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CHAPTER TEN

Complex Superposition of Metaphors in an American Sign Language Poem¹

METAPHOR AND POETRY

Poetic language draws on the same linguistic resources that we use in everyday language. Undoubtedly, most users of language strive for beauty in their linguistic output, and there are ample possibilities for such devices as wordplay, echoing/repetition, symmetrical structure, and joint creation of metaphor in normal conversation (cf. Ferrara 1994, Silverstein 1984). But the poet specifically focuses effort on fitting together linguistic structures to make a pleasing, coherent, and compelling whole. As we shall see, the linkage of metaphor and iconicity in signed languages provides the poet with rich resources for linguistic art.

A skilled poet can combine a number of usually distinct metaphors to form a coherent whole. In particular, the poet can create a scenario that contains the source domains of several metaphors – via the mappings, this scenario's concrete events evoke the corresponding abstract events. Using the terminology of Fauconnier and Turner (1996), we can describe the scenario as a *blend* of the metaphors.

In our chosen text, "The Treasure," poet Ella Mae Lentz crafts a story that, on one level, describes a person digging down to discover buried treasure, and the reactions to her discovery – but on another level, describes the person's linguistic analysis of ASL, and the reactions to *that* discovery.² The poem weaves together many different conventional

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² The poem was published in *The Treasure: Poems by Ella Mae Lentz*. VHS videotape. Berkeley, CA: In Motion Press.

metaphors into a compelling appeal to viewers to cherish and respect ASL.

There is not space here for a complete analysis of all the poetic devices that Lentz employs; nor can a true sense of the poem be conveyed through glosses or through English paraphrases. This chapter limits itself to a summary of the poem's scenario, a catalogue of the major conceptual metaphors used at each stage of the scenario (with additional evidence from ASL lexical items for each metaphor, where possible), and an analysis of how Lentz blends the metaphors together into a coherent whole that forcefully conveys the message that ASL is precious, endangered, and in need of rescue. Appendix Two gives an English translation of the poem.

Lentz's poem metaphorically defines ASL as a valuable treasure that has been buried underground. She frames linguistic analysis of ASL as uncovering the treasure, and the common disregard for ASL as reburying the treasure. Table 10.1 shows the basic structure of the poem: It opens with signing described as "under a layer of earth" (stage 1) and follows Lentz in her efforts to analyze ASL, metaphorically portrayed as digging into the ground (stage 2). At the poem's central scene, Lentz

TABLE 10.1. Stages of "The Treasure"

1. Introduction: signing is "underground"
2. Poet begins her analysis
 - Digging
 - First discovery
 - Digging
 - Second discovery
 - Digging
 - Third discovery
 - Extended digging
3. Gleaming treasure uncovered
 - Poet is inspired
4. Poet attempts to communicate with those on the surface
 - First conversation
 - Dirt shoveled onto poet and treasure
 - Second conversation
 - Dirt shoveled onto poet and treasure
 - Third conversation
 - Dirt shoveled onto poet and treasure
5. Treasure completely reburied
6. Coda: Treasure is still alive
 - Poet offers treasure to viewer

makes a major discovery, shown as a box of glowing treasure (stage 3). Lentz attempts to communicate her discovery and excitement to others but is rebuffed (stage 4) – they show their disdain by shoveling dirt down onto her. Eventually, the treasure is reburied (stage 5). At the end of the poem, Lentz makes one final appeal, this time to the viewer (stage 6).

As we shall see, much of the power of this poem comes from Lentz's evocation of two familiar cultural frames: The frame of *archeology*, in which researchers carefully unearth valuable artifacts, structures stage 2 of the poem, whereas the frame of *burial*, in which dead bodies are covered with earth, structures stage 4. Because these frames share many particulars – for example, dirt, shovels, underground objects – they are easily combined into a blended scenario. The combination adds much to each half of the poem: ASL is seen both as a treasure and as a living thing, reburied while still alive; Lentz, in digging up the treasure, is both scientist and rescuer; the rejecters of ASL are both willfully ignorant and murderers, in that they rebury the living treasure.

The analysis of the poem is based on three types of data: non-metaphorical signs, which simply belong to the overall target domain of ASL and linguistics; lexicalized metaphorical signs, which iconically present some source domain yet have become conventionalized as part of the lexicon of the target domain; and free metaphorical signs, which give a novel, classifier-based representation of the source domain that is interpretable in context as referring to the target domain. For example, in the second stage of the poem, Lentz uses the nonmetaphorical signs DEAF and SIGN; the lexicalized metaphorical sign ANALYZE (see Fig. 8.12); and many metaphorical classifiers, including a representation of a shovel blade scraping away dirt (see Fig. 10.1).

In the following sections, we will go through the poem step-by-step. We will see how Lentz constructs her two major metaphorical framings from the conventional resources of ASL, using both lexicalized metaphorical signs and metaphorical applications of classifier signs. Though her two framings (LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IS ARCHEOLOGY and OPPRESSION IS BURIAL) are not conventional metaphors in general use in ASL, they are built up from ASL's conventional metaphors.

