been. The Enlightenment ideal of transparent classification, the universal library, must be abandoned along with any messianic pursuit of an eschatological purity. It must be replaced by an ideal of hospitality ('hospitalière langagière') which combines love of one's own language with acceptance of otherness. Resistance is motivated by fear and hatred of the outsider, seen as a menace to our linguistic heritage and identity. The movement between languages may appear insurmountable (as in Chomsky, 'bien infranchissable'), but the empirical rejoinder is in this case a devastating one: since translation exists it must be possible. This in turn becomes the ethical ideal of conduct to others within one's own language, towards those who are not strangers: it is always possible to say the same thing otherwise ('autrement dit', perhaps better translated as to and for the other, otherly).

The interest of this recent position lies partly in its reformulation of Ricoeur's earlier hermeneutics founded on the dialectic of explanation and understanding of writing conceived in terms of singular artefacts. Instead of a move to generalized textuality (or linguisticality if one prefers Gadamer), it now posits endless transitions between specific writings. Rather than the deconstructive or Heideggerian unmasking of false origins, acceptance of our condition within writing (as 'nomads errants') implies an opportunity for creative reconstruction and ethical openness to the other. Writing implies writings. This in turn entails a world of divergent but not therefore hostile or incompatible languages and traditions: comprehension of that multiplicity may then become a model for ethical openness to the other both within and outside our own heritages.

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# The Politics of Metaphor

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Metaphor, like any good metaphor, has more than one face: it is, after all, the very stuff of possible worlds promised or denied. It may free or imprison us; it may trumpet its presence or infiltrate unnoticed. We are understandably ambivalent. One moment it appears to be the embodiment of language; the next its betrayer. It indeed troubles us. Little wonder that metaphor can suddenly be seen as the foundation metaphor of politics itself.

There are two related vectors of the politics of metaphor. One is the ostensibly academic question of the place of metaphor, and hence its meaning. Common western thought still welcomes metaphor, after Aristotle, as an attractive accoutrement of things rhetorical but of having no place in other discourse. We are instantly in the politics of boundaries. Conventional wisdom (and common academic practice) today still insists that metaphor stay in its proper place; elsewhere it is persona non grata.

The Greek tradition gives the modern world a second lean on the issue. Aristotle also saw metaphor as providing a change in perspective, of telling us something new. It is not just a manner of words, it is about thoughts, new thoughts. He was lavish in its praise: it is 'one thing that cannot be learned from others – it is a sign of genius – [it] implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars'. Paul Ricoeur, like many others, echoes this sentiment today.

The face of the metaphoric new is one of strangeness, even of a disconcerting incongruity. It upsets the established order. New metaphors may well enthuse those ready to pursue difference; but they frighten others wanting to maintain some existing order of things. Two political moves regularly follow.

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A fear of the current world being challenged is harnessed against the new. Vested interests happily nurture the anxiety. A second weapon, ostensibly more cerebral, is the accusation that 'common sense' (a powerful western metaphor – does it exist elsewhere?) is being challenged by the language of the new, as ideas that have been around for some time eventually become internalized as the natural order of things, as truth itself. The unfamiliar, the seemingly absurd notions of a new metaphoric association, can be easily dismissed by ridicule or by a solemn defence of the transparently 'obvious': that which any 'reasonable' person knows to be the case.

New, bold metaphors always need to struggle before they in turn may become accepted as reasonable, and eventually become the new common sense. Nietzsche (1909: 173–88) saw this pattern clearly: 'What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms – which after long usage, seem to a nation fixed, canonic and binding: truths *are* illusions of which one has forgotten they are illusions' (original emphasis).

Things academic can suddenly erupt into the corridors of power, into parochial or global politics. The nexus between knowledge and politics is a critical one. From a conservative position scientific and scholarly pursuits must remain free of politics (meaning political debate) – not dissimilar to the faith that art and politics ought never mix. (In our own historical epoch the legitimate location of politics itself is constantly being compressed but rarely noted or debated.)

Nevertheless, conservatives face a difficulty here. Metaphoricity as creativity has no natural location, hence no obvious boundary. So actual debate shifts its location to allow new boundaries to be erected, it being now argued that with age and usage metaphors die, and we are left with dead metaphors, which no longer can be called metaphors. We have instead, it argues, literal language. ('Boundary' has become another powerful metaphor of the western tradition.)

So 'literal' language remains the established norm, and metaphoric language the exception, the bold aberration which may well produce new thought and language, but which through repeated usage eventually ends a shadowy half-life as dead metaphor, as a return to the literal.

