would never have said that every parable identified by the gospel writers had only *one-point of comparison*. Jülicher's position was more nuanced. He claimed that if a parable had more than one-point of comparison then Jesus never really said it. A parable with more than one-point of comparison for Jülicher was a clear sign that

²⁹ See Appendix A for samples.

it was not genuinely said by Jesus but was an uninspired embellishment of the gospel writer.

Jülicher has no qualms saying that the parable of the sower, the parable of the net, the parable of the weeds, go to prove that God's Word as found in the Bible is not verbally inspired. For Jülicher the *one-point of comparison theory* was an indispensable tool to find the "historical Jesus" underneath all the unnecessary noise of the gospel writers.

There is very little question that when WELS professors use the *one-point of comparison* they do not believe the biblical critical approach that Jülicher promotes. However, other scholars, if they read WELS material, would be rather confused by their idiosyncratic usage of the terms. In fact, it might falsely lead someone to think that WELS theologians believe Jülicher's critical approach to be a tried and true method of interpretation.

Beyond this confusion, the terms themselves do not reveal anything about the structure and function of parable. They just suggest that there is one teaching. They do not cause a student to look for the source domain or the target domain (the known and unknown as David Kuske verbage). They do not encourage anyone to find the corresponding agents and patients nor the relations that are to be mapped. With these terms students are not equipped to ask questions like: "What could I import into the agent slot of the target domain to better understand this parable?" The terminology currently in use limits a student's scope of understanding and their ability to communicate how they have interpreted a parable.

It is recommended that a formalized approach to metaphor analysis be taught to students pursuing gospel ministry and that Adolf Jülicher's terms fall out of use if at all possible. They cause a great deal more confusion than helpful guidance. They also indirectly affiliate the user of the terms with a theory that embraces a denial of verbal inspiration. This is a most unfortunate consequence.

In conclusion, God's Word is a great treasure for his people. Among this treasure of God's Word are the wonderful gems called parables. These gems deserve to be placed in settings that can bring out their individual beauty, putting on full display all their truthful radiance. Good parable analysis and healthy debate can do just this. It is a great comfort to know that in the WELS, we all treasure this word and believe it to be the very words of the living God, the only source of pure spiritual instruction. It is with a deep sense of gratitude for this word that this thesis has been written. The prayer is that a little bit of wisdom can be seen in the arguments presented in this thesis and that this may lead to thoughtful and meaningful conversations about how we understand and explain parables.

APPENDIX A. WELS EXAMPLES

This appendix provides a small sampling of how terms like *one-point of comparison* and *tertium comparationis* (employed by Jülicher with unfortunate theological baggage) have been used among WELS instructors.

3. Identify the one point of comparison (also called the tertium, the third element in a figure of speech).
4. The interpretation of the figure of speech must be limited to the one point of comparison
5. The interpretation of details in the figure of speech must be limited to those details which develop the one point of comparison. Any interpretation of details which leads to a second point of comparison is illegitimate interpretation.³⁰ – **David Kuske**

As was noted earlier, the interpretation of parables is not very difficult if one remembers that each parable has one known, one unknown, and one point of comparison between two (tertium). The tertium of a parable will be indicated either in the opening or closing words of the parable, or by the historical setting, or by the aim of the parable.³¹ – **David Kuske**

Jülicher us [*sic*] also credited as the first to have the insight that parables “have only a single point of reference”.³² – **Paul O. Wendland**

In typical fashion Jesus stated the parable’s tertium with a οὕτως clause: “In the same way there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent” (v 10, NIV). – **Paul Zell**

Much of the training of lay leaders will be based in Scripture. “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). Elders need to understand not just what law and gospel are, but how to apply it. Sunday school teacher needs to understand how to find the tertium of a parable. A [*sic*] evangelism committee chairman needs to know that when it comes to God-pleasing

³⁰ David Kuske. *Biblical Interpretation: The Only Right Way*. (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2011), 90.

³¹ *Ibid*, 95.

³² Paul O. Wendland “Is Allegorizing a Legitimate Manner of Biblical Interpretation?” *WLQ* 103 (2006): 163–194.

service, “the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love” (Galatians 5:6). In God’s eyes, service done joyfully is more important than service done efficiently, something lay leaders won’t learn from the business world. Gospel motivation is key!³³ -

Jonathan Hein

³³ This statement is found in the session 4 study guide for a course titled Congregational Organization & Management: Developing Church Leaders by Jonathan Hein.

APPENDIX B. EXAMPLES OF SCHOLARS OUTSIDE WELS

The one-point theory is the most influential and the most pernicious part of Jülicher's legacy to a century of interpretation. What every seminary graduate remembers about the parables is that allegorizing is wrong and that every parable makes one main point. But any informed student of literature knows nowadays that these options are ill-framed—that an extended analogy of Spenser, Shakespeare, or Milton, or a metaphysical conceit of Donne's, is neither an allegory to be interpreted down to the last minute detail nor a comparison limited to a single point of resemblance.³⁴ – **John Sider**

But over against Jülicher and Jeremias, one can no longer talk of summarizing even the one main point of a parable.[6] Metaphors simply cannot be expressed in nonmetaphorical language; their meanings are inextricable from their form.³⁵ – **Craig L. Blomberg**

Jülicher insisted that allegorical elements were absent from the unadulterated original parables of Jesus and that a parable can only have one point of comparison between the image and the reality which that image indicates. Modern scholars consider Jülicher's total rejection of any allegorical elements in Jesus' parables as a gross oversimplification, especially when properly considered within the rabbinic and OT contexts of the broader *mashal* genre. Others argue that certain Jesus parables can be rather complex and polyvalent, having more than one point of comparison and interpretation. Nonetheless, Jülicher's enduring contribution to parable exegesis is the insight that there exists a valid distinction between the parables of the historical Jesus and the parables as presented in the Synoptic Gospels.³⁶ – **John Szukalsk**

³⁴ John Sider "Nurturing Our Nurse: Literary Scholars and Biblical Exegesis," *Christianity and Literature* 32 (1982): 17-18.

³⁵ Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2012) 155.

³⁶ John A. Szukalski *Tormented in Hades: The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and Other Lucan Parables for Persuading the Rich to Repentance*. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 4.

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