STAGES OF "THE TREASURE"

Let us now consider the stages of the poem. For each stage, I summarize the major events and list the relevant metaphors. I also include glosses of pertinent passages (see Appendix One for glossing conventions and Appendix Two for a full, idiomatic translation). Extended evidence for

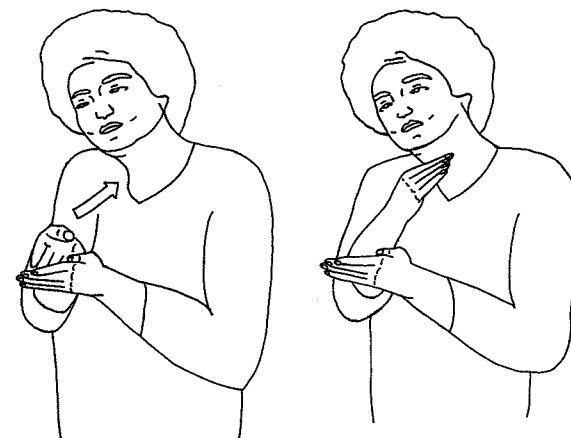


Figure 10.1. CL:BB_R "shovel blade removes dirt from surface"

each metaphor follow in the next section of the chapter; in this section I will simply give the metaphor a TARGET IS SOURCE name.³

1. Introduction: Signing Is "Underground"

At the start of the poem, Lentz describes Deaf people's signing as "underground," trivialized, and devalued. She uses classifiers to show signing as an object covered by a layer of earth, as we see in excerpt 1. (Throughout this chapter, *rh* means "right hand," *both* means "both hands," and *lh* means "left hand." See Appendix One for a full description of glossing conventions.)

- (1)
 rh:
 both: CL:Flat-OO "hold flat object in front of self"
 lh:
 rh:
 both: DIRT CL:55 "flat surface" DEMOTE TRIVIAL.
 lh: -

"It (i.e., *signing*) has been covered with dirt, devalued, trivialized."

³ Note that the name is meant simply to be a useful label; the metaphor actually consists of the cross-domain mapping. The name is probably about as accurate and helpful as the average English gloss for an ASL sign.

In this section, nonmetaphorical items such as SIGN, TELL-STORY, and EXPERIENCE allow us to deduce the actual topic, or overall target domain, of the story: Deaf people's signing. The metaphorical items treat signs as objects that can be passed from person to person or hidden underground. We have evidence in this passage for the conventional metaphors SIGNS ARE OBJECTS, POWERFUL IS UP, and KNOWING IS SEEING. Lentz has laid the metaphorical groundwork for her two framings: KNOWING IS SEEING will combine with other metaphors to form the *archeology* framing, whereas POWERFUL IS UP will form the basis of the *burial* framing.

2. Poet Begins Her Analysis

In stage 2, after "looking over" the situation, Lentz undertakes her analysis of ASL. She describes herself both as "analyzing" and as digging into the earth, using both classifiers and lexical signs, as we see in excerpt 2.

(2)

rh: PRO-I LOOK-AT_R LOOK-AT_L

both: ANALYZE_L ANALYZE_R

lh:

rh:

both: CL:BB_R "shovel blade removes dirt from surface"

lh:

rh:

both: CL:BB_L "shovel blade removes dirt from surface"

lh:

"I look at this, look at that; I analyze this, analyze that; my shovel digs there, digs here."

Figure 8.12 gives the sign ANALYZE, a metaphorical lexical item; the classifier form CL:BB_R "shovel blade removes dirt from surface" is given in Figure 10.1.

This section of the poem consists of digging interspersed with three discoveries of signs. Almost immediately on beginning the digging, Lentz makes a discovery. She "uncovers" two signs, holds them side-by-side, and notices that though they look alike, they have different movements and different meanings. Excerpt 3 shows this event.

(3)

rh:

both: CL:Flat-OO "hold two objects side-by-side"

lh:

rh: FACE + R_{SAME}-AS_L

POSS-PRO-3_R

both:

lh: CL:Flat-O "continue holding object"

POSS-PRO-3_L

rh:

both: MOVEMENT DIFFERENT DIFFERENT MEAN

lh:

"I hold them next to each other. They look alike, but their movements are different, and they have different meanings."

Lentz's next discovery is a sign with an English word "pasted" to its surface. She peels away the label and can now see the sign's true meaning for Deaf people, as we see in excerpt 4.

(4)

rh:

both: SIGN ENGLISH WORD CL:HB "strip across front of surface"

lh:

rh: CL:F "pull strip off surface and drop it"

both:

lh: CL:B "surface" _____

rh: ₁LOOK-AT_{surface}, then downward

both: MEAN DEEP

lh: CL:B "surface" _____

(gaze to CL:B)

rh: BELONGING-TO_{far R} DEAF WOW

both:

lh: CL:B "surface" _____

"[It's] a sign with an English word pasted across the front. I pull the word off and drop it. I look into the sign. Its meaning is profound and belongs to the Deaf world. How impressive!"

Finally, Lentz uncovers and picks up two more signs with English words labeling them. She pulls off the labels and holds the signs side-by-

side. Then she decides that they are in the wrong order and reverses them. She also notices that they have facial expressions associated with them – eyebrows rising and falling above the signs. These manipulations are described in excerpt 5.

(5)

rh: CL:B “flat surface moves to L ctr” ——— BETTER

both: (wrists cross)

lh: CL:B “flat surface moves to R ctr” ———

rh:

both: EXPRESSION CL:XX_R “brows wiggle over right surface”

lh:

rh:

FINE_{wg}

both: CL:XX_L “brows wiggle over left surface”

lh:

“I reverse [the signs’] order – that’s better. Facial expressions dance over the first sign and the second sign – how lovely!”