But is there anywhere a place for boundaries? If metaphor perceives similarities in dissimilars, or relations between things before unapprehended, metaphor is nothing more or less than any thought which sees or makes relations, connections, classifications between things. They are our 'ways of knowing'. From there it seems difficult to disagree with Paul Ricoeur (1976: 22–3) when he argues that if metaphor 'displaces a certain logical order' it must be 'the same as that from which all classifications proceed. The idea of an initial metaphoric impulse destroys these oppositions between proper and figurative, ordinary and strange, order and transgression.'

Accordingly I want to argue that all thought and language is metaphoric. Most metaphors are old; some others are new and these shape the next wave of knowledge and action in the world. All boundaries evaporate. That is not simply an innocent, scholarly point; it has profound political implications. It cuts the ground from under conservative thought (scholastic and political) that only it argues from a position of superiority – whether in the name of the 'literal', 'common sense', 'natural', 'true' or 'right'. But no metaphor has a status higher than another. They are all perspectives on things, each with its own use, beneficial or destructive, with limited or comprehensive application, of short or enduring life. Likewise the value of each metaphor varies and fluctuates. A metaphor's fate is a matter of inspiration, imagination and luck; at the same time it is also a result of persuasion, power, the times, and ultimately of human choice. To adopt one metaphor invariably inhibits consideration of others. In all, metaphors are a mixed blessing; as Heidegger would say of language, a use of metaphor is also an abuse of metaphor. But we have no other option. It is all we have.

Aristotle proposed a fourfold metaphoric system of thought and language: metaphor (he used that word generically and particularly, as I do), metonymy, synecdoche and analogy. Debate on number and name continues two thousand years on. Gerard Genette lent his authoritative voice recently to the position that metaphor must be considered in at least three forms.

I want to propose seven, all of which relate to each other intimately:

Metaphor: the classing together of two or more things because of some common property; this includes formal typologies and concepts.

Homology, isomorphism, analogy: appreciation of a repetition of a relationship, like Aristotle's original illustration: A is to B as C is to D. A common one only occasionally expressed in words but frequently embedded in action and attitude is 'we' is to 'them' as 'known' is to 'strange' as 'clean' is to 'dirty' as 'good' is to 'bad' which generates its own metaphor (particular) 'dirty foreigner'.

Translation, transformation, transcoding: the equivalence between any phenomenon in one form of expression and its translation in another form, such as 'corresponding'

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expressions in thought, language, affect, mental images, behaviour and art. It seems critically important when dealing with translation to remind ourselves that, as in any metaphor, it is both 'true' and 'false'. As Gregory Bateson warned us, a map is not a territory – yet, in a way, it is.

Exchange is the metaphor of value: a recognized equivalence in value, worth or cost between disparate things; a dual equation or investment of a value allowing 'replacement' of one thing by another. Without exchange, for example, there can be no social relations, business or politics.

Contradictions, opposites: when things are related because they are seen as opposites, as co-existing mutualities. Binary opposites exist in many forms including dichotomies, dualities, paradoxes and ironies.

Synecdoche is the perception of identity between a part and its whole: diagnostic thinking, in medicine, psychotherapy or public policy, for example, heavily depends on this form of metaphor, as does the cinema – a hand or a shadow may tell us all. Politics frequently hinges on which whole some 'problem' part belongs to.

Metonymy: rests on relations of contiguity: things that seem to go together because of their proximity – spatial, temporal or conceptual. Advertising exploits this relationship; memories and histories depend on it; humour works by breaking it (which makes it a naturally subversive art).

I am not greatly concerned whether there are seven, ten or however many modes of metaphor. It just seems that these seven have a collective plausibility as a metaphoric system (and as with any metaphor, differences are neglected) and that they provide a comprehensive structure for understanding human activity. They remind us, as well, as Montaigne wryly noted, that metaphors are not 'some very rare and fancy form of language – they apply to your chambermaid's chatter'. Likewise they apply to your chambermaid's thoughts and behaviour.

We need to think beyond the confines of language as words. And in this regard politics is a great teacher. We express our thoughts not only in sentences but in body language, in customary behaviour, in relationships, in each and every political or social move pondered or pursued. We live our metaphors, and at times we astutely read the language of our collective lives. But most times we remain blind to what we are doing and what is being done to us. The worth of social science could well rest on how well it reveals the real flesh and blood of those dead metaphors, which still 'unnaturally' rule our lives.

The world needs a multitude of new metaphors leading us to a better future. But metaphor, like life, is full of risks. Juggling the old and the new is always open to error and disaster as much as it is to a real advance of human interests. Even the ideal challenge could well be beyond us: can we cope, on the one hand, with bestowing sufficient legitimacy on old metaphors to allow us to maintain our ongoing social and cultural system, and yet, on the other hand, be ever ready to welcome new metaphors which abruptly appear with great promise? Can we ever learn to live with and welcome uncertainty? Can we ever learn to appreciate a transience in our habits?

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