

METAPHOR FOR ABSTRACT REFERENT

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METAPHOR FOR ABSTRACT REFERENT IN LANGUAGE

An Abstract
Presented to the
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
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by
Elizabeth Cullison Dixon
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore and discuss how abstract meaning is expressed in language through metaphors of materiality. Referents that have no physically observable, tangible basis for their meanings are compared metaphorically with more familiar physically perceived experiences; meaning is thereby more easily understood and communication is therefore more effective.

Metaphors which relate abstract meanings as physical experiences are Metaphors of Perception. These metaphors are divided into three broad categories, or types: Spatial Metaphors, Process Metaphors, and Sensory Metaphors. Spatial Metaphors create in our mind's eye three-dimensional images to represent abstract referents. Process Metaphors stage action or relationship to relate abstract meaning. Sensory Metaphors relate abstract meaning to sensually perceived experience.

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Finally, I send a message of appreciation to my children, whose language development I have the privilege of observing each day. I hope my scholastic efforts herein in some way will contribute to their own understanding and appreciation of language, and I charge them to endeavor to use it effectively and creatively.

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INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

Listen for a moment to any source of verbal communication, be it conversation and discussion among speakers heard firsthand or information and entertainment presented through the electronic media of radio and television, and you will hear many sentences in which a metaphor of some kind is used. Most metaphors used in normal speech are hardly even perceived as metaphoric, but are "dead metaphors" or "hidden metaphors" that have become idiomatic in our language and go practically unnoticed by their users, such as "a head of lettuce," or "the foot of the mountain." Fewer metaphors in our daily speech are truly novel and advance some special insight of meaning between speakers. If you stop to pick out the metaphors that occur in our language in the normal flow of speech, or even writing, you will soon begin to realize how numerous they are and how dependent our language is upon metaphor for the expression of meaning. A closer look will reveal that in many cases of metaphor occurring in common language, a term that represents a physically perceivable, tangible object has been used to represent metaphorically a non-physical, intangible meaning. By comparing or substituting an abstract notion with analogously similar terms representing a concrete idea, speakers simplify meaning and make it clear for the listener; communication is thereby more effective. The purpose of this

study is to explore and discuss how abstract meaning is expressed in language through metaphors of materiality. The effects of this linguistic process are simplified and effective communication. Consider for the purpose of illustration an example from this writing, "normal flow of speech." The concept of speech is compared with a fluid medium that travels a course. The "flow" is the movement through time and perception of the words which make up speech. Viewing speech as a moving current provides us with a better cognitive grasp of the action of speaking, a process by which meaning travels from speaker to listener in a cohesive fashion.

A study such as this one is significant in its support and expansion of psycholinguistics as it delineates the relationship between cognition and language. Psychologists consider the process of making and using metaphor a means by which we make the foreign become more familiar, the previously incomprehensible more easily grasped. Metaphor utilized in language achieves the same goal: understanding is increased, communication is improved. Of the activities which demonstrate how our minds work and which can be observed, language is the most revealing. As we express ourselves in speech, so do we register, assimilate, and apply information in the cognitive process. Considerable discussion goes on among scholars as to which came first, the thought or the word; the word gives expression to the thought, but once we have words as tools, do our thoughts become limited by the nature and scope of the

particular words we have at our command? This inquiry will not attempt to resolve that dilemma. However, an examination of how metaphor is applied in language, specifically, how metaphor is used to express abstract meaning, will reveal that the task of achieving greater understanding is accomplished.

Even at its most basic level, language is a process of abstraction. It is a system of oral symbols, words, that represent first things and then ideas. Some sociolinguists identify the ability to create and use a language of words as the trait which separates man and makes him unique among other animals who communicate through grunts, whistles, and cries, because our language involves shifting physical, present tense reality to abstract symbol that can be communicated after the fact. Man can conceive and recall an idea of his perceptions and experiences independent of original external stimuli, and can communicate that idea to another person and be understood. While even the most social of animal groups can communicate alarm, aggression, pain, and pleasure as each occurs, it is doubtful they can gather and recall how the previous week Uncle Harry so ingeniously escaped the clutches of the local predator. Jacob Bronowski, in The Origins of Knowledge and Imagination, calls this ability "prolongation of reference," and describes it as "the ability to use language so that it applies not only to what is going on now but to what went on or what will go on. Animals' signals naturally do not have this reference. Prolongation of reference is a part of human

speech which is connected with the high selective advantage that foresight conferred."¹ Another uniquely human trait that Bronowski identifies is the ability to address one's self, the "internalization of language,"² the phenomenon that is of primary concern to the psycholinguist.

Little of our language is literal; actually none of it is: the word "tree" is not the tree itself, but merely an oral or written symbol antecedentially agreed upon by both speaker and listener to represent the idea of the tree. As S. I. Hayakawa puts it in Language In Thought And Action, "The word is not the thing."³ A word names a referent and the referent is the meaning intended to be identified. But because man is a physical being, his experiences at the most basic level are physical and based first upon sensory perception, and these experiences are the foundation upon which language is built. In the basic language we first begin to learn as children, the foundation for our more elaborate future language, specific words signify specific "things," usually objects or conditions that can be perceived through the senses, in a physical context. As we learn to name these objects and perceptions based in physical experience, we share with others a common foundation of simple references which can later serve for comparisons with non-physical, complex ideas as we attempt to express them in more simplified and more familiar language than new, abstract terms might allow.

As language develops to more sophisticated levels, words begin to represent more sophisticated thought. Ideas without immediate, observable reference develop and are named. Relationships, interactions, characteristics, feelings, situations, and other such non-sensible ideas must be named and described. Words such as reciprocity, saturation, meticulous, melancholia, and immediacy, for example, signify products of more abstract thought than is required simply to name physically perceived objects and conditions. But even as language becomes more abstract and words have more notional, ideational referents, there is a tendency to express these ideas in concrete terms, a tendency to employ metaphor. To make an abstract idea, or referent, that has no literal grounding in physical perception more vivid, more easily conceptualized, we express it in terms of an analogously similar but more commonly identifiable new referent, thus creating a metaphor.

In his book Human Behavior and the Principle of Least Effort, G. K. Zipf proposes what he calls "The Law of Abbreviation" for words. His premise is that man will naturally attempt to follow the path of least effort, or least work, in the pursuit of a goal. And in language this principle is demonstrated by the phenomenon he observes wherein the length of a word relates inversely with the frequency of its usage. Shorter words are used more often and are chosen over longer words of the same meaning in speech.⁴ For instance, the

word "often" would be chosen more often than the word "frequently." George Steiner, in Language and Silence, similarly sees a "diminution," or thinning out of words in literature, as can be seen, for example, in Hemingway, and accompanying that trend, an attempt in language to condense ideas into metaphors of more graphic and visual images.⁵ A similar thing happens in the expression of meaning in language. The language used every day for familiar, routine ideas is full of metaphors that lend sensible reference to otherwise abstract concepts. Using metaphor to express an abstract referent simplifies not only by offering our mind's eye a graphic description of the idea, but also by condensing the various attributes of meaning of the original referent into a single, workable image. So employing metaphor for the purpose of communicating referents can simultaneously simplify and broaden understanding. Take, for example, the phrase "a key player." We know immediately, without any further discussion, that a player described this way is indispensable in the team's effort to "open the door to victory," as it were. Of course, we don't visualize a door key running around in sneakers, but we do, in only the instant that is required for comprehension, acknowledge the attributes of a key which, when compared to a team player, help us understand that player's specific importance and function.

Abstract, non-physical ideas are given physical references that bring them down into the realm of sense perception. Such

references will be called "Metaphors of Perception"; several types can be identified: "Spatial Metaphors," "Process Metaphors," and "Sensory Metaphors." These metaphors can assume all the different parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, etc.

Spatial Metaphors are those metaphors which compare the shared characteristics of ideas and physical, three-dimensional objects, as in "this block of instruction," or, as in the previous example, "a key player." This group would also include metaphors that attempt to express ideas as locations in physical surroundings, as in "on the brink of disaster," for instance.

Process Metaphors are those which compare ideas to action that has a physical basis and can be staged in the mind, comparing ideas with change, movement, and development. "Staged in the mind," "blooming interest," or "take time to unwind" are all examples of Process Metaphors. Included in this category are those elusive prepositions that move even the most complex ideas over, around, and through like mere tinker toys. As abstract as the referents are with which they work, prepositions still have their meanings based originally in the sense experience of physical process with which we can all identify. It is this foundation in action that gives them their great versatility on all levels of language, no matter how abstract. Process Metaphors might also be considered "relationship metaphors" because they help

delineate how ideas interact with one another. Prepositions especially can be seen as metaphors of relationship.

The last major group, Sensory Metaphors, includes ideas compared with perceptions made through the human senses, such as hearing, touch, etc. Examples of this group are "a heated debate," "crisp air," or "a warm reception," whereby an experience is identified in familiar sensory terms that share like characteristics. This type of metaphor in language is especially fertile for imagery in poetic application. Sensory Metaphors usually describe qualities of ideational meaning in the context of sensory perception.

What first comes to mind when one considers instances of metaphor in regular speech might be cliches, euphemisms, hyperbole, malapropisms, and so forth. While this paper will be concerned primarily with "hidden metaphors" as well as novel, creative metaphors in language, some consideration will be given as to how metaphors can be overworked and misunderstood. The use of metaphor as a linguistic process makes possible the rise of ambiguity and abuse, confusion and humor. Before we examine in more detail Metaphors of Perception and how they are applied specifically in language, it is necessary that we first consider the concept of metaphor and discuss how it functions as a linguistic process.

METAPHOR AS LINGUISTIC TOOL

Considerable scholarship exists surrounding the concept of metaphor and the way it is applied in language. Psycholinguists in particular are concerned with how metaphor is formulated and applied in language as a cognitive process. The advent of the field of "psycholinguistics" in the early 1950's synthesized the studies of psychology and descriptive linguistics. The two areas of research are especially compatible in their behaviorist approaches to the system of language. Language is seen as a behavior that can be studied empirically. The psycholinguist concerns himself not only with the analysis of the phonetics, morphology, syntax, and semantics of a language as an end product, but also with the mental and behavioral processes which speakers and listeners go through in achieving communication through language. Behaviorist thought in the field of psycholinguistics applies the principles of association and conditioning to the process of language communication.

In his book Words and Things, Roger Brown, an early spokesman for the field of psycholinguistics, identifies reference and meaning as the basic concerns in considering how we use language to communicate: "The use of language to make reference is the central language function which is prerequisite to all else. It is the beginning of the psychology of language. . . ."⁶ Brown explains that when a referent

is named it is not the particular referent alone that is being named, but, rather, the broad category to which that specific referent belongs. For instance, when an object is called a book, the word does not name just that one object; rather, the object is called a book because it shares the more general characteristics of most books, such as pages of print and pictures, binding, and covering. So according to Brown, our process of making reference occurs when an object, action, or quality is identified as belonging to a category of characteristics, and that category has a name. He explains, "Any sort of recurrence in the non-linguistic world can become the referent of a name and all such recurrences will be categories because recurrences are never identical in every detail. Recurrence always means the duplication of certain essential features in a shifting context of non-essentials."⁷ Brown defines linguistic reference as "the coordinate recurrence of categories," and says that "reference may be said to exist whenever occurrences of a name are coordinate with occurrences of some other kind."⁸ These "occurrences of some other kind" might be considered the stimuli which identify and characterize the category.

Brown views meaning as a particular response that is the result of conditioning, or experiencing a name and a referent in association with one another. He identifies the two skills in language behavior as "the ability to name new instances of a referent and the ability to react to a name as a sign of a

referent. . . ."9 He defines meaning as "the total disposition to make use of or react to a linguistic form,"10 and because our ability to create and understand meaning is partially a cultural, or social, ability that is held in common with others, better communication exists among "those who have large areas of overlap" in their experiences.11

The term "abstract referent" in this paper is used to describe those meanings that do not have their referential base in physically perceivable experience, but are of a more ideational nature. Because the largest "area of overlap" among speakers is probably in the physical realm, we use terms or words ordinarily associated with physically perceived referents to name those non-physical, or abstract, referents, thus utilizing metaphor as a linguistic tool.