In stage 2, Lentz develops her *archeologist* framing of ASL research. There is evidence in this passage for the metaphors ANALYSIS IS DIGGING, SIGNS ARE OBJECTS, KNOWING IS SEEING, and UNDERSTANDING IS MANIPULATING. As we shall see, these metaphors combine into a compound metaphor we could call LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IS ARCHEOLOGY.

3. Gleaming Treasure Uncovered

Lentz continues to dig and now hits a large object: a box, whose contents glitter and glow up at her. Lentz is inspired, as we see in excerpt 6.

(6)

rh:

both: BOX CL:BB “lid opens”

lh:

rh: CL:Open-8_{CTR} “shiny” CL:Flat-O/5_R “glow” ———

both:

lh: CL:Open-8_{CTR} “shiny” CL:Flat-O/5_L ——— “glow”

rh:

both: INSPIRE EXCITED

lh:

“I open the lid of the box. The contents glitter and glow. I am inspired and excited.”

This passage forms the center of the poem and marks the transition from the *archeology* framing to the *burial* framing. The archeology framing is “capped” with the addition of the metaphor VALUE IS MONETARY VALUE: Lentz as archeologist has not merely made an important discovery but has found a valuable treasure. Lentz is inspired and “uplifted” by her discovery; the addition of the HAPPY IS UP metaphor shows that the vertical dimension is now taking different metaphorical significance.

4. Poet Attempts to Communicate with Those on the Surface

Lentz now tries, from down in her trench, to get the attention of people up on the surface, as described in excerpt 7.

(7)

gaze up/right ———

rh: “wave for attention”_{UP/R}

both:

lh:

gaze up/left ———

rh: _{UP/R}LOOK-AT_{DOWN/CTR.imper.trill}⁺

both:

lh: “wave for attention”_{UP/L} _{UP/L}LOOK-AT_{DOWN/CTR.imper.trill}⁺

“I look up and wave to both sides. ‘Look down here, everyone!’”

She engages three different people in conversation but is unsuccessful in persuading them of the value of ASL. (From Lentz’s introduction to the poem, we can gather that all three are deaf.) Notably, none of the three mention or even notice the treasure, although Lentz frequently points to it. At the end of each conversation, the interlocutor shovels dirt down onto Lentz, and the dirt smears down her face and body. Excerpt 8 is from the first conversation.

(8)

rh:

both: CL:SS “shovel dirt from R to down/L”

lh:

rh: CL:O/5 “dirt falls from R to down/L”

both:

lh:

rh: CL:O/5 “dirt falls from up/R across face and chest”

both: RS (narrator):<

lh:

>

"S/he shovels dirt down into the trench. The dirt falls down. It falls onto my face and body."

Figures 10.2 and 10.3 illustrate some of the classifiers and referential shifts from this excerpt. In Figure 10.2, Lentz has taken on the first interlocutor's persona, as we can see from her nasty facial expression; her right hand performs the classifier form CL:O/5 "dirt falls from R to down/L" while her left hand retains the S-fist shape used in the previous classifier form. Immediately thereafter, as shown in Figure 10.3, Lentz returns to her "narrator" persona, gazing upward with a dismayed look; her right hand again traces the dirt's path, this time from the narrator's perspective, with the form CL:O/5 "dirt falls from up/R across face and chest."

The first person to look down expresses a belief that analyzing ASL is for hearing people and that Deaf people already know how to sign, so further analysis is not needed. Lentz contradicts this opinion, but the person has no time to listen to her.

The second person states that ASL is only for fun and that it lacks many grammatical structures when compared to English, which is an advanced, exact language suited for serious endeavors. Lentz responds that ASL is of equal status to English, possessing many structures that English lacks. This person accuses her of lying.

The last person uses Signing Exact English (SEE) to communicate instead of ASL. She tells Lentz to accept the "fact" that signed English is easier for hearing parents of deaf children. Lentz counters that if the par-



Figure 10.2. CL:O/5 "dirt falls from R to down/L"

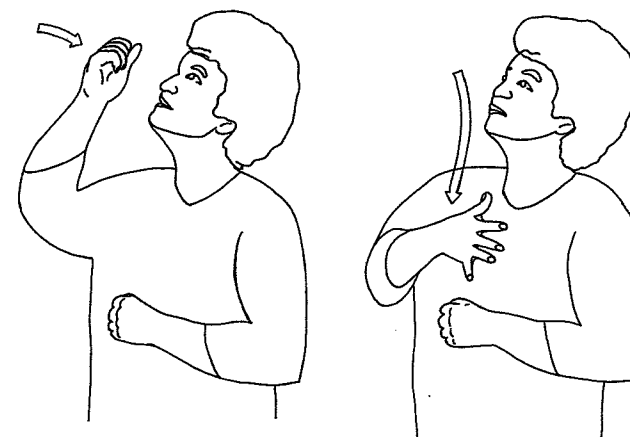


Figure 10.3. CL:O/5 "dirt falls from up/R across face and chest"

ents saw the treasure, they'd be eager to learn ASL. The SEE signer responds that having a Ph.D. makes her the authority on this issue.

This section develops an entirely different framing of the situation. Here, the metaphors POWERFUL IS UP, COMMUNICATING IS SENDING, and BAD IS DIRTY combine to create the metaphor EXPRESSING DISRESPECT TO SOMEONE LESS POWERFUL IS BURYING HIM/HER. Lentz herself still holds to the *archeology* framing, continually pointing to the treasure she sees in front of her, as we see in excerpt 9, from the third conversation.

