

Metaphors

In this presentation we'll take a break from our usual routine of memorizing word elements and instead look at an important linguistic process underlying etymology, metaphor, particularly the ways in which metaphors permeate English and indeed every aspect of communication and thought. Metaphor, the implied comparison of two things, is our principal means of giving shape to nothing less than understanding itself. Many would argue that without metaphor it's impossible not just to speak but to think. We comprehend, and communicate that comprehension, by comparing and equating things, by saying "this is that," and thus use knowledge about one arena of life to inform another.

Metaphor as the basis of understanding is way too big a topic for one lecture or even one class. Thus, our end goal here will be by necessity more targeted, to look at how Latin metaphors have influenced English. Put simply, when our ancestors incorporated Roman words into their language, they simultaneously embraced Roman metaphors and concepts about life as well. They couldn't help but do otherwise, since language and culture go hand in hand. They're part of a single mechanism driving society. If you're interested in that larger question, take a cultural anthropology course. Our goal in this presentation, as with everything in the class, will be to help you build your knowledge of English and from that your vocabulary, so we'll focus on how understanding Roman cultural assumptions illuminates and facilitates the "metaphorical leap" necessary in connecting the current meaning of Latin derivatives with their etymological roots.

The source for this presentation is a ground-breaking book, *Metaphors We Live By*, written by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. It includes a study of how metaphorical systems, that is, the many ways in which we compare things implicitly, give shape to the English language. Here's how we'll proceed. First, we'll take a look at a few of the many metaphorical assumptions built into English, such as "time is money" or "ideas are plants." We'll also look at some orientational metaphors, for instance, what ideas we import when we say something is, or is going, "up" or "down." And finally we'll bring that home by addressing what is immediately relevant in this class: the way Roman metaphors permeate the words we've borrowed from Latin.

Let's start by looking at popular English metaphors, connections between very different things which you may never have thought about but which covertly govern the way you see and express your life. For example, time equals money. Here are just a few of the different expressions English uses which assume that there's a similarity between time and money, by all fair standards two very different commodities:

- You're *wasting* my time.
- This device will *save* you hours.
- How do you *spend* your time these days?
- That flat tire *cost* me an hour.
- I don't have time to *spare*.
- You need to *budget* your time.
- You're living on *borrowed* time.
- Use your time *profitably*.

A close relative of the presumption underlying all these equations of time and money is another assumption English incorporates, the sense that spending time doing something should earn you a wage or some sort of monetary compensation. For example, if you work an hour and you're paid ten dollars an hour, you should earn ten dollars, or however much the government allows you to keep. The modern Western concept that time expended should be proportional to money earned underlies the well-established economic policy that wages are based on hours worked, and even if you're not doing anything at work, just because you're spending time at work, you should be paid. Well, in Western cultures that's true, especially after industrialization in the nineteenth century and the imposition of the ten-hour factory workday, but it's not seen as broadly or at all in many ancient societies like Greece and Rome or even in some modern non-Western states.

Here's another such metaphorical equation our society feeds us constantly, the comparison of words to containers:

- He *put* his ideas *into* words.
- Try to *capture* a good idea *in* words.
- By knowing vocabulary we can *encompass* more ideas *in* fewer words.
- The meaning is *in* the words.
- Your words *rang hollow*.
- The idea is *buried* in the paragraph somewhere.

Were you aware that you've been trained to treat language as a commodity that's delivered in little baskets called words which carry meaning? Because of this metaphor in our language, we are taught to see linguistic communication as a sort of "train of thought" made up of little railroad cars depositing information one word at a time, as if language operated on the same principle as quantum mechanics in physics. Maybe it does, but does it have to be that way? When your language tells it does, you really have no choice but to think so. That's how much power metaphor wields over our minds.

Here's another metaphorical system pervasive in English: theories and arguments are buildings.

- This is the *foundation* of their supposition.
- His accusation needs *support*.
- Our argument is *shaky*.
- We need to *construct* a stronger case.
- Our theory *collapsed* when they *exploded* our latest proposition.
- Our hypothesis needs a new *framework*.

So thinking is architecture? I'd never thought of a lumber yard as a place to build philosophical insight.

Here's yet another set of metaphors, this one based on the assumption that ideas are food:

- What he said left a *bad taste* in everyone's *mouth*.
- Your paper is full of *half-baked* ideas.