The best place to begin a discussion about the definitions of metaphor is in the beginning, with Aristotle. As Warren Shibles points out, most definitions and theories of metaphor grow out of Aristotle's discussion of metaphor in Poetics and The Art of Rhetoric: "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else. . . ."12 and "It is metaphor above all that gives perspicuity. . . ."13 Explaining how calling one thing by another's name can make meaning more lucid, he writes, "All words which make us learn something are most pleasant. Now we do not know the meaning of strange words, and proper terms we know already. It is metaphor, therefore, that above all produces this effect; for

when Homer calls old age stubble, he teaches and informs us through the genus; for both have lost their bloom."¹⁴

Aristotle infers that using metaphor is a special cognitive function as he capsulizes the basic essence of metaphor:

"The greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars."¹⁵

So very basically, building on Aristotle's comments, a metaphor is the substituted name not normally considered similar to or related to a referent's usual name for the purposes of illustration and enlightenment. Although literally unlike, the two terms share compellingly similar characteristics, and their comparison reveals meaning about the first referent perhaps not considered before the substitution.

I. A. Richards, in The Philosophy of Rhetoric, constructs a basic model for metaphor as the relationship between "tenor" and "vehicle." The tenor in a metaphor is the original term used to signify a referent. The vehicle is the new, non-literal term substituted to name the same referent. The vehicle "transports" us to a new dimension of meaning for the referent. That new meaning, or interpretation, is the "ground." In the metalanguage which describes figurative language, the tenor is also called the "subject" and the vehicle is called the "predicate" in a metaphorical construction. Max Black calls the two parts of a metaphor the two

subjects: the principal subject (tenor) and the secondary subject (vehicle). Of metaphor in language, Richards writes, ". . . most sentences in free or fluid discourse turn out to be metaphoric. Literal language is rare outside the central parts of the sciences."¹⁶

This observation brings us to consider how we recognize a metaphor and how we can differentiate it from literal comparison or nonsense. Several proposals attempt to explain how we recognize a metaphor. One suggests that we recognize a metaphor when some sort of anomaly occurs, usually a semantic anomaly that makes a literal reading impossible, such as "silence is a wall."¹⁷ Another, related proposal is the relevance criterion: "Metaphors read literally violate a pragmatic rule that requires a sentence to be sincere and relevant to its context."¹⁸ Psychologists propose a "two-step model" for recognizing metaphors. The sentence is interpreted twice; first it is read literally and when that reading doesn't produce understanding, it is read metaphorically.¹⁹ The test that is applied to a metaphor to determine its validity as a metaphor by most definitions is the test of feature saliency. The tenor and vehicle (or subject and predicate, respectively) in a metaphor share like attributes, but the vehicle usually possesses a particularly salient, or conspicuous feature that is not so readily observed in the tenor. Juxtaposing the two offers some new relevant insight about the tenor.

Consistent with Roger Brown's discussion of referent naming, a particular referent alone is not named, rather the broader category to which that referent belongs is named. Similarly, Max Black, in his discussion of the two subjects composing a metaphor, thinks "Both subjects . . . are better regarded as systems of belief than as individual things. One interprets a metaphor . . . by constructing a set of beliefs about the principal subject parallel to the set about the secondary subject. The two subjects interact in the interpretation. . . ." ²⁰ Likewise, Roger Tourangeau sees the subjects of a metaphor as two systems of attributes as he concludes: "Metaphors join two incompatible subjects. We use our beliefs about the one subject as a model to construct parallel beliefs about the other subject. . . ." ²¹

Albert Katz uses Richards' tenor-vehicle-ground model for metaphor in his 1982 paper "Metaphoric Relationships: The Role of Feature Saliency" as he discusses what underlies the ability to interpret relationships metaphorically. A metaphor follows the model "an A is a B," the tenor and vehicle, respectively. Katz explains that each term, A and B, consists of various features, and that the relevant features of B are applicable to A. The salient, or outstanding, characteristics shared by both A and B trigger a metaphoric interpretation. ²²

Consider again the example "silence is a wall." Upon our first reading we immediately realize that the intended

meaning is not a literal one, so we attempt a metaphoric reading. In the mere instant that is required for such a process, we sort through our responses, or the storehouse of characteristics we assign to each word, and we retain those features of the two that can be considered similar. The attributes of the predicate term, wall, that are most notable and applicable to the subject are assigned to the subject, silence, and we then recognize a compelling parallel that augments our understanding of the subject, or original referent. The word "silence" conjures meanings such as absence of noise, emptiness, tranquility, lack of communication, muteness, sleep, dormancy, death, loneliness, and so on. The features we might assign to the word "wall" are: a hard surface built of rocks and mortar or bricks or wood, and the like, a barrier, a supporting fortification, an immovable obstacle, something which separates and divides, and so on. If the metaphor appears within a discussion of the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, for example, the salient features assigned to the subject, silence, will probably be "muteness" or "lack of communication," and the salient feature of the predicate, wall, which is applicable and broadens or describes the subject for us is "a barrier which separates and divides" people or "an obstacle to be overcome" in a relationship. Muteness (silence) has the effect of separating (wall) people and comparing silence to a wall elucidates that particular meaning for us. Our appreciation and understanding of a metaphor,

therefore, is furthered by reading the sentence in the context of the topic in which it is used. For a metaphor to be successful, the features of the subject and the predicate must be common in the experiences of the speakers, and the main feature of the predicate must be salient enough that it can be applied to the subject. Otherwise the result is nonsense or incomprehension. (Such is the frustration of the student attempting to understand the obscure metaphors of Blake or Eliot.)

John Guthrie discusses the important role of feature saliency in his 1980 article "Metaphor": ". . . a critical dimension of metaphorical relations is that the salient feature of the predicate is not immediately obvious or predominant as a characteristic of the subject."²³ We differentiate a metaphor from nonsense, according to Guthrie, by recognizing that ". . . the attribute of the predicate that can sensibly apply to the subject is salient, whereas in a nonsensical statement, none of the shared characteristics are salient."²⁴ Guthrie uses the example "The moon is an Oxford dictionary." This sentence would be regarded as nonsense rather than as metaphor because there is no salient feature shared by the two that "elicits a flash of understanding from the reader."²⁵ Regardless of what similar characteristics one might attempt to construe, none of the features of an Oxford dictionary readily serve to expand our concept of the moon. Guthrie emphasizes the role of feature

saliency for the success of metaphor by writing, "An obviously important quality of metaphors is that a clear and compelling association exist for the intended comparison."²⁶ By way of illustration he defines metaphor as a "vehicle of communication" that helps us to "see below the surface" of things to their "deeper meanings" and "bridge the gap" between the known and the unknown.²⁷

Aristotle believes that a metaphor can be reduced to a simile simply by the addition of the words "like" or "as." This simplified view of metaphor overlooks some of the finer functions and capacities of metaphor, but allows us to view the subject-predicate relationship more easily. So without distortion of meaning, we could say "silence is like a wall" as well as "silence is a wall." Aristotle explains, "The simile also is a metaphor; for there is very little difference. When the poet says of Achilles, 'he rushed on like a lion,' it is a simile; if he says, 'a lion, he rushed on,' it is a metaphor; for because both are courageous, he transfers the sense and calls Achilles a lion."²⁸ Aristotle points out that a metaphor is more concise and direct than a simile: "The simile is a metaphor differing only by the addition of a word, wherefore it is less pleasant because it is longer; it does not say that this is that, so that the mind does not even examine this."²⁹ Reading a metaphor as a simile, however, helps us resolve the semantic infelicity we may experience upon first encountering a metaphor.

Of course, not all metaphors follow the "A is B" formula. But usually with some syntactic rearrangement on our part we can provide the subject and predicate for the model. A "heated debate" can be understood as "the debate is like heat," or "the debate (A) is heat (B)." "Heated" in this case is an adjective of the noun and its meaning is the "predicate," or "vehicle," or "secondary subject" in the metaphor. Consider the predicate of the metaphor used as another part of speech, a verb: "tempers flared." We must extend the term "flared" and supply the true predicate that is merely characterized by "flaring," and that is "fire." So we can construct the model "temper (A) is a fire (B) that flares." As "flares" qualifies the predicate, fire, so it qualifies the subject, temper, in the metaphor. The true, implied predicate of the metaphor, fire, is understood. Likewise, in an "implicit metaphor," the subject is implied by the context, but unstated. In the metaphor, "Heaven's tears cleansed the squalid streets," the subject of the predicate, tears, is rain, and we are left to supply that subject in our own minds as we read the metaphor.

Psycholinguists have proposed various definitions and theories of metaphor use and production to explain the relationship between metaphor in language and cognitive processes. Most overlap and reiterate one another to some degree. A short review of some of the major theories will provide not only a basis for later consideration as specific metaphors

are explored but also a springboard for discussion of metaphor as it applies to this study.

Warren Shibles is one of the foremost spokesmen on metaphor in his book An Analysis of Metaphor and in his editorial preface to Metaphor: An Annotated Bibliography and History, in which he has compiled a formidable list of authors and writing concerned with all aspects of metaphor. In the former book, Shibles reviews M. C. Beardsley's classification of theories of metaphor into four classes as he promotes and develops the Substitution Theory of Metaphor.³⁰ Beardsley's four classes described by Shibles are 1) the Emotive Theory, 2) the Supervenient Theory, 3) the Literalist Theory, and 4) the Controversion Theory.

Metaphor according to the Emotive Theory does not have clear or cognitive meaning and is merely emotive language. "Indicative meaning is testable by certain empirical and logical criteria but emotive meaning is not."³¹ So unless a metaphor is reducible to literal, indicative meaning, according to this theory, it is meaningless. Advocates of this theory would probably consider reducing a metaphor to a simile a good way to reduce a metaphor to indicative meaning, thereby validating the metaphor. S. I. Hayakawa holds the opposite view that metaphor as affective language is quite valuable in communication: "Metaphor, simile, and personification are among the most useful communicative devices we have, because by their quick affective power they often make

unnecessary the inventing of new words for new things or new feelings. They are so commonly used for this purpose, indeed, that we resort to them constantly without realizing that we are doing so."³²

According to the Supervenient Theory, metaphor conveys meaning that literal language cannot convey. Shibles explains the Supervenient Theory: "There is no substitute for a metaphor. Metaphor is in this respect regarded as an idiom. To understand a metaphor we need intuition because it cannot be explained in literal terms. . . . The metaphor is, then, said to be grasped immediately and intuitively before any step by step analysis."³³ This theory is reminiscent of the Gestalt theory of cognition in which there is no empirical, observable process we undergo in understanding meaning. The Supervenient Theory would explain why so many metaphors pass into our language as idioms and are understood and used without analysis. Shibles explains this theory further: "In general, the metaphor cannot be explained in literal terms without loss of meaning because the meaning of a metaphor is usually immediate and precedes a step by step analysis of it."³⁴ Analyzing a metaphor is somewhat like explaining a joke; the essence is lost in the process.

The Literalist Theory of Metaphor is the basis for the Substitution Theory of Metaphor. Quite simply, the Literalist Theory "regards metaphor as an abuse of language"³⁵ because it does not mean literally what is stated.. The Substitution Theory attempts to substitute literal sentences or terms

for metaphorical ones in order to make the metaphor meaningful. According to the Substitution Theory of metaphor, metaphor 1) should be reducible to a simile which would make the metaphor literal (or indicative), 2) should be reducible to literal terms or statements, 3) is a misuse and distortion of meaningful language.³⁶ Max Black describes the Substitution Theory as "Any view which holds that a metaphorical expression is used in place of some equivalent literal expression."³⁷ And Shibbes describes the Substitution Theory further: "That one should consider metaphor as a type of fallacious reasoning is held by those who assert the Substitution Theory of Metaphor. They treat the metaphor as a riddle to be unravelled or excluded from meaningful language."³⁸ This study, on the contrary, proposes that metaphor can in fact elucidate meaning by providing novel insights that literal language neglects. While metaphor may indeed be reducible to simile or to literal, indicative language, it is the metaphoric relationship itself that lends special, expanded meaning to a notion. Max Black supports this latter view of metaphor by saying, "Metaphorical statement is not a substitute for a formal comparison or any other kind of literal statement, but has its own distinctive capacities and achievements. It would be more illuminating in some of these cases to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing."³⁹

Considering metaphor a relationship leads us to the Controversion Theory of Metaphor. According to this theory

metaphor may be literally absurd, but it has non-literal meaning. The theory stresses Richards' tenor-vehicle relationship model for metaphor. The metaphor is a "double unit" in that "a word usually belonging to one context acts as a lens through which a word usually belonging to another context is viewed."⁴⁰ The Controversion Theory, along with the Super-venient Theory, most closely approximates what is intended by use of the term "metaphor" in this paper as we discuss later how concrete metaphors are used to express abstract meaning in language.