(9)

rh: SUPPOSE++ MOTHER+FATHER

both: RS (narrator):< "no, no"

lh:

rh: SEE_{down/ctr} RESPECT-PRO-3_{down/ctr}

both:

lh:

rh: WILL #ASL WILL

both: EXCITE EAGER LEARN++ "what" >

lh:

"I reply, 'No, no – if parents see what's down here, they'll get excited and eager, and learn ASL.'"

But in refusing to see the treasure, the three people refuse to give any support to this framing or any value to ASL and Lentz's work.

5. *Treasure Completely Reburied*

Dirt continues to fall on Lentz and the treasure (presumably from the shovels of many other disdainful people), until the box is completely reburied. She frames this second burial as an act of oppression. Excerpt 10 shows how she does this: Her classifiers for dirt rising to cover the box merge into the metaphorical lexical item *OPPRESS*, with its fist-shaped nondominant hand and its downward-pressing 5-shaped dominant hand.

(10)

rh: CL:5 "level rises to top of container and over top"

both:

lh: CL:C "container" ————— CL:S "container"

rh:

both: *OPPRESS*

lh:

"Dirt rises, covers the box, and pushes it down – oppression."

Figures 10.4 through 10.6 illustrate this passage as well. Figure 10.4 shows the right-hand 5-CL (indicating the level of the dirt) rising past the left-hand C-CL (indicating the container).

In Figure 10.5, the 5-CL circles the top of the left hand, indicating that the dirt has covered the box, as the left hand begins to close into a fist. Finally, Figure 10.6 shows the lexical sign *OPPRESS*, where the right 5-



Figure 10.4. CL:5C "dirt rises to top of container"



Figure 10.5. CL:5C "dirt covers top of container"

hand pushes down forcefully on the left fist; this sign can also be read as a continuation of the classifier construction, with the meaning "dirt pushes down on the box."

Stage 5 continues to develop the *burial* framing, with the addition of the metaphor *OPPRESSION IS DOWNWARD PRESSURE*. The entire framing might now be called *OPPRESSION IS BURIAL*. Meanwhile, a consequence of the reburial for the *archeology* framing is that the treasure is now hidden again – no longer accessible, no longer available for study, no longer usable to enrich the lives of Deaf people.



Figure 10.6. *OPPRESS* or CL:5S "dirt pushes down on container"

6. Coda: Treasure is Still-Alive

Though the treasure is buried, Lentz tells us that those glowing lights are still alive. She offers the box to the viewers, urging us to consider what should be done. Excerpt 11 gives the final lines of the poem.

(11)

gaze to camera, nod

rh:

both: STILL LIVE STILL LIVE

lh:

rh:

THINK + SELF_{camera}

both: CL:55 "hold box out toward camera"

lh:

CL:5 "hold box"

"[It's] still alive – still alive. Here it is – you decide what to do."

This last stage is a coda, a final comment on what the viewers have seen. The assertion that the treasure is "still alive" brings in the metaphor EXISTENCE IS LIFE, and it forces us to see the buriers as murderers because we know that a living creature cannot survive buried underground.

At the end, Lentz's offering of the box to the viewers brings in the metaphor CONTROL IS PHYSICAL CONTROL. This final act serves as a comment on all that has gone before. Lentz uses the box to bring in the framing of ASL as a treasure one last time, but she abandons the careful, consistent source–domain structure that she has built up throughout the poem: We are no longer down in the trench and ASL is no longer buried – we are now exhorted to think on what she has told us and to act appropriately.

METAPHORICAL COMPOSITES IN "THE TREASURE"

In this section, we will look at the two major metaphorical framings: LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IS ARCHEOLOGY and OPPRESSION IS BURIAL. Each of these framings is made up of several less-complex metaphors; we will go through each of the component metaphors and review the evidence for it both in the poem and in the lexicon of ASL. Then we will see how the metaphors fit together to create the composite framings.

We will also see how the central episode of the poem causes a slight shift in the first metaphorical framing and how the addition of EXISTENCE IS LIFE in the coda sharpens the second framing. We do not have space to address all the metaphors in the poem – only the ones that participate in the major framings.

The First Framing: LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IS ARCHEOLOGY

The first major framing in the poem, LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IS ARCHEOLOGY, is made up of the components ANALYSIS IS DIGGING, SIGNS ARE OBJECTS, KNOWING IS SEEING, and UNDERSTANDING IS MANIPULATING. Let us go through each in turn.

ANALYSIS IS DIGGING As we saw in Chapter Eight, in ANALYSIS IS DIGGING the domain of digging down below a surface is mapped onto the domain of finding out more and more about a topic. Table 10.2 reviews the exact mapping from source to target domain.

Lentz uses this metaphor again and again; if one metaphor could be chosen as the basis of her poem, this is the one. She explicitly introduces it with the lexical item ANALYZE, in stage 2; the form of ANALYZE, with two bent-V handshapes, resembles the act of scraping away a surface to reveal what lies beneath. She immediately follows up this lexicalized image with several classifier representations of digging: B-handshapes show the blade of the shovel pushing away dirt, and S-handshapes show her wielding the shovel.

The interesting thing about this metaphor is that conventionally, only the downward direction is mapped. There is no conventional sign showing upward movement or reburial of objects that has a meaning like "ignore" or "cover up facts." The poem, of course, uses the upward direction as well; this is Lentz's poetic elaboration.