- I can't *swallow* what you're suggesting.
- I need to *stew over* it for a while.
- Let the ideas *percolate* before you *serve* them up.
- It's *food* for thought.
- Teachers shouldn't *spoonfeed* students.
- Let it simmer on the *back burner* for a while.
- Here's the *meaty* part of the paper.
- Your hypothesis needs more data to make it *jell*.
- She was a *voracious* reader.
- That's a book you can really *sink your teeth into*.

What does it say about a society which blithely suggests eating books? No one needs that much fiber.

Here's one more metaphor we live by, one with even creepier results: seeing is touching.

- I can't *take* my eyes *off* her.
- His eyes were *glued* to the screen.
- Their eyes *met*.
- She *ran* her eyes *over* his body.
- But her glance *lingered* on his wallet.
- He, however, never *moved* his eyes *off* her face.

When you think about these statements in literal terms, it, they're disgusting. Anyone whose eyes are "glued" to anything needs a doctor, not a linguist.

Finally, here's one last set of metaphors — I could go on like this for days since metaphors perfuse our culture but I think, I hope, you're beginning to get the point — to argue is to go to war.

- Your claims are *undefensible*.
- She *attacked* the weak points in his case.
- Their criticisms were *right on target*.
- You disagree? Okay, *shoot!*
- He *tore* our arguments *to shreds*.

Most English speakers see opponents in a debate as people engaging in combat against each other, often mortal combat, but does an argument have to be viewed this way? Instead of seeing it as a battle, couldn't we imagine it as a way of working out differences, of finding common ground, building, not destroying lives? Why can't an argument be a place where everyone's a winner? When we assume that argument must entail hostility and envision it as some sort of bitter confrontation, it's our language that's teaching us to see it that way. The metaphor equating debate and military conflict boxes us in and prevents us from adopting any other perspective. English may be a beautiful, useful tool of communication, but it's also a prison. And there's a metaphor you can live by for eighty years ... to life.

Metaphors don't just permeate our expressions. They're coded into our linguistic DNA, the very word elements we're studying in this class. Even such simple building blocks as prefixes and prepositions carry connotations we assume without thinking. Something as basic as "up" has all sorts of associations we're quite familiar with but may never have thought of consciously. Up, for instance, doesn't always mean vertically high. It can also convey a sense of "happy":

- I'm feeling *up*.
- That *boosted* my spirits.
- Her spirits *rose*.
- We're in *high* spirits.
- Thinking about them always gives me a *lift*.

And it can also be "conscious, awake":

- I got *up*.
- I woke *up*.
- I'm *up*.
- Early to bed, early to *rise* . . .

Or "healthy":

- Young people are at the *peak* of health.
- He went to the gym and *pumped up*.
- Now he's in *top* shape.
- Jesus was *resurrected*.

Is it possible even to speak of the resurrected Jesus as having fallen or going down? No! If he's come back to life, he has to be "up," not down. He's healthy again. That means he's up.

Up can also mean "having control":

- I have control *over* them.
- I'm on *top* of the situation.
- She's my *superior*.
- Caesar was at the *height* of his powers.
- He ranks *above* me.

Finally, up can also signify "more":

- Use of the web keeps going *up*.
- The percentage of people who own computers is *high*.
- Incomes tend to *rise* through life.

“Down” conversely carries the opposite of all these up-positions. Besides being vertically lower, it can be “sad” (as opposed to up’s “happy”):

- I’m feeling *down*.
- I’m *depressed*.
- She’s feeling pretty *low*.
- I *fell* into a funk.
- My spirits *sank*.

Or “unconscious”:

- He *fell* asleep.
- They *dropped* off to sleep.
- She decided to go *under* hypnosis.
- The patient *sank* into a coma.

As opposed to up’s sense of “health,” down connotes “sickness and death”:

- He *fell* ill.
- The patient is *sinking* fast.
- Her health is *declining*.
- He *dropped* dead.

Could you as an English speaker ever tolerate someone saying “the warrior *stood up* dead”? No, dead people *fall down*. Well, except Jesus.

Rather than up’s sense of “having control,” down says “being controlled”:

- I’m *under* someone’s control.
- Caesar *fell* from power suddenly.
- His power is *waning*.
- Interest in this is on the *decline*.
- This caste is socially *inferior*.
- He’s the *low* man on the totem pole.