Having considered some of the major theories of what metaphor is, it might be useful for our purposes to consider how we go about creating metaphor for our use in language. Researchers in the field of psycholinguistics have recently addressed the subject of how metaphors are produced by conducting clinical experiments testing three of the major theories of metaphor production. The three most prevalent suggestions for how metaphors are produced are 1) attribute matching, 2) analogy, and 3) direct perceptual appropriation of relations, or "Gestalt."

Attribute matching is the most popular theory of metaphor comprehension. As we have previously discussed this process, the subject and predicate of a metaphor share like attributes, or characteristics, and the feature most salient, or outstanding, that is most applicable to the subject is applied to that subject as a means of offering new and broader insights of meaning for the referent.

The analogy theory of metaphor production and comprehension proposes that we produce some metaphors by recognizing the analogical basis underlying them. The speaker begins with two empty cells in the frame of an analogy, for example, "As a ship is to water, so Exemplar X is to what category?" As Pitts, Smith, and Pollis explain this theory in their research, "A choice of vehicle-category would be the necessary first step. . . . Once this category were chosen, a particular exemplar would then be selected to reflect the desired relationship. . . ."41 For our example, if we wanted to show the relationship of the ship pushing through the water, we could choose the vehicle-category "land" as comparable to water. The exemplar that shares the relationship with land of "pushing through" might be "plow." So we could form the implicitly analogous metaphor "The ship plows through the water."

The third theory of metaphor production is termed by Pitts, Smith, and Pollis as "perceptual." They also describe the process "Gestalt," and explain metaphor viewed this way as "a type of physiognomic perception."42 They describe the process: ". . . a listener sees and understands a metaphor immediately without the necessity either of resolving the nonliterality of the statement embodying the metaphor or of rearranging elements to solve an implicit analogy." They discuss the process of metaphor comprehension in terms of

Gestalt theory: "Applied specifically to metaphor, Gestalt theory emphasizes the nonanalytic 'seeing' of relationships between the subject and the vehicle of a metaphor where such relationships are of a holistic and semiperceptual nature."⁴³

Through a series of experiments, they found that metaphors produced by subjects using the attribute matching and analogy processes were conventional, simple metaphors that we use daily, while the metaphors created by a Gestalt-like process were more unusual and insightful. The students who were the subjects taking part in the experiments also found producing metaphors according to the attribute matching and analogy processes was more difficult and not as satisfying as using the perceptual process. Students using attribute matching and analogy were more concerned with analytic evaluation, but those using the Gestalt process experienced the famed Gestalt "aha!", or "Eureka!"⁴⁴ that "captures the excitement and surprise accompanying the production of a genuinely original insight."⁴⁵ The perceptual, or Gestalt, process of metaphor production and comprehension is consonant with the Supervenient Theory of Metaphor which holds that metaphor is understood through intuition, not evaluation.

When we rely on a Metaphor of Perception to convey the meaning of an abstract referent, our creation and comprehension of that metaphor are probably not so much a result of analytic evaluation as of a perception we experience without going through a prescribed procedure. But analysis of the

metaphor will usually show that the metaphor is appropriate and can be analyzed according to attribute matching or analogical methods. It is not surprising that Pitts and his team found that students could produce metaphors more easily using the perceptual process and that those metaphors were more creative and insightful than the dull metaphors produced through conscious evaluation and analysis. Consider the previous example, "The ship plows through the water." To use and understand the metaphor, it is not necessary that we first construct the analogy; rather, our understanding and appreciation are immediate. Our grasping the image "a silver chord" is much easier and more immediate than our attempt to analyze consciously why it is a successful metaphor. In his argument in Gestalt Psychology, Kohler explains that "there are direct relationships among experiences relating to the various sense modalities, and . . . language embodying these relationships is understood directly."⁴⁶ Spatial Metaphors and Process Metaphors might lend themselves readily to analysis by attribute matching or analogy, but Sensory Metaphors are more a result of perceptual, or Gestalt process. Synaesthesia especially is consistent with a theory of experiential, perceptual process, such as "screaming red," for instance. As our premise states, experiences are based first in the physical realm, and following a Gestalt-like, perceptual process, we tend to transfer the expressions that signify those basic experiences onto other, more complex abstract experiences, and not necessarily through conscious procedure.

Michael Apter, in his paper "Metaphor as Synergy," regards metaphor as an example of "cognitive synergy." He defines "synergy" as the experienced tension resulting when two opposite or incompatible meanings are regarded simultaneously. The term "synergy" is derived from the Greek terms "ergon," meaning "work," and "syn," meaning "together." The term synergy is used to denote that two processes or meanings are "working together to produce an effect which neither could produce alone."⁴⁷ Apter sees this phenomenon as applicable to the metaphorical relationship between the subject and predicate of a metaphor (and is perhaps analogous to Richards' "ground"). The predicate is and is not the subject at the same time: A is experienced simultaneously both as B and not B. The effect, he contends, is heightened arousal and vividness of experience. "There is also a sense in which meaning is created over and above the individual meanings which enter into the meaning complex."⁴⁸ This description supports Max Black's view that metaphor "creates the similarity," and that "some metaphors enable us to see aspects of reality that the metaphor's construction helps to constitute."⁴⁹

When we consider the use of metaphor in language, we are compelled to wonder what the nature of the metaphorical process is that enables it to occur with such facility and frequency in our language. Why is the metaphorical process so well suited to our needs in communication, and why do we use metaphor at all? Why not continue to call A "A" and be

done with it? If we accept the tenets of the Supervenient Theory of Metaphor and the Gestalt, or perceptual, process of metaphor production and comprehension, we can realize that the metaphorical process in language is our attempt to express one realm of experience and, therefore, meaning, through another realm of experience. When the metaphor is successful, the effect is insight into meaning not before considered. We then can regard metaphor as a linguistic tool, a creative device which not only expands and elucidates, but in some instances also creates meaning in our communication with others through language.

METAPHOR AS WORLD VIEW

An important source for the student concerned with the study of metaphor in linguistics is Lakoff and Johnson's Metaphors We Live By. The authors of this recently published book combine theories in linguistics, psychology, and philosophy to support their proposal that metaphor is not merely a rhetorical embellishment of language restricted to use primarily in literature and other art forms, but is inherent in language, affecting and defining not only communication but our perception of reality as well: ". . . metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature."⁵⁰ And as metaphors vary among cultures, so do the perceptions and expressions of reality vary from one culture to another, according to the authors. Their proposals give strong credence to theories of cultural relativity. They cite everyday language as the primary source of evidence of how our perceptions of reality are affected by metaphors: "Since communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting, language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like."⁵¹

Throughout the book innumerable examples are offered. They find that words or phrases in language that are metaphorical in

nature are for the most part not individual instances of comparison of like attributes, but, rather, members of whole coherent systems of metaphorical concept. There is a systematicity of metaphorical concepts in our experience and in our communication. ". . . metaphorical entailments can characterize a coherent system of metaphorical concepts and a corresponding coherent system of metaphorical expressions for those concepts."⁵² One of the first examples given that illustrates how metaphor can create a whole conceptual system in language and experience is the basic metaphor "Argument is War." Consider the extensions of that basic metaphorical concept: "Defend your position from his attack"; "I won the argument"; "He threatened my position with a barrage of facts"; "If you use that strategy, he'll shoot you down"; and so forth. Argumentation is not seen as a means of resolving differences and coming to agreement, an engagement out of which something positive can grow, but, rather, as verbal combat in which one either "wins" or "loses."

Various types, or categories, of systems of metaphorical concept are identified. "Structural metaphors" are those in which one concept is "structured" in terms of another: "Argument is War," "Time is Money" ("budget your time", "spend time," etc.), "A Theory is A Building" ("the theory lacked foundation," "construct a strong support").

"Orientational metaphors" assign place or direction relative to our own experience as physical bodies to concepts,

such as "happy is up--sad is down" ("that boosted my spirits," "my spirits sank") because in our physical experience, depression brings about shrinking posture and happiness is associated with an erect posture (also, a smile is up and a frown is down). A more complex "orientational metaphor," based on cultural values as well as physical experience, is "good is up--bad is down" ("things are looking up," "things are at an all time low") because "happiness, health, life, and control, the things that principally characterize what is good for a person, are all up."⁵³ An extension of the "good is up--bad is down" "orientational metaphor" is the concept "virtue is up--depravity is down" ("he is high-minded," "don't stoop to that," and in our culture, Heaven is up and Hell is down).

A third group of conceptual metaphors discussed in this book is "ontological metaphors." An "ontological metaphor" is one in which an entity or substance is made to represent an otherwise dissimilar idea; that is, ". . . physical objects (especially our own bodies) provide the basis for . . . ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances."⁵⁴ Examples of two different "ontological metaphors" that are applied to the same referent are "the mind is a machine" ("I'm a little rusty today"; "The wheels are really turning now"; "Grind out a solution to the equation") and "the mind is a brittle object" ("Her ego is very fragile"; "I'm crushed"; "His mind snapped"; "He cracked under the pressure"). Personification and metonymy are obvious

examples of "ontological metaphors" ("Inflation has robbed me of my savings"; "The gun he hired wanted fifty grand"). An example of a more subtle "ontological metaphor" that is given by the authors is the idea of the activity or event of racing as an object which can contain other objects or as an object itself: "Are you in the race?" (container object); "Did you see the race?" (object); "I'm going to the race" (object that occupies a place). The authors explain that "ontological metaphors" can be "so natural and so pervasive in our thought that they are usually taken as self-evident, direct descriptions. . . . The fact that they are metaphorical never occurs to most of us."⁵⁵

Lakoff and Johnson's work contributes an added dimension to this study with the notion of systematicity of metaphorical concept. According to them, metaphors that are identified in common language are usually members of wider metaphorical concepts which can be applied in many instances. They have fellow words and phrases that together constitute a whole system of related metaphors based on a single primary metaphor as their base, as in the case of "a theory is a building," for example.

Lakoff and Johnson's study gives strong support to this thesis in two respects. First, they contend that the metaphors with which we perceive reality and express it in verbal communication are based originally in experience, and, secondly, those experiences are primarily our experiences as

physical beings in a physical environment which is perceived in terms of physical dimension (objects, substance, entities) and spatial orientation (direction, movement, activity).

Experience is the basis for metaphor: ". . . no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis."⁵⁶ At the end of their book, the authors consider the applications of their theory of systematicity of metaphorical concept to the objectivist, subjectivist, and experientialist philosophies of experience and perception. They clearly favor the experientialist view. They explain what occurs when we form metaphors by employing the idea that our basic first experiences are "prototypal gestalts" from which extensions in our methods of perceiving, conceptualizing, and expressing are made:

. . . understanding emerges from interaction, from constant negotiation with the environment and other people. It emerges in the following way: the nature of our bodies and our physical and cultural environment imposes a structure on our experience, in terms of natural dimensions of the sort we have discussed. Recurrent experience leads to the formation of categories, which are experiential gestalts with those natural dimensions. Such gestalts define coherence in our experience. We understand our experience directly when we see it as being structured coherently in terms of gestalts that have emerged directly from interaction with and in our environment. We understand experience metaphorically when we use a gestalt from one domain of experience to structure experiences in another domain.⁵⁷

The significant point of their view that metaphor grows out of experience, as it applies to this thesis, is that those experiences are grounded in physical experience, and expressions of physical experience become metaphors for the expression of non-physical ideas, or referents,: "Because so many of the concepts that are important to us are either abstract or not clearly delineated in our experience (the emotions, ideas, time, etc.) we need to get a grasp on them by means of other concepts that we understand in clearer terms (spatial orientations, objects, etc.)."⁵⁸ (Notice their use of the metaphor "get a grasp on" for the referent "conceive," or "understand," for instance.) They express this same premise, giving further support to this thesis, elsewhere in their book by saying, ". . . what we are claiming about grounding is that we typically conceptualize the non-physical in terms of the physical--that is, we conceptualize the less clearly delineated in terms of the more clearly delineated."⁵⁹ Inherent in their premise is the notion that conceptualization, or cognition, grows initially out of perceptions of our physical environment. The physical perceptions then become the prototypes, or models, for later, more sophisticated thought.