SIGNS ARE OBJECTS The next important metaphor, and the first one to appear in the poem, might be called SIGNS ARE OBJECTS. Here signs are described as if they were physical objects that can be examined,

TABLE 10.2. ANALYSIS IS DIGGING

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Surface | Simplest, most superficial information |
| Area below surface | Information that requires effort to figure out |
| Digging or descending below surface | Figuring out a more complete account |
| Scale of depth below surface | Scale of degree of completeness |
| Closer to surface (= higher) | Less information known |
| Deeper below surface (= lower) | More information known |

TABLE 10.3. SIGNS ARE OBJECTS

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Physical objects | Signs |
| Manipulating and examining objects | Analyzing signs |
| Passing signs to others | Teaching signs |

manipulated, passed to others, and stored in a box. This mapping is probably a special case of a more general metaphor where any abstract entity can be described as if it were a physical object.⁴

The mapping for SIGNS ARE OBJECTS is given in Table 10.3. This metaphor occurs throughout the poem, but particularly in stages 1 through 3. Lentz first brings it in via the lexical signs GIVE-TO_{each.other} "we have given signing to each other" and PASS-DOWN-THROUGH-GENERATIONS "we have passed down signing for many years"; both signs have the flat-O handshape, which is a classifier for handling flat objects, and both refer to signs in this case.

Lentz also freely and repeatedly uses flat-O and B classifiers to describe how she "picked up" signs from her excavation trench, held them up for examination, and later set them aside. The use of these classifiers shows that Lentz is envisioning signs as flat objects.

Finally, though Lentz never explicitly says so, the treasure box is understood to be full of signs that glitter and glow.

KNOWING IS SEEING The third major metaphor in the *archeology* framing can be called KNOWING IS SEEING (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1980 for English examples); in this metaphor, the domain of receiving visual information is mapped onto the domain of understanding information in general. This metaphor is conventional in ASL; evidence for the mapping can be found in signs such as PERSPECTIVE, in which an understanding of a situation is shown as a way of "looking at" a referent; BLURRY, in which difficulty in understanding is shown as visual blur; and CLEAR/OBVIOUS, in which ease in understanding is shown as visual clarity. Table 10.4 gives the mapping.

An important corollary of this mapping might be given the name UNKNOWN IS HIDDEN: That is, facts that are not accessible to our intelli-

⁴ Neither of these metaphors has been documented in ASL outside this poem, and this chapter makes no claim as to whether they are conventional.

TABLE 10.4. KNOWING IS SEEING

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|--|--|
| Visible objects | Facts or ideas |
| Looking at something | Directing attention at some fact or idea |
| Receiving visual information | Understanding |
| Difficulties in receiving visual information | Difficulties in understanding |

gences are described as if they were hidden from view. This corollary is especially important for "The Treasure."

Lentz uses this mapping throughout her poem. At the beginning and at the end, ASL is described as covered up by a thick layer of dirt; this entails that the truth about ASL is unknown, inaccessible to most people's understanding. As Lentz uncovers signs, she makes them visually accessible – and, in fact, she examines them with her eyes (as shown by lexical items such as LOOK-AT and classifier representations of looking). Part of her analysis involves removing English "coverings" from the signs and looking at what is revealed; via this mapping, the English labels serve as barriers to true understanding of ASL signs. When she discovers the treasure, the signs are described as glittering and glowing – visually beautiful, and by the metaphor, intellectually pleasing.

In the second half of the poem, Lentz continually tries to get others to look at the signs, but they refuse; metaphorically speaking, they refuse to consider the facts. When they throw dirt down on Lentz and the treasure, reburying it, they are making it impossible for themselves and others to learn about ASL's structure, because the facts are no longer accessible.

UNDERSTANDING IS MANIPULATING The final metaphor in the *archeology* complex, UNDERSTANDING IS MANIPULATING, also focuses on the target domain of knowledge and understanding; here the domain of physical handling and arranging of objects is mapped onto the domain of receiving and organizing information about a topic.⁵ Wilcox (1993) presented many examples in which ASL classifiers for showing how objects are handled were used to describe collection, selection, and organization of ideas. The cross-domain mapping is given in Table 10.5.

⁵ There is no significance to the two different names for the target domain.

TABLE 10.5. UNDERSTANDING IS MANIPULATING

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Tangible objects | Ideas or facts |
| Manipulating objects | Analyzing information |
| Arranging objects | Organizing information |
| Gathering objects | Collecting information |

Lentz makes repeated use of this mapping in stage 2 of the poem: As we see from her use of flat-O, B, and F classifiers, she picks up signs, turns them over in her hands, pulls off labels from them, and arranges them in what she feels is the proper order. Metaphorically, she is collecting, analyzing, and arranging data to yield a satisfying analysis of ASL's linguistic structure.

THE COMPOSITE The four metaphors described here are separate conceptual mappings: There is clear independent evidence for each of them (except perhaps *SIGNS ARE OBJECTS*) in ASL's lexical items and metaphorical classifiers. Yet the four fit together naturally into a single framing or scenario.

Quite often in our lives, there is an object we wish to understand. We pick it up, turn it over, and receive at the same time both visual and kinesthetic information about it. Experiences such as this one bring together a number of conceptual domains in what Grady and Johnson (in press) call a *primary scene*. This particular scene involves tight correlations among the domains of visual perception, object manipulation, and information gathering. The correlation between visual perception and information gathering provides the experiential basis for the metaphor *KNOWING IS SEEING*; a similar correlation provides the basis for *UNDERSTANDING IS MANIPULATING* and for a general metaphor that might be called *CONCEPTS ARE PHYSICAL OBJECTS*.