Note that this is in direct contradiction to the very source of this expression. In native American tradition, there is either no importance given to a figure’s placement on a totem pole, or the lower figures are seen as more powerful and significant. But native culture is not the issue here. Ours is. Could we ever stand saying “He’s so *important*. He’s the *low* man on the totem pole.”? No! In our culture low means having less power. If you try to impose the original truth about totem poles on English speakers, they’ll just stop using the expression altogether rather than change their metaphorical viewpoint of low as powerless. To be honest, we couldn’t even do it if we wanted to. We don’t control our metaphors; our metaphors control us. Metaphor up; people down.

Finally, as opposed to up's "more," down can also be "less":

- The graduation rate is going *down*.
- Our success rate is *low*.
- They are *under* age.
- Turn the heat *down*.

You can see these principles even more clearly when you combine and compare up- and down-metaphors:

- When things are looking *up*, it's no time to be *down*.
- Her popularity was at its *peak*, but then she *slid off the radar*.
- She has *high* standards and would never *bow* to pressure.
- *Upright* people don't play *low* tricks.
- *High-minded* people don't get *down and dirty*.
- *High-level* discussions don't *fall* to the emotional level.

Note the implication in the last sentence where up means "rational" and down "irrational." But that's not always the case. Sometimes down means "known, certain, definite" whereas up is "unknown":

- He *settled* the matter, *nailed* the answer . . .
- . . . and didn't leave things *up in the air*.

Our expression, to leave things "hanging in the balance" — that is, uncertain — says much the same.

So if up is "good" but also sometimes "unknown," does that mean "unknown" is "good"? No. One of the more maddening things about metaphors is that, while they make it possible for us to create and communicate a sense of the world, they themselves don't have to make sense. Much as they look like equations, metaphors don't work like math or logic; instead, they reflect our very fallible, emotional approach to understanding the world. At the same time that they're nothing less than the basis upon which all human knowledge rests, metaphors don't necessarily have to be coherent. If you're looking for the reason why life is so chaotic, look no further.

But the rules governing metaphor aren't entirely random. There are tendencies and principles guiding its application. For instance, as long as you don't force two different senses of the same metaphor into the same statement, you'll be fine. Did you ever have an English teacher preach to you about not using "mixed" metaphors, if by chance you wrote something like "High-minded people don't leave important matters up in the air"? Comprehending and expressing life through metaphor is a happy process that putters away producing some semblance of sense, just as long as you don't mix your ups up. Ever heard of the comic play by Oliver Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*? That title is meant to be humorous, because we assume that up means powerful but "she" — the title character is a high-class woman who pretends to be a serving maid — "she" is lowering herself to win the man she loves. So mixed metaphors can be just fine, as long as they're ironic.

Making matters only more confusing, one concept can encompass several metaphors. For instance, we've seen that ideas can be equated with food, but they can also be compared to people:

- Einstein's theories *gave birth* to a new world view.
- His ideas *spawned* a rash of new theories.
- The theory of humors *died* a long time ago.
- Some sciences are in their *infancy*.
- Whose *brainchild* was that?

Or ideas can be plants:

- His research finally came to *fruition* in a book.
- There are many *branches* of mathematics. Calculus is only one *offshoot*.
- You need to *trim* your more extreme assertions.
- She *planted* the idea of marriage in his mind.
- But he had a *barren* mind.

Life can be seen in a number of different ways, as a container, for instance:

- She lived a *full* life.
- My cup *runneth over*.
- Live life to the *fullest*.

Or as a gambling game:

- I'll take my *chances*.
- The *odds* are against them.
- She had an *ace* up her sleeve.
- You're *bluffing*.
- The President *upped the ante*.
- When the *chips* are down, the brave make guacamole.

Your mind is readily metaphorized too. It can be a machine:

- Those Washington think-tanks *grind out* ideas.
- My mind just isn't *operating* today.
- You can see his *wheels turning*.
- I'm still a little *rusty* on my prefixes.
- I can't study any more – I've *run out of steam*.
- He *broke down* under cross-examination.

Or a fragile object:

- Some people have *fragile* egos.
- The prosecution *broke* him.
- It was a *shattering* experience for us all.
- “I *fall to pieces*, each time I see you again . . .”
- My mind *snapped*.

Probably one of the more common things subjected to metaphorization is love. Sometimes our culture forces us to see love as a mental disease:

- He’s *crazy* for the girl.
- She drove him *out of his mind*.
- He *raved* about her constantly.
- He’s gone *cuckoo* over her.
- And she’s just *wild* about Harry.

Other times, it’s a physical force:

- You could feel the *electricity* between them.
- There were *sparks* in the air.
- They *gravitated* toward each other.
- His life *revolved* around her.
- But then they lost *momentum*.