Consider as way of example, the author's choice of the word "grounding" to relate the idea that the basis, or foundation, for our means of conceptualizing abstractions is physical

reference. Using their rationale of "systematicity of metaphorical concept," one could construe "grounding" to be a member of the orientational metaphorical concept "stability is down" or the ontological metaphorical concepts "stability is the earth" or "stability is a building" or "origin is land" (territory being one of man's most basic social needs). It is more likely, however, that "grounding" would be identified as a "dead metaphor," one which through constant use has lost its original force as a metaphorical concept and has passed into the language as an expression of a notion that is self-evident. To understand the meaning of the word in its context, one need not visualize a plot of ground; doing so might even prove foreign and distracting to the natural flow of thought: "His self-confidence is grounded in positive self-esteem"; "On what grounds do you make that claim?" The authors dismiss "dead metaphors" as "idiosyncratic, unsystematic, and isolated."⁶⁰ They offer phrases such as "foot of the mountain," "leg of the table," and "a head of cabbage" as examples of "dead metaphors." They claim "dead metaphors" "do not interact with other metaphors, play no particularly interesting role in our conceptual system, and hence are not metaphors that we live by," and that "If any metaphor deserves to be called "dead," it is these."⁶¹ Perhaps dead metaphors do not suit the purposes of the authors as philosophers in their concern for examples which promote their theory of systematicity of metaphorical concept, but dead metaphors should

be of interest to the linguist, and even the psychologist, as we inquire into how our language is constructed and evolves, and how meaning is expressed and understanding is achieved through language. This study proposes that what are regarded as dead metaphors do in fact play a vital role in our conceptual system, even when reduced to cliché through overuse or when they are no longer conscious attempts at comparison. And it is our common experiences in the physical context and our constant use of that reference in our expression of abstract meaning that create and sustain these metaphors until they are so familiar and accepted they are considered "dead."

In his book Linguistics, Adrian Akmajian also addresses the issue of metaphor categories used to express whole systems of perception. He calls the process in which "one realm is described in terms of words from another realm providing a familiar and public frame" "metaphorical extension."⁶² By saying "familiar and public frame," he too suggests a common basis of experience among speakers. An illustration he offers is that mental processes are expressed in terms of food and digestion. The following examples would fit into this category of "metaphorical extension": food for thought; chew on that idea; swallow that story; digest the idea; regurgitate facts for a test; feeding me that line; spit it out; bit off more than he could chew; half-baked ideas; and so forth. Most of those phrases will be recognized as clichés and dead metaphors, but while not particularly novel or creative, they

do serve to communicate meaning in a compact image that might otherwise require more explanation to relate.

Dead metaphors are valid forms of communication even though they are not recognized as metaphoric and do not necessarily express original, creative thought. Initially they were original insights, and it is their repeated and accepted use that renders them idiomatic in our language. Most of the Metaphors of Perception used to express abstract meaning can probably be considered "dead" linguistically because they are used so frequently and require little metaphoric interpretation when they are heard. Their meanings seem self-evident and their metaphorical effects are regarded as intuitively obvious to their users. But they do continue to offer graphic illustrations of notional meaning. Brown explains that a metaphor is dead when there is no longer any consideration of its metaphorical origins. It is accepted as a linguistic unit because it is not any longer incongruous upon its first reading. Brown explains, "A metaphor lives in language so long as it causes a word to appear in improbable contexts, the word suggesting one reference, the context another. . . . When the word becomes as familiar in its new context as in its old, the metaphor dies."⁶³ In his discussion of metaphor in Language in Thought and Action, S. I. Hayakawa says, "Metaphors are so useful that they often pass into the language as part of its regular vocabulary. Metaphor is probably the most important of all the means by which language develops,

changes, grows, and adapts itself to our changing needs When metaphors are successful, they 'die,'--that is, they become so much a part of our regular language that we cease thinking of them as metaphors at all."⁶⁴ It is interesting that he sees a dead metaphor as one which was "successful": a metaphor dies because it has been especially appropriate.

Some of the forerunners of psycholinguistics recognized the importance dead metaphors play in building language. Otto Jespersen, in Language, Its Nature and Development, also discusses the use of dead metaphors in language: "In the course of ages a great many metaphors have lost their freshness and vividness so that nobody feels them to be metaphors any longer. But the better stocked a language is with those ex-metaphors which have become regular expressions for definite ideas, the less need there is for going out of one's way to find new metaphors."⁶⁵ William Empson, in Seven Types of Ambiguity, discusses the role of dead metaphors in our language: "All languages are composed of dead metaphors as the soil of corpses, but English is perhaps uniquely full of metaphors of this sort, which are not dead, but sleeping, and, while making a direct statement, colour it with an implied comparison."⁶⁶ Herbert Read echoes these thoughts about the importance of metaphor in language and suggests that the use of metaphor in language is a reflection of cognitive processes: ". . . in the use of metaphor we have, indeed,

one of the main agents in the growth of intelligence. It has been a main agent too in the growth of language, most words and idioms being in the nature of dead metaphors."⁶⁷

A study of words' etymologies reveals that many words' meanings are metaphorical extensions of an original meaning; often a current usage that denotes abstract meaning has grown out of a word that originally signified literal, physical meaning. We don't even consider the original meaning when the word is used, so the metaphor "dies" as the new meaning is accepted in association with the word. When we observe how often this has happened in our language, we can appreciate to what a great extent the development of our language has been a result of a metaphorical process whereby words denoting physical meaning are extended to have figurative, non-physical meaning. Consider some illustrative examples. In our current vocabulary, the word "mettle" is a reference to a person's character and denotes "fortitude; natural vigor and ardour; courage; spirited, as horses." "Mettle" comes to us from Middle English, is a figurative variant of "metal," and alludes to the fine metal of a sword. As the Oxford English Dictionary explains, 'mettle' was "originally the same word as 'metal' of which 'mettle' was a variant spelling used indiscriminately in all senses. The senses explained below are in origin figurative uses of 'metal' and developments of these, but they are so remote from the literal sense that the consciousness of the identity has long been lost."⁶⁸

An early example of the word's use offered by the OED is from Shakespeare's Henry IV, 11. iv. 13: "A Corinthian, a lad of mettle." Another example comes to us from Latin; in current usage, the word "exuberance" means "full of unrestrained high spirits; lavish; profuse." The Latin origin, "exuberare," means "to overflow" and is associated with "uber," which means "udder." To Ancient Romans, an exuberant person figuratively resembled "overflowing udders." Consider the metaphorical extensions and meanings we have in our language today for the Latin root "spirare," which means "to breathe": aspire, inspire, expire, conspire, and their cognates. "Reflect" has been extended from the original meaning of "bending light," as in a mirror, to metaphorically bending back one's thoughts. By metaphorical extension, a "threshold" is not only the stone or plank under a door, but also a point of beginning, and "table" no longer means just a horizontal board or slab, but also "to postpone." "Dead" though they may be, these metaphors which have as their base literal, physical meaning now possess vibrant, effective acquired meaning which transcends the physical. Indeed, if we accept Black's proposal that metaphor can itself "create the similarity," and consider how dependent our language is upon metaphor, we can appreciate how metaphor can function to shape and direct our very perception of reality. Expressing ourselves through metaphor can simultaneously broaden and simplify meaning as it offers new categories of reference that augment our understanding as we communicate.

SPATIAL METAPHORS

If we examine how we apply the idea of sight and its forms in our language, we will discover to what a great extent we express meaning in terms of sense perceptions of our physical environment. Or rephrased, "If we take a look at how we apply sight . . . we will see to what a great extent we view meaning in terms of. . . ." Even the word "perceive" implies physical experience: the Latin root, "percipere," means "to take possession of, seize, get, obtain, receive, gather, and collect" as well as figuratively "to apprehend with the mind or senses."⁶⁹ We are at first physical beings inhabiting a physical environment, a "Mundane Universe," as William Blake might say. We are limited by time, space, and corporeal existence and the material nature of our environment. Our first experiences and perceptions are in the physical, sensible realm. It is only natural that we depend on that common experience of physical reference as we express meaning in language. Of course not all our experiences are identical and we perceive stimuli from our environment uniquely. In this vein, we have already discussed the possibility of cultural relativity as it might apply to perceptions of reality through language. But because man's experiences at the most basic level are physical and based on sensory perception, these are the foundation upon which language is built,

and the experiences we hold in common are held up for comparison with non-sensible ideas metaphorically in an attempt toward more simplified and more successful communication. The assumption is that language that denotes physical, literal referents is more easily conceived and thus simpler, requiring the least amount of effort. We tend to express abstract ideas that have no literal grounding in physical experience in terms of sense perception and thereby create and use Metaphors of Perception.

When we consider our physical environment, our attention is first directed to things of substance, tangible objects that can be seen and touched, objects which take up space. Spatial Metaphors are Metaphors of Perception that allow us to express notional, ideational meaning through words which ordinarily denote physical, three-dimensional objects and situations that occupy space. Expressing the abstract referent through a Spatial Metaphor gives our mind's eye a graphic illustration of the meaning. For example, the following are instances of Spatial Metaphors: a block of instruction; haywire ideas; heaps of praise; the brink of disaster; the path to success.

Spatial Metaphors can assume all the different parts of speech but usually originate as nouns which name physical objects and conditions. Haywire was originally wire used to bind bales of hay and therefore the word is a noun. But its tangled and haphazard lineament made it appropriate for metaphorical application as an adjective that describes anything

that is confused and snarled. "Heaps of praise," usually a noun which in this instance acts as an adjective, could also be used in a verb form, as in "heaping praise." The brim of a cup, a noun, could assume the verb form in the metaphor "brimming over with pride" (pride is figuratively represented as a liquid substance in the metaphor). Likewise, the following examples of metaphor evoke physical images that originate from spatial objects: "your intentions are disguised (clothed, dressed) in the conventions of respectability"; "bridge the disparity of opinion"; "curtain off your private thoughts." Whatever the part of speech the vehicle, or predicate, of the metaphor assumes, however, the image conveys a physical quality or condition that originates from the nominative form of the word and evokes a physical image.

In most metaphors that occur in the normal flow of language, as in the previous examples, the metaphor is implicit; that is, the tenor, or subject of the metaphorical construct is implied, or understood. The vehicle, or predicate, stands by itself and elicits a physical image that aids in the comprehension of an abstract condition. One can supply the probable implied tenor and construct the two part metaphor. For instance, "this block of instruction" describes the particular organization of the instruction as a unit as it relates to a larger program of study. We could construct the two part metaphor by filling in the tenor: "the organization (tenor) is a block (vehicle)." Or by applying the test of the Substitution Theory of Metaphor, we could reduce the metaphor

to a simile: "the organization (of the instruction) is like a block." This particular metaphor is probably a member of a more encompassing system of metaphorical concept based on Lakoff and Johnson's Structural Metaphor process in which the larger concept is "education is a building." Throughout one's career as a student, the goal is to "build" an education. Rudimentary skills are the "foundation," individual courses are the "blocks" from which the "walls" are built, and electives might be considered embellishments such as "gables" and "cornices." The "education is a building" concept is just one of the possible metaphors we could use in discussing education.

We form Metaphors of Perception, especially Spatial Metaphors, because the tenor and vehicle of a metaphor share like attributes. Some characteristics of the tenor, which is the abstract referent, are comparable to some particular salient, or outstanding, characteristics of the vehicle, the term which usually signifies a physically perceivable object or condition. The attributes of the abstract meaning are more easily understood when they are compared with the similar attributes of the term representing the physical meaning. Visualizing the attributes as physical images is what allows greater comprehension.

Spatial Metaphors rely on our ability to see abstract meanings as images with form and structure. Some particular aspect of the form also figuratively characterizes the abstract referent. For instance, a "network" in the literal physical sense is a system of interconnecting lines such as

threads, cables, ropes, filaments, pipes, etc. The word is also extended figuratively to mean any interconnecting system or pattern, even though the connecting elements are not tangible objects, such as a network of crime, a network of support (social), or a network of lies.

Many Spatial Metaphors are common and simple to understand. Their repeated use renders them dead metaphors. The like attributes are fairly self-evident. "He doesn't have a leg to stand on" compares logic or evidence to "legs" that support a claim, that hold it up as credible. "Can you lend me a hand?" is a process of metaphorical metonymy whereby assistance that is rendered manually is represented by the hand. But as the metaphor is extended, the image of the helping hand is intended to represent all forms of assistance, not just help involving manual work.

