

most people's everyday consciousness or discourse. At the same time, a major metaphor has entered into the national consciousness because of certain Supreme Court decisions—that Corporations Are Persons with Constitutional Rights.

Reflexivity enters here. Decisions made by our courts have the power to turn metaphors into facts-on-the-ground, as in this example. Those metaphors taken as facts give rise to further court decisions extending those metaphors.

The power to turn metaphors into facts can be an awesome power—a power with enormous political impact. The Corporations Are Persons metaphor has so great a political impact that it is worth some discussion here. Let's begin, though, by looking at two powerful metaphors that form its roots.

Cognitive scientists who study metaphorical thought have recognized two common metaphors, which we adopt unconsciously and automatically, that are relevant here.

METAPHOR 1: PLURALITIES ARE GROUPS. The Pluralities Are Groups metaphor attributes group properties to separate individuals—whether warranted or not. The result is that the group is perceived as an entity with different properties than the individuals in it. Take a look at the two operative words:

- A **plurality** consists of people, animals, plants, or other things considered separately—ungrouped. A number of people may be riding on the subway, for instance; but aside from being on the same subway, they are not necessarily part of any particular group. They are a plurality—but they need not have common characteristics, goals, or functions.
- A **group** is an entity, conceptualized metaphorically as a container for other entities. The group can, and usually does, have properties, resources, goals, and functions that are separate from the individual entities in the group.

Once we combine the two metaphorically, we begin to think about