And sometimes it’s just plain, out-and-out warfare:

- He’s known for his *conquests*.
- She fled from his *advances*.
- He *overpowered* her and gained her hand in marriage.
- Later she had to *fight* to keep his affections, and in the end his mistress *won*.
- So she loved and *lost*.

To sum up, it’s clear that our whole way of understanding the world is based on our ability to see similarities in things which are really not very similar — war and love? Please! But if language hands you that equation, you have no choice to believe it. Without the metaphor, misguided or not, you have no structure for seeing and understanding things. Metaphor empowers our ability to grasp and shape the world we live in, but that same power also controls us. Lakoff and Johnson explain it this way: “... every experience takes place within a vast background of cultural presuppositions ... all experience is cultural through and through, that we experience our ‘world’ in such a way that our culture is already present in the very experience itself.”

Is it really that bad? Isn’t there some way to use this powerful tool for formulating thought and expression without being used by it? Can we escape this proverbial “metaphorical” cage? Let’s try. Let’s go back to arguments and see if we can re-imagine them in very different way from our culture’s presumption that they are battles to be won and lost. What if we chose instead to see arguments as ... dances? No longer, then, are the participants combatants. Now they’re partners,

sharing the goal of creating a pleasing, esthetic, collaborative experience. If we watched presidential debates, for instance, the same way we watch ballroom dancing, our expectation of success, what makes a good one, would be very different, wouldn't it? In fact, the whole situation would be so far from the way we envision arguments now that it wouldn't be an argument at all. It would be something entirely new and different. You really couldn't call it an argument anymore. Thus, it's all but impossible from our cultural perspective to envision arguments as dances without changing them into something else. The metaphor defines the thing. Change the metaphor and the thing changes too.

Here's another example, something that's closer to a real conflict going on within our culture. What if drugs and addiction weren't an enemy to be fought and defeated in battle; rather, drug addiction was instead seen as a disease to be treated and cured? But as long as drugs are the foe, you can't treat them the way you might treat an infection. You don't "cure" a war — that's not even a mixed metaphor; that's just a mess! — you end a war by winning or losing. So as long as the metaphor is in place that equates drug use and enemy activity, it's all but impossible to pass legislation to help people recover from their addiction to drugs. All we can do is fight it, and them.

Charlotte Lind says it well: "People in power get to impose their metaphors." In fact, that's what most political campaigns are really about. Whose metaphors will rule? And there's another metaphor for you: politics equals war. But what if politics were seen as a dance too? I have to say that's probably one waltz I'll sit out. But it would change everything, wouldn't it? And even so, where does that get us? Supposing we could purge our language of these particular metaphors and their biased equations that blinker our thinking, we'd just have to create a new set of metaphors with different biases, because you can't comprehend or communicate without them. So pick your poison. Now there's an interesting metaphor.

To end this presentation, let's get practical and look at some Roman metaphors, that is, the implicit comparisons which Romans assumed about life and which underlie many Latin words. Some we've already addressed. The base PEND-/POND-, for instance, which has a basic meaning "hang, be heavy," but it can also mean "weigh, pay," as in our Latin derivative "compensate." The metaphor that equates weighing and paying is based on the widespread use of balances in antiquity. You've seen them, scales with two plates suspended from chains and used to weigh things by putting a weight on one plate and a commodity to be measured on the other. Payment was often meted out that way in Rome. But the weigh sense metaphorized another way too when it was compared to thinking, where you often "weigh" ideas against each other in your mind to see which is worth more. From that metaphor come words like "ponder" and "pensive" ("thoughtful").

Another base COG-, meaning "think, reflect, consider" and giving us derivatives like "cogitate" ("think"), originally meant "force" (*con-* "together" + *AG-* "drive"). The primary "force" sense is still felt in our word "cogent" which is used to describe arguments which are forceful, that is, strong and compelling. Ah, there it is again, that argument-combat metaphor! Of course, the Romans had that metaphor too. But the simple etymological sense of "drive together" also gave this word a non-combative sense "collect" ("bring together"), so the combative "forceful" sense

doesn't always win the day. A comparable expression in English is "to collect one's thoughts" meaning "to think."