Other Spatial Metaphors are more novel and complex but at the same time facilitate understanding by offering visual, structural reference for comparison. A "deluge" is originally a torrential downpour or flood of rain but can be extended to mean metaphorically anything which overwhelms, as a flood would, surrounding one on all sides (in every respect) and sweeping him away (keeping him from attending to desired, normal tasks). A computer systems company recently aired a television commercial that capitalized on this image literally applied as office workers were overcome and swept down hallways by a flood of unmanageable paperwork.

Spatial Metaphors can delineate the meaning of an abstract referent by comparing like attributes of quality, quantity, and place shared by the referent and the term as it is ordinarily applied to a physical referent. The term "align" applied literally to physical objects simply means "to arrange in a line" or "to straighten." The word is applied figuratively to describe agreement, as agreement is viewed as opinions that are "in line" with one another. And so by metaphorical extension, to align also means to ally one's self with a particular side of an argument or cause, as in the term "aligned nations." Many terms which describe abstract ideas and relationships originate from physically perceivable objects that have qualities that can be transposed onto the abstract referent, as with "a circuitous (circle) argument," "my sphere (ball) of experience," or "delineate (a drawing or outline) the problem," for example.

"Deluge" is a Spatial Metaphor that compares its meaning with anything that overcomes and overwhelms, as water can. Its overflowing quantity is the primary image conveyed. Another example of a Spatial Metaphor that is used to signify an abstract quantity or extent is the word "world," as in "It did her a world of good." Since in our experience the world is not only very large, but also all encompassing, it is used to emphasize greatness and totality. One might also say, "Their ideas are worlds apart." "Lot" or "a lot," as it is commonly used now to mean "a large amount, number, and very

"much" is a Spatial Metaphor that grew out of the meaning of "lot" as one's share or portion of an inheritance or divine fortune, and later, a plot of land or a grouped quantity of goods or articles. The original meanings are not even consciously considered now when "lot" is used to mean "much." And many people consider "a lot" one word, as evidenced by student writing. Perhaps the future will see "a lot" as one word (alot) as its perception as such persists. Other examples of Spatial Metaphors that lend physical image to quantity and degree that is not necessarily of a physical nature are: heaps, loads, mountain, ocean (anything large, as in "an ocean of woes"), stacks, multitude, atomize, shred (of evidence), dwarf (anything small, as in "His grief dwarfed my woes."), microcosmic, etc.

Saying "steps to success," or "the path to success," designs a mental image for us in which success as a goal is a place to be reached. The prescribed efforts made toward achieving that goal form a route that is followed by accomplishing certain tasks, each one represented by a step. Another Spatial Metaphor that frames an abstract idea as a place or location is the term "heart" used for the ideas "central" or "main," as in "the heart of the matter," or "attack the problem at its heart." In the body the organ is located in the center and is considered the primary means by which we are kept alive. By extension, the heart is also considered the seat of strong emotions such as love, grief, loyalty,

sincerity, fear, hope, etc., and is considered where the spirit or soul dwells. And so the heart of a thing is its most central and supporting part. Other Spatial Metaphors that designate place or location to otherwise abstract concepts are: "on the edge of a discovery"; "on the brink of insanity"; "mainstream America"; and "at the height of his career." Lakoff and Johnson discuss how abstract meaning is assigned directional and locational significance in their discussion of "orientational metaphors." They explain how in one system of metaphorical concept, good is up and bad is down. And so we have representing this particular association examples such as: "It's the pits"; "in a rut"; "down in the dumps"; "high minded"; "on top of things"; "above and beyond the rest"; etc. The description and conception of a certain condition are related as a place in a physical environment. Insofar as time is also considered in terms of physical location and place as a linear model, many Spatial Metaphors express conditions and relationships of abstract referents as points in time that tell us "when." We say, for example, "the eve of destruction," "the twilight of life (or evening, morning, etc.), and further extended, "the now generation" (modern, up to date), and "embryonic stages of research" (combining the ideas of early, undeveloped, and potential). People often offer definitions and explanation as "when" propositions: "Symbiosis is when two organisms depend on each other. . . ." Many prepositions help create

Spatial Metaphors that express non-physical, notional conditions and states in terms of physical location. The operative words work together with the preposition to create the image of "where" as a scenario: "on the fence" (ambivalence); "out of his mind" (insanity); "up the creek" (in trouble); "called on the carpet" (held accountable); and "happiness is around the corner" (imminent).

Seeing meaning as images in our minds, picture thinking, is what Spatial Metaphors allow us to do as we use them in our language. A familiar form represents a complicated idea and we have an imagistic "for instance."

PROCESS METAPHORS

Process Metaphors treat abstract ideas as objects that can interact and relate to one another and the environment in a physical context or they compare notional relationship and process to physical action usually performed by physical objects. Process Metaphors allow ideas to be acted upon or to act so that their performances can be staged in the mind's eye. The action is improbable in a literal sense and is usually action that is observed among tangible players. Some examples of Process Metaphors are: "elevate your standards"; "a sweeping statement"; drop the subject"; and "the answer lies in research."

The metaphor in a Process Metaphor is usually implicit; that is, the vehicle of the metaphorical construct is understood and implied by the action or activity. For instance, in the metaphor "a sweeping statement," the basic metaphor is "a statement is a broom," or as a simile, "the statement is like a broom." Adding the qualifying activity closes the simile: "a statement is like a broom as it sweeps." By dropping the vehicle of the metaphor we have "a statement sweeps," or "a sweeping statement." The listener may or may not envision a broom when the action of sweeping is imagined, since the emphasis in meaning is the sweeping motion, metaphorically, not the broom itself, and sweeping motion can be

performed by other objects as well. The statement is compared with the sweeping of a broom because as a broom reaches out over a broad expanse to gather up particles in one inclusive, continuous motion, so a "sweeping" statement makes one comprehensive conclusion or commentary about various considerations over a broad range. The phrase "a sweeping statement" offers us a tight, concentrated expression that relays an image that communicates all this meaning in one instant.

Like Spatial Metaphors, Process Metaphors can also assume the various parts of speech, but they usually appear as verbs or adjectives. Many Process Metaphors are used as transitive verbs. Situations, conditions, and ideas--meanings that are without literal physical basis--are considered physical, tangible objects upon which action can be applied. These referents "receive" the action of these verbs as their objects as they are implicitly compared with other more familiar physical referents that usually receive action physically. In many cases, the combination is used with such facility and is so familiar in our speech, the metaphor is hardly recognizable. For instance, the Process Metaphor "find a solution" treats "solution" as an object such as a button or a shoe that can be sought and discovered; the metaphor "understanding is sight" is also inferred as we could similarly state "look for a solution" or "discover a solution." "Solution" is treated as an object that can be acquired or viewed. Other examples of Process Metaphors that function as transitive verbs are: "spend time"; or "spend talents" (time and

talent are regarded as commodities such as money); "weave a story" (the elements of the story are likened to the interlacing threads of cloth); "radiate joy" (joy is likened to warmth and light, as from the sun); "defeat the purpose" (the purpose is like a contender in a contest between goals and obstacles). In instances of Process Metaphors such as these examples, the verb implies the metaphorical comparison by virtue of its particular meaning that elicits a specific image of process or action, and the verb applies that meaning to the abstract referent as its object.

Some Process Metaphors rely on the connotative meaning of a verb reapplied to a new, abstract referent rather than on an image of action to convey its meaning. The verb "forage" is usually used in conjunction with and associated with food; "forage" originally meant "food" itself. When we substitute the object "food" with an abstract referent such as "answers" in "foraging for answers," the referent "answers" is implicitly compared with food by virtue of the connotative meaning of "forage," and the action is likened to the activity associated with the search for food. Likewise, as we "nurture" children, so we "nurture" opinions, caring for them and sustaining them as if they were our children. The strength of the metaphor depends on our understanding the connotative and emotive meanings of the word "nurture." The particular "process," or action, is specialized to the specific purposes of the meaning intended.

Some Process Metaphors that appear as verbs occur as a result of the personification of abstract referents. The referents become capable of performing themselves as they are regarded as entities. Again, the specific verb chosen implies the metaphor with which the referent is compared by virtue of its particular meaning. For example, in the sentence "Effort bears results," the Process Metaphor "bears" compares efforts to a pregnant female, and the results are her babies. Or "effort" might be a tree and "results" are the fruit. "Effort" is personified as someone or something capable of exerting action itself. Process Metaphors that personify abstract referents can occur as adjectives: "her unbridled temper" personifies temper as a spirited, runaway horse through the use of the adjective "unbridled." Other examples of Process Metaphors as instances of actions performed by abstract referents personified as animated beings are: "the evidence suggests guilt"; "disappointed expectations"; "inflation robs me of my savings"; "hungry curiosity"; and "the facts speak for themselves."

Notice that in the examples discussed so far, the Process Metaphor is not itself a principal in the two part metaphorical construction, but rather an extension of the metaphor as a qualifier; usually it closes the simile. Consider some previous examples as they are reduced to closed similes; the Process Metaphor usually closes the simile rather than stands as the tenor or vehicle of the metaphor: "time is like money

that can be spent"; "joy is like the sun as it radiates warmth and light"; "opinions are like children that need nurturing"; "facts are like witnesses who speak." When the abstract, intangible referents (time, joy, opinions, facts) are compared with perceivable, tangible objects (money, sun, children, witnesses, respectively) through verbs that describe familiar processes, we are able to conceptualize them and what they "do" as images that allow us better understanding.

Up to this point we have discussed Process Metaphors as verbs and adjectives that treat abstract referents as objects (both literally and grammatically) and imply the metaphorical comparison through their particular denotative and connotative meanings. A Process Metaphor can also function as the abstract referent itself and can be the vehicle in the two part metaphorical construction. The process as the abstract referent itself is compared through metaphor to a more familiar, observable activity in a physical setting. Although the action might be upon an object, or an abstract notion treated as a tangible object, the metaphor is not an attempt to describe the object, but rather, the "action" done to it. For example, the Process Metaphor "to stir up an argument" is not so much a commentary on the similarity of an argument to a fluid medium of some kind as it is an attempt to describe more specifically and graphically the method or process by which the argument is started. Verbal taunts and confrontations

are catalysts that stimulate antagonism and arouse animated exchange just as stirring is a catalyst that creates movement and mixture in a physical medium. In an argument, accusations, threats, denials, and so forth are exchanged at a fast pace among the participants, and this activity resembles the whirling motion accomplished by stirring a liquid. The previous example "a sweeping statement" is another example of an abstract characteristic or process compared metaphorically with a more familiar motion that can be physically observed. Saying "cut him out of the will" gives us a graphic image for the abstract meaning "exclude" or "eliminate." The will is treated as a physical material that can be cut, but the thrust of the metaphor is not in describing the will as a material such as fabric or paper, but, rather, in the action that "cut" itself represents. A "blooming interest" metaphorically likens interest to a flower that is opening; it is the process of developing and becoming that is comparable in both the interest and the flower. Other examples of Process Metaphors that compare abstract process and relationship to a more familiar, physically based action are: "stifle the imagination," "churn out ideas," "blow the attempt," "drop the subject," "close the meeting," "attack the problem," "sift through the paperwork." The image evoked is a particular activity used in conjunction with a literally improbable object. The action is the vehicle of the metaphor, and the tenor is absent and tacitly understood. With some creativity we can provide the

usual term that is being stated metaphorically by the vehicle, and thus construct the two part closed simile model: "suppressing the imagination is like stifling one's breath"; "producing answers is like churning butter out of milk"; "destroying is like blowing something up"; "discontinuing is like dropping something, in that you no longer have it"; "an end is like closing a container so that the contents are no longer accessible"; and so forth.

As physical beings we tend to express processes and relationships in terms that use our own bodily existence as the relative reference. Things, both material and abstract, are dealt with as objects that can be acquired and possessed or places that can be travelled to and overtaken. The acquiring and possessing and the travelling and overtaking are figurative images that are substituted for more complex and abstract processes. By describing processes and relationships in terms of what a body can do, we offer ourselves a more commonly understood picture of what is "happening." Things are taken and given, had and gotten: "take that into consideration"; "take a chance"; "take this seriously"; "give me a reason"; "give it some thought"; "have pity"; "have an influence"; "get the idea"; "get revenge." Other ideas and things are treated as destinations, and processes or relationships are expressed as movement through space and time, travel from one point to another. For instance, we "arrive at a conclusion"; "pursue a career"; "achieve recognition"; "withdraw into

anonymity"; "come to an understanding"; "are driven to distraction." Ideas are objects that traverse a distance and move in particular ways through space: "rumors circulate"; attention spans" (across time); "checks bounce" (back); "feelings are transferred"; "a disease runs its course." Some processes are given directional significance in their "movement," reminiscent of Lakoff and Johnson's "orientational metaphors" of concept systematicity, such as "good is up" and "bad is down," or "more is better" and "less is worse," and so forth. For example, we "elevate our standards"; "raise our consciousness"; "lower our expectations"; "sink into a depression."