In this poem, Lentz tells us clearly in stage 1 that the metaphorical objects under consideration are ASL signs; once that has been established, it is perfectly natural to reconstruct the rest of the primary scene and to show investigation of the signs as handling, arranging, and visually examining the objects.

The poem adds one more metaphor that fills in more details of the scenario. The combination of *SIGNS ARE OBJECTS*, *KNOWING IS SEEING*, and *UNDERSTANDING IS MANIPULATING* gives information about how the objects are treated but not about where they came from. The additional metaphor, *ANALYSIS IS DIGGING*, provides those details along with a specific setting for the scenario.

In *ANALYSIS IS DIGGING* as conventionalized in the lexicon of ASL, found objects are not mapped. That is, the lexical items that draw on this metaphor, *SURFACE*, *DEEP*, and *ANALYZE*, do not depict found objects in any way; they simply draw attention to the depth of the excavation, or to the digging process. Yet we know that in the domain of digging, one usually is digging to find something. There is an obvious "slot" in the source domain for extension and elaboration: the found objects.

The four metaphors thus fit neatly together to form a coherent scenario, outlined in Table 10.6. Each stage of the scenario is listed, along with the metaphors that apply to it. As we can see, this scenario matches the basic *modus operandi* for the science of archeology. Because the sign *ANALYZE*, used repeatedly by Lentz, suggests a scientific endeavor of some sort, the scenario evokes archeology as an overall source domain. Taken together, then, the four metaphors create a composite that can be given the name *LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IS ARCHEOLOGY*.

TABLE 10.6. Scenario for Archeology Framing

| SOURCE SCENARIO | TARGET SCENARIO |
|--|--|
| There is a interesting, undisturbed site. | There is an interesting topic about which little is known (in this case, ASL signs). |
| (ANALYSIS IS DIGGING, KNOWING IS SEEING) | |
| Person digs down into earth. | Person starts to investigate topic. |
| (ANALYSIS IS DIGGING) | |
| Person finds objects. | Person discovers interesting data about signs. |
| (ANALYSIS IS DIGGING, SIGNS ARE OBJECTS) | |
| Person picks up objects, manipulates, and arranges them. | Person collects, organizes, and gets information about signs. |
| (UNDERSTANDING IS MANIPULATING, SIGNS ARE OBJECTS) | |
| Person looks carefully at objects. | Person thinks carefully about signs. |
| (KNOWING IS SEEING, SIGNS ARE OBJECTS) | |
| Result: person knows much more about objects and site. | Result: person knows much more about signs and ASL. |
| (Composite of all four metaphors) | |

There is a major consequence to this evocation of archeology. Linguistics is not a particularly well known field; moreover, many nonlinguists believe that they know as much about language as any expert could. Archeology, on the other hand, has piqued the popular imagination; its methods are easily understandable to anyone who has ever imagined digging up strange and ancient artifacts. By linking linguistic analysis to archeology, and by using the stages of archeological research to explain the stages of linguistic research, Lentz strengthens the framing of linguistics as a science – indeed, as an adventurous, exciting field of research.

Through this composite metaphor, then, Lentz informs the viewers that she as a linguist is an expert and that her analysis of ASL is valuable scientific research. When Lentz's interlocutors rebury the treasure in stage 5, this metaphor frames them as "know-nothing" ignorers of science; the effect of their actions is to make the facts about ASL once more unknown and inaccessible.

The Central Episode: Discovering the Treasure

VALUE IS MONETARY VALUE Stage 3 of the poem adds one more detail to the already-completed *archeology* framing: Lentz "strikes it rich" by discovering a box full of treasure. This event does a number of things: It adds the metaphor **VALUE IS MONETARY VALUE** to the composite, it subtly shifts the framing from a scientific excavation to a treasure hunt, and it metaphorically defines ASL as a treasure of great worth.

In this metaphor, the domain of money and financial riches is mapped onto the domain of worth in general.⁶ The mapping is given in Table 10.7. Lentz uses this metaphor in two ways. First, during stage 4 Lentz uses the lexical item **RICH** to refer to ASL and its grammatical structure. Second, and more significantly, she describes ASL as a box full of glitter-

TABLE 10.7. **VALUE IS MONETARY VALUE**

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Financial worth | Worth |
| Worth a large amount of money | Extremely valuable |
| Worth a small amount of money | Not valuable |

⁶ This metaphor is widespread in English (cf. Lakoff, Espenson, & Schwartz 1991) but has not been previously documented in ASL; this chapter makes no claim as to whether it is part of ASL's conventional resources.

ing, gleaming objects, using open-8 ("shining") and 5/O ("light-emitting") classifiers. In the poem, she never explicitly states what is in the box, but the context of the excavation, the buried box, the reflected light, and Lentz's ensuing excitement, along with the poem's English title ("The Treasure") all lead us to conclude that the box must be full of precious objects such as jewels, gold, and silver.

The addition of this metaphor to the scenario in Table 10.6 creates a shift of emphasis in the framing. Up to this point, Lentz's analysis of ASL has been described in a way consistent with a scientific venture: She has been examining objects to figure out their nature. Now, however, she has found gold and jewels, a discovery that strongly evokes a frame of adventure and exploration. The two frames are not mutually exclusive, of course: The best scientific endeavors have an element of the treasure hunt in them, and major scientific discoveries are at least as rewarding as gold and jewels. (This very point is emphasized in the poem by the overlapping of the two frames.) At the end of the poem, when Lentz's interlocutors rebury the treasure, they are understood as squandering vast riches as well as ignoring scientific facts.