The prefix *sub-*, meaning "under" (as in "submarine"), to the Romans also denoted sneakiness, in the same way we say "under the carpet." Thus, Latin has given us several derivatives starting with *sub-* which indicate sneakiness: subterfuge, surreptitious, subvert and suborn (i.e. bribe). But through a completely different metaphorical path, *sub-* also came to mean "helpful, supportive," the same way English-speakers talk about the "*underpinnings*" of something, when they mean its foundation. Thus, some Latinate words with *sub-* carry a "helpful" sense: support, subvention ("funding"), succor ("aid"). So *sub-* can mean "sneaky" or "helpful," but never both at the same time. Don't mix your metaphors and they make good sense.

Another Latin prefix *in-*, meaning "in, into," passes that basic sense onto many English derivatives such as "impress" ("press into"). But *in-* in Latin can also take on an aggressive sensibility, making it mean "against," just as we can say "lay *into* someone." Through this metaphor we get some very aggressive Latinate words like incursion, invade and impugn.

Returning to bases, let's look at how metaphor can affect the sense of various bases, such as REG-, the Latin base for "straight." From that basic sense we get our word "direct." But "straight" is also closely associated with another sensibility, "right, just," and from that sense come words like "regulate, rectitude." The connection between straightness and justice probably goes back deep in human history to a time when "just" judges resolved property disputes between two parties by drawing "straight" lines, that is, making fair and equitable judgments. Think Solomon and the baby. Or not.

The base LEG- means "choose." A "delegate" is a person "chosen" to represent some person or cause. But because Romans saw a book as something you "choose," to read presumably, we get the word "legible" in the sense of "readable," not choose-able. At least the Romans didn't eat it.

One of the Romans' major metaphors is that cutting equals knowing. This affects the base CERN-/CRET-/CERT- which means "separate, distinguish." But when applied to the mind, "separate apart" took on a different connotation, the implication that, if you can separate different things, you understand them. Thus, physical separation is equated with mental distinction. So can you think of an English word from Latin which uses the CERN- base and means "distinguish and thereby show your understanding of something"? Yes, of course, "discern." Let's try another. What about "separate very much (that is, to put something apart from other things to show that it's important to you)"? If you show that kind of care and understanding, you show ... concern.

Another Latin base that means "cut" is SCI-. "Cut" was its original sense; "know" came later when the metaphor kicked in. The "cut" sense gives us a word like "scissors," but the know-metaphor produced far more derivatives, "science" being only one of many.

Yet another Latin cut-base is PUT-. It meant originally "prune," like pruning a tree. Later, it came to mean "think." If you need proof that the Romans were fundamentally an agriculturally

minded people, here it is. To them, “to prune thoroughly” meant “to think about seriously.” And what word do we get from that? Well, take a moment to let that ... “compute.”

Let’s explore a few more metaphors which affect bases you’ve studied. Often, a metaphor is formed when a physical process is compared to a mental one. ERR- literally means “wander.” What would you guess that base means when it’s applied to thinking? When people’s thoughts “wander, go astray, don’t stay on the right path,” what happens? They’re ... mistaken! That produces English words that have ERR- in them and mean “mistaken.” Can you think of any? Good! “Err, error, erroneous.”

What about MOV-/MOT-, the base that means “move”? What happens when it’s applied to the mind, when your mind or heart is “moved”? That’s right. Your mood is affected. And what words do we get from that sense? How about “emotion, motivation”?

Now, what about JAC-/JECT-, the base that means “throw”? If you “throw” with your mind, what are you doing? Say, you just toss out an answer! Do you really know the correct answer or are you just ... guessing? Can you think of a derivative in English that uses the JECT- base and means “guess”? Try putting the prefix *con-* on the front, what do you get? Come on, guess, make a ... conjecture.

How a metaphor developed is often hard to unravel historically. As we’ve seen, something so free-form and subject to the whims of cultural fancy doesn’t leave many tracks or have to follow logic. But sometimes it’s possible to trace how certain metaphors evolved. Take the prefix *pre-*, for instance, which meant originally “before, forward, forth.” From the “before” sense it came to mean “in advance,” that is, with forethought, and from that sensibility we get our word “premise,” something that’s assumed in advance. The sense “with forethought” then led to another meaning “in a studied manner, carefully.” After all, if you think ahead, you’re being careful, right? That gives us words like “precise” (literally, “cut carefully”) and “prescribe” (literally, “written out with care” — or at least you hope). Finally, from the “done carefully” sense, *pre-* came to mean “thoroughly, extremely,” giving us words like “precipitous” (“headlong”), predominate, preoccupy, preponderance, prevail and pretense.