Along these lines of metaphorical process as travel or movement through space, our language depends heavily upon the figurative concept of "going," of moving through space from one point (state, condition) to another as a process. We "go crazy"; "go ahead with a plan"; "go into a coma." Other forms of the word "go" are used: "the song goes like this"; "she went without food"; "they're going through a rough time"; "they're going steady." Time is viewed as a linear distance that we travel as we express the future as "going to" ("gonna") events paired with the infinitive form of a word: "I'm going to write a letter tomorrow"; "are you going to be there?"; "she's going to get angry." Even languages other than English that have specific future conjugations for verbs (and don't rely on "will," as English does) experience

the "going to" expression of the future. In Spanish a speaker need not memorize all the future tense forms of verbs; he need simply know the present tense form for "to go" in each person and the infinitive form of the verb: "yo voy a comer (I'm going to eat)," Ella va a contar" (she is going to sing), "nosotros vamos a hablar" (we are going to talk).

Many prepositions can be considered Process Metaphors because they describe and specify relationships in terms of process or action that has physical basis. When we first consider the meanings of prepositions, we probably first visualize how physical objects relate to one another in a physical environment. The specific preposition used denotes the relationship of objects to one another in their relative positions or how they move in relation to one another and the environment. Prepositions denote direction, position, and means and therefore imply and specify movement and process. Prepositions are called "function words" by The Harbrace College Handbook. Notional meanings are regarded figuratively as objects of substance as we discuss them using prepositions that give us visual reference. For example, we "think through a problem" as we would wind our way through a maze; a concept is "beyond our comprehension" like an object placed outside our grasp; "delving into the mysteries of the universe" puts us right in the middle of the unknown, as if it were a place or substance; "controversy around an issue" figuratively girds a topic.

Prepositions as Process Metaphors do not directly name the action going on, they describe it in terms of physical motion and station. Herein lies the confusion over whether prepositions are really adverbs or merely connectors of verbs and substantives: they specify how and where as well as identify relationships.

Using Process Metaphors is our attempt in language to transfer our perceptions of activity, motion, and relationship as physically based events to non-physical realms of thought. Many of the figurative applications of these Process Metaphors are regarded as instances of dead or hidden metaphor, while others can still be rich, novel comparisons that lead us to special, appropriate insights. In either case, using metaphors of materiality for abstract referents allows us better understanding and communication as we refer to our common experiences of physical perception.

SENSORY METAPHORS

Metaphors of Perception include not only our observations of an objective reality as it is represented in tangible objects, action, and relationships among objects, but also our perceptions of our environment through the human senses. Of course we use our senses, especially those of sight and touch, when we perceive the existence of an object or some action it performs as it fills space, such as a tree dropping its leaves. But after we recognize it as a form of substance, we begin to perceive other qualities that characterize the object through our other senses: the bark is rough, the leaves are varicolored, the smell is woodsy, the leaves rustle in the wind. We no longer merely observe the existence of a material object as a form and its movement, we interpret aesthetic qualities and conditions of the object through sense perception; we make interpretive judgements. Since sense perception is individualized and interpretive, it is creative and emotive. Sense perception is one of the richest sources for novel, evocative metaphor. Sensory Metaphors are Metaphors of Perception that express abstract, notional meaning in terms of sensory experience, or they identify one sensory experience synaesthetically in terms of another sensory experience.

Sensory Metaphors are successful and compelling because they allow us to "feel" vicariously the meaning of an idea that might otherwise be expressed through prosaic explication. The strength of a Sensory Metaphor usually lies in the prominence, or saliency, of a particular notionally similar attribute shared by the abstract concept and a sensory experience. Sensory Metaphors join the abstract with the sensual. A rigid, unyielding, unresponsive person is described as "cold" because extreme cold has these effects on physical objects, especially living things; and further extended, death is aligned with the idea of coldness. The following are examples of Sensory Metaphors: "an icy stare," "a thunder clap," "screaming red," "a sticky situation," "delicious gossip." Sensations perceived through the human senses are used to describe conditions and qualities that do not literally possess the particular sensory trait. Using Sensory Metaphors allows us to rely on our common physical experiential base for communication.

As Roger Brown explains in his discussion in "Metaphor in the Vocabulary of Sensation," words are used to name sensations before they are used to name abstract, psychological qualities. Naming sensations occurs earlier in man's history as well as earlier in a child's acquisition of vocabulary than naming abstract qualities and concepts.⁷⁰ Since a child learns and appreciates very early the meaning of "hot!", little analysis is required to likewise understand that Mommy

has a "hot" temper, even though she is not hot to the touch, as the meaning of "hot" was originally understood.

Especially with the use of Sensory Metaphors in language, psycholinguists suggest that little objective analysis goes on in understanding the metaphor; rather, the understanding is instantaneous; there is a flash of recognition of the saliency of the like attributes. The meaning is understood and the appropriateness of the metaphor is appreciated through a Gestalt experience. In the normal flow of language, little logical analysis is required as we apply sensory experience to abstract concept; this phenomenon is a testament to the extensive degree to which our systems of thought are dependent on and relative to our nature as physical beings. Of course, Spatial Metaphors and Process Metaphors can be products of Gestalt realizations as well, but for them, logical explanation is more apparent. Sensory Metaphors rely more on connotative, emotive associations applied toward abstract idea, and it is these associations that give Sensory Metaphors their appeal and power.

Sensory Metaphors originate from all the different senses. Tactile sensations are especially fertile for metaphoric application because they incorporate so many varied tactile experiences. Many meanings are described in terms of cold and heat: "his cool reply," "sexual frigidity," "a heated debate," "a hot topic," "a warm reception," "boiling mad." The qualities of sharpness and dullness, as of a blade

or point, are extended to mean relative acuteness or intensity: "a sharp pain," "sharp cheese," "sharp criticism," "a sharp blow," "a sharp mind," "a dull mind," "a dull movie," "a dull color." Roughness and smoothness and their cognates reach across the realm of physical quality to describe notional meaning: "an abrasive manner," "having a rough time," "a smooth operator," "a coarse version of the story," "a smooth transition," "velvet touch" (diplomacy). "Hard" (solid and difficult to penetrate) and "soft" (smooth and yielding) are extended to denote metaphorically the ideas of difficulty and easiness: "hard times," "a hard test," "hard to do," "an old softy," "a soft job"; or the qualities of relative rigidity or severity, figuratively: "hard hearted," "a hard boiled character," "you're too hard on him," "a hard look at the problem," "soft hearted," "I'm soft on him" (affection), "soft language." Dryness, wetness, oiliness, stickiness, and so forth are also tactile sensations and conditions that are extended to have notional meanings that describe abstract concepts: "you're all wet; dry up" (you're wrong, so readjust your attitude), "a dry sense of humor," "a sticky problem," "you gummed it up" (ruined it), "an oily character." There are many other categories of tactile sensations used to express and describe notional meaning in language. Every tactile sensation experienced has probably been used in some way to express a non-literal, non-physical meaning, from the perverse ("take this job and shove it. . . .") to the sublime

("the warmth of your love"). Throughout literature man has delighted in making scatological reference, and expressing himself in language through use of tactile experience as a living, feeling body likewise comes naturally.

The other senses provide Sensory Metaphors as well. The sense of taste and its different interpretations are compared with ideas to indicate relative severity and mildness, goodness and badness, strength and weakness, and the like: "a bitter reply," "a sweet gesture ("Sweet" connotes nice, cute, adorable, loved, etc. in a wide variety of uses, such as "a sweet song," "a sweet dress," "a sweet baby," "I'm sweet on him," or it can mean "satisfying," as in "revenge is sweet" or "sweet relief."), "a sour disposition," "acid tongued criticism," "stale news," "a fresh idea," "a spicy novel," "a bland attempt," "a pungent image." Tasting as a process and the particular ways of tasting and activities and descriptions surrounding tasting are extended to express and describe notional meaning: "savor the moment," "an unsavory character," "relish the thought" ("I eat my hot dog with relish with relish"), "delicious gossip," "he flavors his speech with expletives," "a palatable suggestion," "that comment smacks of racism."

The olfactory, aural, and visual realms of sense perception are also sources for Sensory Metaphors. From the sense of smell, closely related to the sense of taste, we have metaphors such as "it stinks" (something that is unjust and

wrong) or "sniff it out" and "I'm on to your scent" (as a bloodhound detects a criminal). We assign meaning other than the literal to what we hear: "Mother buzzes around the house doing her chores," "the dirty car begs to be washed," "a weedy garden clamors for attention," "a cadence of books lined up on the shelf," "to trumpet an ideology," "to harken to the warning signals of cancer," "tone down your criticism," "to sing praises of his administration." Visual perceptions that are extended to have figurative meaning in themselves occur most often as qualities assigned to colors and the symbolism assigned to dark and light. Emotions are described as particular colors. Melancholia is "a blue mood," and melancholy music is "The Blues," we are "green with envy," "tickled pink," and "love is a red, red rose." In our culture, tradition and literature associate good, life, happiness, and celebration with the color white, while evil, death, despair, and grief are associated with the color black. Innocent brides wear white, grieving widows wear black; the good guy wears the white hat, the bad guy the black; morning brightness symbolizes rebirth, hope, truth, and cleanliness, while night shadows cloak mystery, magic, and treachery. White can also mean death, however, as it is the absence of the color of life. Many of the images associated with light and dark are so commonplace they are regarded as cliché. The associated metaphorical meanings of light and dark are evident in our language: "it pales by comparison," "his face darkened,"

"obscure meaning," "the dark side of The Force," "I am the Light and the way," "snowy (unsullied) breast."

The visual sense is especially conducive to the process of synaesthesia, whereby notions involving two senses are combined: one sense is described in terms of another sense. People attribute colors to various sounds: rich, base tones are described as brown; brassy, squealing notes are red; and the high tinkling of bells is silver. Likewise, images are assigned to musical compositions. Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" and Disney's "Fantasia" are exercises in personifying music and assigning visual images to particular sounds. Such a process is interpretive and creative, and therefore uniquely personal, but the validity and credence of communicating in such a way are confirmed by the audience's ability to empathize with the suggested comparison and derive the intended meaning. "Dark velvet silence" and "blinding noise" are examples of synaesthetic Sensory Metaphors that attribute tactile and visual sensation to sound.

In our language we rely on synaesthetic expressions to convey descriptive ideas, such as: "a cacophany of colors," "a symphony of colors," "loud colors," "screaming red," "splashed with color." These are examples of colors expressed and described as sounds. Colors are also experienced as tactile sensations: "hot pink," "icy blue," "cool blue," "warm brown."

The quality of prettiness is usually considered one which is perceived and judged through the sense of sight, but the smell of perfume can be described as "pretty." It is also described as heavy, light, soft, or dry, adjectives usually associated with other senses. Likewise, the cosmetic industry would have us associate all kinds of images with particular scents through advertising, in hopes our desire to be associated with a particular image will prompt us to purchase its product. Fragrances are described in nebulous and interpretive terms such as "feminine," "masculine," "sexy," "romantic," "rugged," "sophisticated," and so forth. Yet we do tend to accept the associations of smells with other sets of experiences and images.

When we use Sensory Metaphors, physical qualities and conditions are described by words which evoke particular sensory images that allow us to understand the meaning more poignantly. The striking similarity advanced or implied emphasizes the desired meaning intended in a concentrated image. Instead of saying that the sun was shining on everything, we say, "The countryside was bathed in sunlight." "Cool, fresh, dry air" is a description using sensory terms, but a more commanding metaphor is "crisp air." The term a "thunder clap" describes thunder onomatopoeically and differentiates it from the booming, rumbling type of thunder. What man has never stood in awe at a thunderstorm at some time in his life? So the phrases "a thunder of applause" and "the

thunder of hooves" carry with them the affective powers of excitement and perhaps a little subliminal fear that are associated with our original understanding of the word "thunder." "Silky water" evokes images of sensuality and pleasure, while "slimy water" repulses us and conjures images of stagnant swamps. Yet, the two terms may describe the same objective body of water. It is the affective, connotative associations we have for the sensory terms that determine the "meaning" that is conveyed and understood.