The Second Framing: OPPRESSION IS BURIAL

The second framing in the poem, **OPPRESSION IS BURIAL**, is developed in stages 4 and 5. Throughout these stages, it is a composite of the metaphors **POWERFUL IS UP**, **OPPRESSION IS DOWNWARD PRESSURE**, **COMMUNICATING IS SENDING**, and **BAD IS DIRTY**. At stage 6, Lentz adds the metaphor **EXISTENCE IS LIFE**, which gives additional power and urgency to the *burial* framing. Let us first consider the metaphors in the earlier composite.

POWERFUL IS UP Chapter Eight established the existence in ASL of **POWERFUL IS UP**, which maps the vertical scale onto the domain of social standing and power. Table 10.8 restates the mapping. Lentz invokes this

TABLE 10.8. **POWERFUL IS UP**

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Up-down dimension | Scale of relative power/importance |
| Higher locations | More important ranks |
| Lower locations | Less important ranks |
| Movement upward | Increasing power |
| Movement downward | Decreasing power |

metaphor at the beginning of the poem, describing ASL with the signs DEMOTE and TRIVIAL; moreover, Deaf people's signing is beneath the ground (as described with the sign EARTH and spread-5 "surface" classifiers). Through the rest of the first half, as she develops her *archeology* framing, the POWERFUL IS UP mapping is in the background but at some level still accessible. Though Lentz at this stage is framing her actions as scientific research, we can also use POWERFUL IS UP to see her as a "rescuer of the downtrodden," a visitor from the world of power who decides to visit the world of the powerless.

As soon as Lentz tries to communicate her discovery to the people on the surface, this metaphor comes back into the foreground. Her interlocutors are high up, and she is underground with the treasure. The interlocutors clearly have the power to ignore and suppress her findings; she and the treasure are framed as powerless. She tries in vain, using signs such as ADVANCE and EQUAL (which themselves incorporate the POWERFUL IS UP mapping), to persuade them that the treasure has value, but to no avail. By reburying her and the treasure, they ensure that ASL will continue to be stuck at a "low" status.

OPPRESSION IS DOWNWARD PRESSURE The next metaphor in this group, OPPRESSION IS DOWNWARD PRESSURE, is also well established for English but not documented in ASL. This mapping could be considered an elaboration of POWERFUL IS UP, in which pressure exerted downward by those above is mapped onto oppressive actions by those more powerful. There are at least two signs that give evidence for this elaboration in the lexicon of ASL: the sign OPPRESS, in which the dominant B-hand presses down on the nondominant S-hand, and the sign FORCE, which has a downward movement of the dominant C-hand.

Table 10.9 gives a mapping for OPPRESSION IS DOWNWARD PRESSURE. Lentz uses this metaphor in stage 5 of the poem: With a 5-CL for the dirt's level and a C-CL for the box, she shows how the dirt thrown down on the treasure accumulates until it reburies the treasure. As her domi-

TABLE 10.9. OPPRESSION IS DOWNWARD PRESSURE

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Up-down dimension | Scale of relative power |
| Higher locations | More powerful status |
| Lower locations | Less powerful status |
| Downward pressure | Oppressive action |

nant hand shows the dirt rising to cover the treasure, her classifiers merge into the lexical sign OPPRESS. In this way, she indicates that the weight of the dirt pressing down on the treasure should be understood as oppression directed toward ASL.

COMMUNICATING IS SENDING and **BAD IS DIRTY** The last two metaphors in this composite function together in the poem, so I will treat them together.

The metaphor COMMUNICATING IS SENDING was extensively discussed in Chapter Six; Table 10.10 restates the mapping. Lentz uses a novel elaboration of this metaphor, analyzed here as a compound with a mapping called BAD IS DIRTY: in communicating with Lentz, her interlocutors throw dirt at her.

The metaphor BAD IS DIRTY, though well documented in Western cultures (cf. expressions such as *unclean*, *pure*, and *filthy* to refer to moral states), has not yet been established as conventional in ASL. There is some evidence supporting its existence: The sign DIRTY can be used to mean "bad" or "immoral," and the sign CLEAN is most likely related to the sign NICE. Whether or not the metaphor is conventional in ASL, Lentz would likely have access to it through the American culture in which she lives.

BAD IS DIRTY maps the scale of cleanliness onto a scale of moral goodness. Table 10.11 gives a mapping. If we combine this mapping with COMMUNICATING IS SENDING, we get the entailments that good messages are clean objects, whereas bad messages are dirty objects. The interlocutors' action of shoveling dirt is shown through S-shaped "handling" classifiers, and the dirt itself is shown with an O that opens to a 5. In throwing this dirt, then, they are sending Lentz the worst possible message. We might give this combination of metaphors the name EXPRESSING DISRESPECT IS THROWING DIRT.

TABLE 10.10. COMMUNICATING IS SENDING

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Objects | Ideas |
| Sending object | Articulating idea in language |
| Catching object (and putting it in head) | Understanding idea |
| Sender | Communicator |
| Receiver | Addressee |
| Difficulties in sending or catching | Difficulties in communication |

218
TABLE 10.11. BAD IS DIRTY

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|---------------|-------------|
| Clean | Good |
| Dirty | Bad |
| Clean objects | Good things |
| Dirty objects | Bad things |

THE FIRST COMPOSITE We have already seen how COMMUNICATING IS SENDING and BAD IS DIRTY combine to form EXPRESSING DISRESPECT IS THROWING DIRT. The addition of the vertical dimension, with the metaphors POWERFUL IS UP and OPPRESSION IS DOWNWARD PRESSURE, leads us to a composite scenario in which disdainful, dismissive actions by people in power are understood as acts of burying.