Likewise, *pre-*’s close relative *pro-* which means at heart “forward” came to mean “good,” which is, if you think about it, quite a metaphorical leap. It presumes a fairly positive view of the future to say what’s ahead will necessarily be good. But building upon this presumption, the Romans gave us words like “profit” (“make forward”) and “progress” (in the sense “step forward”), also promote, prosper, provide and providence. In much the same way but the reverse, the prefix *re-* (“backward”) took on the sense of “bad,” producing negative terms like refuse (literally, “pour back”), remorse (“bite back”), and a slew of others: reprobate, rescind, reduce, repudiate, renege, reluctant, retard, repent, recluse and reticent. Note that, while the last three (repent, recluse and reticent) all have a backwards-sense, they don’t necessarily have negative connotations. *Re-* as “back” can be good when a *retreat* is called for, as in redeem, retain, resurrect and respect. Nor, if the situation demands, are all *pro-*’s necessarily positive: prohibit, protest, proscribe and, of course, prostitute. If a *pro-* word is attached to a negative base or a word with a negative sense, something sexual, for instance, then going *pro-* (forward) is obviously not good, you

promiscuous profligate! Let's remember: metaphors don't have to be consistent. They only have to seem to work.

Here are few more Latin bases which have been affected by notable metaphors.

- CANT- (“sing”) can also mean “lure into a trap,” using the same line of thinking as the Greek poet Homer who describes the Sirens, half-woman half-bird creatures which lure sailors to their deaths by singing about how great those sailors are who happen to be passing by their island. Today we'd call that death-by-selfie. From this magical-entrapment connotation of CANT- we get words like “enchant, incantation, incentive, recant.”
- The Latin base FERV- (“bubble”) expanded into “boil, be hot,” and then became “become excited.” Excitable people do seem bubbly, don't they? From this we get our words “fervent, fervidity.”
- CAD-/CID-/CAS-, the Latin base for “fall,” came to mean “chance,” as in the “fall of the dice,” which led to “accident, casual.”
- SAL-/SULT- (“jump”), the base you see in Latin derivatives like “insult, assail, exult,” moved from “jump” to “stand out” — the gazelle that's jumping is the one the lion notices, so that gazelle stands out — and from that sense we get “salient,” meaning “important, noticeable.” Building on that stand-out sense, this base then migrated into denoting “what's left behind.” After all, when you cut down everything else, the thing that's still “jumping,” that is, “standing up,” is what's left behind, the result. And “what's left behind” is “what persists, what just won't die,” what's resilient.

Finally, to end this presentation, let's look at a particularly complicated system of metaphors based on the Latin word root ROG- (“ask”). The Romans used this base in a legal sense: you go to court and “ask” for a judgment, so ROG- came to mean “sue, pursue a legal case.” This is just one of many legal metaphors we get from Latin. Add the prefix *inter-* to ROG- and you get “interrogate,” meaning “cross-examine in court.” The *inter-* prefix adds the sense “back and forth,” the way prosecutors question witnesses. And because what they ask are questions, we get the term “interrogative,” meaning “associated with the words typical of questioning, especially lawyerly questioning”: who, where, when, and with what weapon?

- Add *de-* (“down, bad”) to ROG- and you get “derogatory,” meaning “insulting, belittling,” that is, asking questions like a lawyer who's trying to challenge the legality or validity of something, the same way we say “to question something's existence.”
- Add *sub-* (“under, assist”) to ROG- and you get “surrogate,” meaning “a replacement,” originally “a deputy requested to assist in some formal proceeding instead of an official.”
- Add *pre-* (“before”) to ROG- and you get “prerogative,” meaning “a prior legal claim, precedence,” thus, “the right to make the first choice.”
- Add *ad-* (“toward”) to ROG- and you get “arrogate,” meaning “to claim unduly for oneself,” literally, “to *ask or demand* someone bring something *to* you.” And what do we call people who arrogate things for themselves when they don't deserve them. Arrogant!

- Add *ab-* (“away from”) to *ROG-* and you get “abrogate,” that is, “repeal, reject.” If you abrogate your responsibility to study, you can’t sue me when you fail this class. We have a legal agreement that I teach you and you work hard. Don’t like that arrangement? Talk to the judge.

And that’s enough legality for the time being. I hope you see now how every moment of our lives we’re swimming through an ocean of metaphor, a feature of language which enables and empowers nothing less than the flow of understanding itself. And to continue the current of that merry marine metaphor, no more than fish can live without water, can we think or speak without metaphor. It’s incomparable.