In her essay "The Sensuous Metaphor," Joyce Armstrong Carroll discusses the metaphors that grow out of sense perceptions and are used to express deep thoughts, feelings, and memories as physically sensed experiences. She writes that "the sensuous metaphor appears a curious symbolic projection which dips into sensory realms, cuts across sensory boundaries, and reunites sensations in synaesthetic ways to convey felt experiences, inward expressions. It is as if a feeling, so energy charged, cannot be expressed through conventional ways, so the mind ranges among the maximum intensities picking and choosing, not to match meaning with feelings, but to approximate them . . . if the desire to transform is intense enough, we rely on the sensuous metaphor."⁷¹ The term "sensuous metaphor" is borrowed from philosopher Susanne K. Langer. It acknowledges and emphasizes the importance sense perception has in our process of forming metaphors to express meaning and attempt to communicate with one another more effectively.

S. I. Hayakawa similarly recognizes the necessity of metaphor in our language: "Metaphors are not "ornaments of discourse"; they are direct expressions of evaluations and are bound to occur whenever we have strong feelings to express."⁷² Sensory Metaphors allow us to express the meaning of a referent in terms of the experiential base that we share, and they draw on our affective feelings we associate with those physical experiences to relay meaning.

MIXED-UP METAPHORS

Using Metaphors of Perception does not always necessarily insure more simplified, effective communication. The listener must be adequately familiar with the meaning of the word used as the vehicle in the metaphor. A listener would not grasp the full intended meaning of the metaphor "the job market has careened toward the technical in the last decade" unless he understood that "careen" means not only some kind of movement, but, specifically, uncontrolled, rapid tilting or leaning. Likewise, the speaker must understand both the literal and implied meanings of a word in order to create a viable and effective metaphor and relay the intended meaning. That the speaker should himself correctly understand the words he uses might seem obvious, but the failure to use words correctly as metaphors is commonplace in our language and is the basis of much misstatement and therefore lack of effective communication.

Aside from simple ignorance of the vocabulary of language, dead metaphors are perhaps the biggest culprits that lead us into language misstatement and ineffectiveness. Dead metaphors cause us to construct inconsistent mixed metaphors, catachresis, and deceptive euphemisms. The outcome of these transgressions against language is confusing, ineffectual communication. However, skillfully performed, language

misstatement through ambiguity and malapropism can be the source of humor as well. And even more compellingly, the constructive use of metaphor in language can be the means of shaping the opinion of an audience as metaphor creates a new perception of reality. Our view of reality is relative to the images we use to symbolize and express it; as Max Black has stated, "the metaphor can create the similarity."⁷³

William Empson warns us of the potential hazards of using the dead metaphors in our language in Seven Types of Ambiguity: "Among metaphors effective from several points of view one may include, by no great extension, those metaphors which are partly recognised as such and partly received simply as words in their acquired sense. All languages are composed of dead metaphors . . . which are not dead, but sleeping. . . . The school rule against mixed metaphor, which in itself is so powerful a weapon, is largely necessary because of the presence of these sleepers, who must be treated with respect; they are harder to use than either plain word or metaphor because if you mixed them you must show you are conscious of their meaning, and are not merely being insensitive to the possibilities of the language."⁷⁴ For instance, "founder" has the acquired meaning of "failing utterly, collapsing or breaking down" that grew out of the Vulgar Latin "fundorare" which meant "to submerge, sink" and was used in association with ships, as we still use the word to denote "sink" in our language today. So to say

"foundering in the jungle of high technology" is to mix the incompatible metaphors of sinking in water with getting lost in a jungle. A more metaphorically consistent statement might be "foundering in the rising tide of high technology," or "foundering in the swift current of high technology." Incidentally, because "founder" is used more frequently in its acquired sense and no longer necessarily evokes an image of a sinking ship, and probably because of the similarity of their pronunciation, the words "founder" and "flounder" are often mistakenly used interchangeably. "Flounder" means "to move clumsily or awkwardly in confusion" and is perhaps a blend of the words "blunder" and "founder," as suggested by The American Heritage Dictionary. Because "founder" is now in many contexts a dead metaphor, that is, its use no longer summons compelling associations for the listener, and because the two words sound similar, the potential for misstatement and inexactness in expression exists. The listener must rely on the context of the statement to either confirm a proper use or correct an inaccurate use for him as he tries to determine whether the subject being discussed is still "struggling to stay afloat" or already "sunk." Although not an extreme case, the confusion of these two words creates a catachretic misstatement of meaning.

The imprecision that catachresis causes can result from a speaker's misconception of the meaning of a word and an ignorance of its metaphorical base. Of the impending war

between Great Britain and Argentina in 1982 over the Falkland Islands, a reporter wrote, "The Argentine patriotic mood was tempered by its Memorial Day observances." In a story describing the chauvinistic demonstrations that were contributing to the escalating probability of war, the author could not have meant that the holiday had a moderating or mitigating effect on the popular stance. One can speculate upon two possible reasons for his erroneous use of the word "temper." Perhaps he was associating fire or heat with the meaning of "temper" since heat is used to blend, or temper, metals, in which case he could have more accurately written, "The fires of the Argentine patriotic mood were fanned by its Memorial Day observances." Or perhaps he was associating the noun "temper," a state of mind or emotional disposition, with a fiery or hot mood, still alluding to the metaphorical base of the word "temper." In this case he might have built on the metaphor "a temper is a flame" and written, "Memorial Day observances caused the Argentine patriotic temper to flare." He could have subsequently extended the metaphors of heat, fire, and cooking throughout the remainder of the report. The misuse of the word "temper" in this instance resulted from a basic inattention to the exact meaning of the word and its metaphorical base, surrounded by generally correct associations with the word.

As we have defined "dead metaphor," a metaphor dies when we come to accept the acquired meaning of a word or phrase

and no longer regard its metaphorical origins. Once we are no longer conscious of a metaphorical comparison, the possibility for distortion of the word's meaning, use, and even its form grows. Whether you say, "You're the spitting image of your father" or "You're the splitting image of your father," your listeners are sure to understand your meaning: "You look like your father." If people are asked which is the correct word for the cliché, "spitting" or "splitting," their responses are pretty evenly divided. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the phrase "the very spit of" (circa 1825) meant, as the cliché does today, the exact image, likeness, or counterpart of a person. Later the word "image" was added and the phrase became "the very spit and image of" (circa 1895). Through usage the phrase became "the spit and image of," pronounced as "the spit an' image of." The similarity of sound renders our current dialectal cliché that boasts the participle: "the spittin' image of." The original expression was probably a metaphorically scatological reference to the notion that a part can reflect the whole. A comparable modern day image might be that of cloning, wherein a small part from the whole donor is used to grow an exact copy of the original. But those who use the phrase "properly," that is, "the spittin' image" rather than "the splittin' image," probably do so without conscious reference to its metaphorical meaning, and the listener likewise accepts and understands the intended meaning without reference to metaphorical

image. "The splitting image" emerges from "the spitting image" foremost because of the similarity of pronunciation which is reinforced by a new metaphorical reading that is imposed on the meaning of "likeness." "Splitting image" is credible when we consider that one thing looks like another when it has been "split off" the original. Again the image of reproduction by division is implicit in the metaphor, if metaphor is regarded at all when the phrase is used. Since the phrase has become cliché and its meaning is no longer dependent on precise metaphorical image, its original form and even its metaphorical reference have become corrupted.

Similarity of pronunciation, ignorance of or disregard for metaphorical origin, or the attempt to read new, modified metaphor or meaning into a word or phrase have contributed to the evolution of other misstatements, distortions, and catachreses in our language that are commonly heard and accepted: "heat frustration" for "heat prostration," "for all intensive purposes" instead of "for all intents and purposes," "bobbed wire" for "barbed wire," "a smathering (non-word) of rain" for "a smattering of rain." One might speculate that there is an etymological relationship between the words "haywire" and "awry." "Haywire" is listed as "informal" and "slang" in The American Heritage Dictionary and The New American Webster Dictionary, respectively. Aside from their similar pronunciations, "haywire" is the graphic illustration of the meaning

of the word "awry," and both are used metaphorically to denote a state of confusion, distortion, or disorder. Their meanings probably reinforce one another, with "haywire" considered the more colloquial usage. Perhaps the ready acceptance of "haywire" in our vocabulary is a result of its coincidental similarity in pronunciation and meaning with the more respected word "awry."

Inherent in metaphor is the possibility of ambiguity: should a term be interpreted literally or metaphorically? For instance, "He suffered a terrible blow" does not indicate whether the blow was a physical attack or an emotional trauma. The surrounding context must indicate the intended meaning of an ambiguous term.

Herbert Read suggests that in the use of metaphor we have one of "the main agents . . . in the growth of language, most words and idioms being in the nature of dead metaphors."⁷⁵ Perhaps distortion and reinterpretation of dead metaphors contribute to the growth and evolution of language as well.

Metaphors of Perception often occur as euphemisms that are substituted for terms regarded as too direct, explicit, or offensive. Euphemism is maligned as being dishonest and phony, the language of salesmen, politicians, and prudes. Some simple examples that first come to mind might be "pass away" (a Process Metaphor) for "die"; "laugh lines" or "crow's feet" (Spatial Metaphors) for wrinkles at the corners of the eyes; the Victorian "limb" (Spatial Metaphor) for "leg";

"restroom" for "toilet"; "passing wind" for "flatulence"; and a host of other "potty talk." Most of us don't object to cooperating with these efforts for the sake of good manners and others' feelings. But Neil Postman suggests that the purpose and power of euphemism can be more significant than mere persuasion or courtesy. He proposes that "euphemisms are a means through which a culture may alter its imagery and by doing so subtly change its style, its priorities, and its values."⁷⁶

Consider the area of child education as an example of how euphemizing, or renaming, has had the effect of changing some of our old attitudes toward children and learning: the nursery is now called the "child development center"; retarded children are "special"; smart children are "gifted"; we never call children "dumb" or "stupid," rather, they are "slow" or "culturally deprived." These kinds of euphemisms attempt to mitigate through explanation and lend dignity to situations and people whose old names have acquired negative connotations. The names of other groups in our society reflect the ameliorating attempts of euphemism: old people are "senior citizens," spouses and children of military members are no longer "dependents," but "family members," cripples are "the handicapped." The attempt to lend respectability to a thing by renaming it can become comical when it is excessively affected: a housewife is a "domestic engineer," a garbage man is a "sanitation engineer," and toothpicks are "interdental cleaners." The response to these euphemisms is probably "Who

are you trying to fool?" But we should be mindful that using euphemisms can be an attempt to "fool," or deceive, when a new term diverts our attention from a central truth or tries to gloss over an important concern, such as: "terminate" or "neutralize," for murder; "process" for brainwash; "secure" for steal; or "having his way with her" for rape. Postman cites a particular instance of euphemizing that he finds not only contemptible, but immoral. Hydrogen bomb tests in the South Pacific were given the name "Operation Sunshine" by the U. S. Government. He explains that by using this name, the government was "trying to expunge the hideous imagery that the bomb evokes."⁷⁷ Euphemizing as a process is not itself contemptible; its intent is in fact noble at times. It is the effect that should be considered in determining the appropriateness of an image created through euphemism.

We "mix up" our metaphors when we create oxymora, and the result is disturbingly pleasing. In "The Sensuous Metaphor," Carroll describes the use of oxymoron as "a mental provision for the resolution of tensions, a balancing act performed by the mind."⁷⁸ The paradoxical poisoning of opposing images does not cancel them out; rather, it creates a synthetic effect that relays new meaning. Oxymora can be clever, witty, and perceptive as they communicate meaning in a concentrated image: "growing fewer in number," "jumbo shrimp," "completely unfinished," "divinely sinful."

Metaphor that has been misunderstood and misstated is a rich source for humor. Television's Archie Bunker is perhaps the master of malapropism as he confidently betrays his ignorance with such quips as "on the sperm of the moment," and "The Emasculation Proclamation." While he is oblivious to his errors, the audience hysterically considers the new, inappropriate image in its unlikely context.