In the first framing, three of the four component metaphors fit together into a scene that every human experiences starting from early childhood (i.e., picking up objects and examining them). This is not the case for the second framing. Instead, the component metaphors combine to create a scenario that happens rarely if ever in our experience.

COMMUNICATING IS SENDING forms the basic framework, in which messages are understood as objects that move from communicator to addressee. BAD IS DIRTY specifies the nature of the objects: Because they are negative messages, they are represented as dirt. POWERFUL IS UP now gives us the relative locations of the communicator and addressee: Because the communicators are framed as more powerful, they are located above the addressee. Finally, OPPRESSION IS DOWNWARD PRESSURE adds detail to the effects of the messages: They have an oppressive effect, and so the dirt settles on top of the addressee with a heavy weight.

Taken together, the source domains of these metaphors create a scenario of burying. Table 10.12 outlines the scenario.

Thus, through this framing, Lentz's interlocutors are powerful and dismissive; Lentz is powerless to stop them; and ASL falls under a heavy weight of oppression. As we have seen, the interlocutors never accept Lentz's *archeology* framing; they never even look at the treasure. In their own minds, they are simply burying Lentz – and this is reflected in the fact that the dirt falls first onto Lentz. But the end result is the burial of the treasure.

219
TABLE 10.12. Scenario for *Burial* Framing

| SOURCE SCENARIO | TARGET SCENARIO |
|---|---|
| One person shovels dirt down onto another person. | A powerful entity says disrespectful, dismissive things to a less-powerful entity. |
| (POWERFUL IS UP, COMMUNICATING IS SENDING, BAD IS DIRTY) | |
| The process of shoveling dirt continues until the person is fully buried. | The process of disrespect from powerful sources continues until the entity is completely powerless. |
| (POWERFUL IS UP, COMMUNICATING IS SENDING, BAD IS DIRTY, OPPRESSION IS DOWNWARD PRESSURE) | |
| The dirt weighs heavily on the buried person. | The situation is extremely oppressive to the disrespected entity. |
| (POWERFUL IS UP, OPPRESSION IS DOWNWARD PRESSURE) | |

EXISTENCE IS LIFE In stage 6, Lentz adds one more metaphor to the mix: EXISTENCE IS LIFE, where the concept of continued life is used to understand the concept of continued existence. This metaphor is highly productive in English (e.g., *That idea is dead in the water*; *His business is barely alive*, etc.) but not documented in ASL.

Table 10.13 gives a mapping for the metaphor as it is used in English and as it functions in Lentz's poem.

At stage 6 of the poem, once the treasure has been buried, Lentz describes it as "still alive." That is, though it is no longer easily accessi-

TABLE 10.13. EXISTENCE IS LIFE

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Alive | Existent |
| Dead | Nonexistent |
| Remaining alive | Persisting |
| Dying | Ceasing to exist |

TABLE 10.14. Final Stage of Burial Framing

| SOURCE | TARGET |
|---|--|
| The buried person eventually dies under the weight of the dirt. | The oppression eventually causes the entity to cease to exist. |

ble, and though it has been ridiculed, ASL and its beautiful structure still exist. This new metaphor adds a twist to the existing "burial" composite.⁷

The New Composite Up until stage 6, the *burial* framing has claimed that ASL is under heavy oppression by those who dismiss its importance. The addition of EXISTENCE IS LIFE gives the implication that ASL's very existence is in danger.

We know that one main function of underground burial is to dispose of dead bodies; similarly, we know that any live creature buried underground cannot survive there for long. Table 10.14 gives one final stage that we must add to the OPPRESSION IS BURIAL scenario: The eventual effect of heavy oppression is extirpation. Thus, in the final framing of the situation, ASL is an endangered being, Lentz is a would-be rescuer, and her interlocutors are not just oppressors but murderers.

SUMMARY

A close analysis of "The Treasure" has shown how a skilled poet can take the conventional resources of her language and elaborate them into a work of art. In this poem, Lentz has blended together many conventional metaphors of ASL and of American culture in a dramatic statement of the importance of ASL linguistics to deaf people and Deaf culture. Starting from a scenario of digging up and reburying artifacts, she crafts two framings of the state of ASL research: LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IS ARCHEOLOGY and OPPRESSION IS BURIAL.

Her message draws much of its power from the salience of these framings to our everyday experiences; we may be unfamiliar with linguistic

⁷ An anonymous reviewer suggests a different view of this passage. In this view, Lentz does not add to the *burial* framing in stage 6; instead, she drops it for a new framing. She now stands in a different place with the treasure in hand; ASL is not buried or endangered but rather still alive and accessible to us.

research, but we certainly know about archeology, treasure hunts, and death. Taken together, these framings tell us that ASL is an important artifact, a treasure chest, a living thing; that linguists are scientists, lucky adventurers, rescuers; that people who "put down" ASL are willful disregards of science, wasters of valuable resources, and murderers. This poem clearly shows the power of conceptual metaphor to influence our understanding and framing of complex issues such as the linguistic analysis of ASL.