Ambiguity is another source for humor as terms and the images they evoke do double duty as their dual meanings counter each other in a game of expectation. Some ambiguities arise due to syntactical arrangement: "I know a man with a wooden leg named Smith." "Really, what's the name of his other leg?" Other ambiguities exist in the possibility of more than one interpretation for a word: "Let's not belabor the issue," said the nervous expectant father to the obstetrician. Michael Apter explains jokes as "reversal synergy" in which "one meaning which an identity is supposed to have gives way unexpectedly to an opposite meaning," and that "for humor to be experienced, however, the new meaning must be evaluated less highly than the original meaning, so that the identity is downgraded in some way during the transformation."⁷⁹ An example of this process is: Customer: I have been waiting here for ten minutes. Waiter: That's nothing, Sir, I have been waiting here for 25 years. The operative term in the joke is the ambiguous word "waiting" which evokes one image that is superseded by another, unexpected image. Other

examples of this process are "The road is so crooked it could run for the Legislature," or "You're lying like a Persian rug." When a member of the Armed Forces is permanently leaving the service, he has the option of taking all his accrued leave (vacation) time at the end of his service; the last day of his leave is considered the last day of his membership in the service. This option is called "terminal leave"; now that's a vacation to be avoided. Apter extends his theory of joke structure by explaining that "it is always possible to convert a metaphor into the reversal synergy of a joke by taking the property which the two identities are assumed to have in common, and then disclosing unexpectedly that the common property implied in the metaphor is really a different, and in some way lesser, property."⁸⁰ He offers the example: "He aspired to her heart, but never reached that high." "Heart" the metaphor for "love" is contrasted with "heart" the physical organ in the body, as "aspire" (ambition) is implied as climbing both metaphorically and physically. Aristotle also recognized the function of metaphor in humor: "Most smart sayings are derived from metaphor, and also from misleading the hearer beforehand. For it becomes more evident to him that he has learnt something, and the mind seems to say, 'How true it is! but I had missed it.'"⁸¹

We "mix up" our metaphors in language when we are inattentive to the precise meanings and imagistic origins of dead, or hidden, metaphors and are not sensitive to the potentials

for meaning that metaphor in regular language presents. Employing metaphor in these instances is not a conscious effort and so the possibility for unconscious misstatement through catachresis and ambiguity arises. We don't say what we mean and we don't mean what we say. The result is failure to communicate effectively.

But metaphor can be "mixed up" constructively to serve specific purposes. Euphemisms help us rename and perhaps thus reevaluate our imagery surrounding certain referents, oxymora help us express seemingly paradoxical experiences, and ambiguity and malapropism are rich sources for humor that censures our preconceptions. We must be ever mindful, however, of the power metaphor has to shape perception and not allow it to get us "mixed up."

Chapter VIII

CONCLUSION

Language is a behavior that reflects how our minds work; the ways in which we perceive, collect, and incorporate information can be observed in how we express ourselves verbally. Talking in metaphor is a process that comes naturally to beings such as ourselves who communicate through oral symbols that represent referents. Even speakers who cannot define what metaphors are use them with great facility in their language, and by doing so communicate among themselves more effectively. We are all physical beings inhabiting a physical environment: the limitations and provisions of an existence governed by time, space, and physical substance are imposed upon us all. When as children we begin developing our consciousness within our existence in a physical environment, we learn that there are names to represent all the things, activities, and feelings we are perceiving. We also soon learn that those experiences and the words that are their names are understood and held in common with the others with whom we would communicate. As our experiences and ideas become more sophisticated and abstract, not based in physically perceivable conditions, we must find ways of expressing those referents as well. Often we express a new referent by means of comparison, relying on a familiar term that names a familiar referent which is in some way notionally or analogously

similar to the abstract referent. Recalling a word that represents a physically perceivable referent evokes a mental image of a particular object or a particular activity or a particular sensation that, through comparison, helps us better understand the new referent. When we recall words which ordinarily represent physically perceived objects, actions, or conditions to represent notional, non-physical referents, we are using Metaphors of Perception.

Abstract referents that are expressed as material, three-dimensional objects that occupy space are Spatial Metaphors, such as "a capsulized statement." Abstract referents expressed as motion or activity that can be observed in a material setting, performed by or to physical objects, are Process Metaphors, such as "reaping the benefits." Abstract referents that are expressed in terms of sensations and feelings perceived through the human senses are Sensory Metaphors, as in "a ticklish situation."

Various related theories have been forwarded which attempt to explain how we create, use, and understand metaphors in language. The most logical and analytical are the theories of attribute matching and analogy. Attribute matching provides that, simply, some salient feature of the vehicle, or predicate, of a metaphor is comparable to a corresponding feature of the tenor, or subject, and regarding the tenor in terms of the vehicle helps us better understand the tenor (a bead of sweat). Analogy similarly suggests that we observe some

analogous relationship that exists between the tenor and vehicle, and by expressing the tenor, through substitution, as the vehicle, some special insight of meaning is afforded (as chambers are to a house, so areas of control or cognition are to the mind; hence, "chambers of the mind"). Most theorists concerned with the relationship of language and thought recognize the validity of a third category of metaphor creation and comprehension: the instantaneous, affective "seeing" of a metaphorical relationship that might be called a Gestalt-like process. Conscious analysis is superseded by intuitive insight. Experiments have shown that metaphors produced using this Gestalt type process are richer, more novel, and multifaceted when compared with the more mundane metaphors created through the methodical processes of attribute matching and analogy. Our ability to rely on the subconscious and affective powers of the mind to create effective expressions of meaning in language attests to the degree to which our language is a reflection of our experiences, specifically, our experiences as they are registered in our minds.

Metaphors of Perception can be identified readily in every level of our language and are so common and accepted, in fact, that they are often not considered metaphoric at all but "dead" or "hidden." Their "deaths" prove their appropriateness and acceptance: it is through their repeated use that their appearance is no longer considered initially incongruous so as to necessitate a metaphorical reading. But even

dead metaphors elicit mental images that help us "bridge the gap" between abstraction and understanding.

Many of the Metaphors of Perception are implicit; that is, the metaphorical comparison or analogy is not stated and the listener must determine the tenor for himself through the context, as in "the door to success shut in his face" (opportunity [tenor] is a door [vehicle]). Often the complete metaphorical comparison is not stated but is suggested by what is actually a qualifier that closes a simile, as in "burning desire" (desire is like a fire as it burns). Most metaphors can be stated as similes, with some rearrangement and creativity. But for the most part, a metaphor is more powerful and more compact than a simile. A metaphor allows us the pleasure of realizing simultaneously that while it is not literal, it is still "true."

Using Metaphors of Perception is a game of eliciting images to convey meaning. Relying on images to represent meaning offers the potential for humor as one image is recalled and then diminished by the appearance of another, unexpected image. Talking in metaphor allows us to play with words to create humor, but it also betrays our ignorance when we don't use the words correctly. Since metaphor in language can evoke differing interpretations among users, there is also the potential for ambiguity and misunderstanding. The words and phrases that express the images that metaphors summon can become epithets in our language that we accept without due

consideration as we tend to readily associate the image with the referent. We must be careful that they do not become crutches for our laziness in language and that the images and our connotative interpretations of those images do not begin to control us.

By using Metaphors of Perception we draw on our basic common experiences in a physical environment to express notional, non-physical ideas, or referents. Metaphors of Perception evoke images in our minds of objects of substance, activity among physical objects, and physical qualities that are made to represent metaphorically abstract ideas. Because our common experiential base is the reference most easily comprehended and conceptualized among the most speakers, Metaphors of Perception make meaning more easily understood and therefore language more effective.

¹Jacob Bronowski, The Origins of Knowledge and Imagination (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 34.

²Bronowski, p. 34.

³S. I. Hayakawa, Language in Thought and Action (New York: Harcourt-Brace-Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), p. 24.

⁴G. K. Zipf, Human Behavior and the Principle of Least Effort (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1935), p. 38.

⁵George Steiner, Language and Silence (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 5.

⁶Roger Brown, Words and Things (New York: The Free Press, 1958), p. 7.

⁷Brown, p. 8.

⁸Brown, p. 9.

⁹Brown, p. 107.

¹⁰Brown, p. 108.

¹¹Brown, p. 108.

¹²Warren Shibbles, An Analysis of Metaphor (Mouton and Co. Publishers, The Hague, 1971), p. 116.

¹³Shibbles, p. 121.

¹⁴Shibbles, p. 121.

¹⁵Shibbles, p. 120.

¹⁶Shibbles, p. 67.

¹⁷Roger Tourangeau, "Metaphor and Cognitive Structure," in Metaphor: Problems and Perspectives, ed. David S. Miall (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1982), p. 18.

¹⁸Tourangeau, p. 19.

¹⁹Tourangeau, p. 20.

²⁰Tourangeau, p. 17.

²¹Tourangeau, p. 33.

²²Albert N. Katz, "Metaphoric Relationships: The Role of Feature Saliency," Journal of Psycholinguistic Research, Vol. 11, No. 4 (1982), p. 284.

²³John T. Guthrie, "Metaphor," in Journal of Reading, Vol. 23, No. 7 (April 1980), pp. 640-42.

²⁴Guthrie, p. 641.

²⁵Guthrie, p. 641.

²⁶Guthrie, p. 642.

²⁷Guthrie, p. 642.

²⁸Shibles, p. 125.

²⁹Shibles, p. 125.

³⁰Shibles, p. 63.

³¹Shibles, p. 64.

³²Hayakawa, p. 111.

³³Shibles, p. 66.

³⁴Shibles, p. 66.

³⁵Shibles, p. 71.

³⁶Shibles, p. 73.

³⁷Shibles, p. 71.

³⁸Shibles, p. 72.

³⁹Shibles, p. 73.

⁴⁰Shibles, p. 68.

⁴¹Marian K. Pitts, Howard R. Pollio, and Michael K. Smith, "An Evaluation of Three Different Theories of Metaphor Production Through the Use of an Intentional Category Mistake Procedure," in Journal of Psycholinguistic Research, Vol. 11, No. 4 (1982), p. 349.

⁴²Pitts, et. al., p. 349.

⁴³Pitts, et. al., p. 349.

⁴⁴Pitts, et. al., p. 365.

⁴⁵Pitts, et. al., p. 366.

⁴⁶Pitts, et. al., p. 349.

⁴⁷Michael J. Apter, "Metaphor as Synergy," in Metaphor: Problems and Perspectives, ed. David S. Mial (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1982), p. 56.

⁴⁸Apter, p. 56.

⁴⁹S. G. Pulman, Journal of Literary Semantics, Vol. XI, No. 2 (Oct. 1982), p. 81.

⁵⁰George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 3.

⁵¹Lakoff and Johnson, p. 3.

⁵²Lakoff and Johnson, p. 9.

⁵³Lakoff and Johnson, p. 16.

⁵⁴Lakoff and Johnson, p. 25.

⁵⁵Lakoff and Johnson, p. 25.

⁵⁶Lakoff and Johnson, p. 19.

⁵⁷Lakoff and Johnson, p. 230.

⁵⁸Lakoff and Johnson, p. 115.

⁵⁹Lakoff and Johnson, p. 59.

⁶⁰Lakoff and Johnson, p. 55.

⁶¹Lakoff and Johnson, p. 55.

⁶²Adrian Akmajian, Richard A. Demers, and Robert M. Harnish, Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979), p. 114.

⁶³Brown, p. 142.

⁶⁴Hayakawa, p. 111.

⁶⁵Otto Jespersen, Language, Its Nature, Development, and Origin (New York: Holt Pub. Co., 1928), p. 432.

⁶⁶William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (New York: New Directions Pub. Corp., 1966), p. 30.

⁶⁷Herbert Read, English Prose Style (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1949), p.34.

⁶⁸The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, (1971), p. 1785.

⁶⁹OED, p. 2127.

⁷⁰Brown, p. 145.

⁷¹Joyce Armstrong Carrol, "The Sensuous Metaphor," in The English Journal, Vol. 71, No. 1 (Jan. 1982), p. 88.

⁷²Hayakawa, p. 109.

⁷³Max Black, Models and Metaphors (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 35-37.

⁷⁴Empson, p. 30.

⁷⁵Read, p. 34.

⁷⁶Neil Postman, Crazy Talk, Stupid Talk (New York: Delacorte Press, 1976) p. 262.

⁷⁷Postman, p. 260.

⁷⁸Carroll, p. 89.

⁷⁹Apter, p. 58.

⁸⁰Apter, p. 63.

⁸¹Shibles, p. 123.

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