

## METAPHOR AND IDEOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

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### **Abstract**

Since metaphor in language and thought might be glossed as 'metaphor and meaning' and as ideology has been defined as 'meaning in the service of power', this paper explores some of the ways in which metaphor is used for ideological purposes. It begins by discussing the salient and topical metaphor themes POWER/IMPORTANCE IS HEIGHT, RACE IS COLOUR, DISEASE IS INVASION and SEX IS VIOLENCE. It proceeds to introduce the theoretical question of the extent of physiological and cultural influences on metaphor theme. To illustrate the importance of the cultural it shows how early capitalism established, selected or nurtured a constellation of metaphor themes to convey and reinforce its ideological position and how these were elaborated in a genealogy stretching from the British (economic) philosophers Hobbes, Hume, Smith, Malthus through to Darwin. This genealogy forms the basis for current neo-conservative sociobiological political and economic theories. The most important metaphor themes in this ideological project are identified as ACTIVITY IS FIGHTING, ACTIVITY (COMPETITION) IS RACE, QUALITY IS QUANTITY, and QUALITY IS MONEY/WEALTH. The paper shows how these reinforce a culture of competitiveness, survival of the fittest, and the equation of wealth

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possessed with personal value. It also shows how PERIOD IS LENGTH DISTANCE and TIME IS MONEY/COMMODITY were recruited for purposes of capitalist industrialisation.

**Keywords:** metaphor; ideology; capitalism; race; sex; 9/11; auto-immune disease; Hobbes; Hume; Adam Smith; Malthus; Darwin.

## 1. Introduction

The theme of this conference is metaphor in language and thought. This paper explores metaphor as a tool of ideology<sup>2</sup>, by which I mean 'meaning in the service of power' (Thomson, 1984). How original metaphors are used to justify the exercise of power is clear enough from examples like the following, describing metaphors used in Brazil:

Street children ... are often described as 'dirty vermin' so that metaphors of 'street cleaning', 'trash removal', 'fly swatting', 'pest removal' and 'urban hygiene' have been invoked to garner broad-based support for police and death squad activities against them. (*New Internationalist* 10/97: 21)

However, I wish to concentrate on patterns of conventional metaphors that can be found in the dictionary.

My data is taken from my online database known as *Metalude*.<sup>3</sup> This identifies sets of metaphorical lexical items often called conceptual metaphors, and which I call root analogies or metaphor themes.

## 2. Some ideological metaphor themes

First of all let's look at a sample of interesting ideological metaphor themes.

### *2. 1. Power, importance and success is high*

At least three metaphor themes use height as a source for positive meanings, in addition to GOOD IS HIGH: POWER / CONTROL IS

ABOVE, IMPORTANCE / STATUS IS HIGH and ACHIEVEMENT / SUCCESS IS HIGH. **Upper** means 'of important status' as in **upper class**; **high** means 'having an important position' as in **high up**, **high-powered**; and 'the most important position' is **top**, as in **top job**, **top people**, **top dog**. Important tasks have **top priority**. **High** is also a metaphor for power and dominance, as in **high places**, **high handed**, so **over** or its synonyms mean 'in control of' as in **overlord**, **superior**, **on top of**. The most powerful person is the **top man/woman**. Success is also conveyed metaphorically by **height** and the highest points of objects – **peak**, **summit**, **apex**, **pinnacle**, **zenith** all mean 'most successful period, point or stage of development' (*at the height of his career he was giving 2 concerts a week*). A person expected to be successful is a **high-flier**, for whom perhaps **the sky's the limit** 'there's nothing to prevent them achieving great success', so they may go **onward and upward** into the **stratosphere**. The most successful **come out on top**, or **tower over/above** competitors.

The confluence of these metaphor themes with the same source make height an impressive symbol of power, success, achievement and importance, following a tradition that began with the Tower of Babel. Today governments and corporations continue to build higher to express their political and economic power (See Table 1). The Far East and Middle East have temporarily taken over from the US in building highest, perhaps celebrating what Mahathir Mohammed and Lee Kuan Yew in the 1990s called the superiority of 'Asian values'.

If height is a metaphor for success, power, status and importance, then loss of these is movement downwards. **Fall**, means 'lose power', and **fall down**, **fall flat**, **crash** and **collapse** mean 'fail' or 'fail completely'. When in danger of failure or losing power you **totter**. To reduce someone's power or bring about their failure you try to make them **fall**: **topple**, **undermine** or **cut the ground from under them**, **overthrow them** and, once they are on the ground, **come down on them like a ton of bricks**.

Rank	Building	Completed	Stories	Metres	Feet
1.	Taipei 101, Taipei, Taiwan	2004	106	508	1,667
2.	Petronas Tower 1, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	1998	88	452	1,483
3.	Petronas Tower 2, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	1998	88	452	1,483
4.	Sears Tower, Chicago	1974	110	442	1,450
5.	Jin Mao Building, Shanghai	1999	88	421	1,381
6.	Two International Finance Center, Hong Kong	2003	88	412	1,352
7.	Citic Plaza, Guangzhou, China	1996	80	391	1,283
8.	Shun Hing Square, Shenzhen, China	1996	69	384	1,260
9.	Empire State Building, New York	1931	102	381	1,250
10.	Central Plaza, Hong Kong	1992	78	374	1,227
11.	Bank of China Tower, Hong Kong	1989	70	369	1,209
12.	Emirates Tower One, Dubai	1999	55	355	1,165
13.	The Center, Hong Kong	1998	79	350	1,148
14.	T & C Tower, Kaohsiung, Taiwan	1997	85	348	1,140
15.	Aon Centre, Chicago	1973	80	346	1,136
16.	John Hancock Center, Chicago	1969	100	344	1,127
17.	Burj al Arab Hotel, Dubai	1999	60	321	1,053
18.	Chrysler Building, New York	1930	77	319	1,046
19.	Bank of America Plaza, Atlanta	1993	55	312	1,023
20.	Library Tower, Los Angeles	1990	75	310	1,018
21.	Telekom Malaysia Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur	1999	55	310	1,017
22.	Emirates Tower Two, Dubai	2000	56	309	1,014
23.	AT&T Corporate Center, Chicago	1989	60	307	1,007

24.	JP Morgan Chase Tower, Houston	1982	75	305	1,002
25.	Baiyoke Tower II, Bangkok	1997	85	304	997
26.	Two Prudential Plaza, Chicago	1990	64	303	995
27.	Kingdom Centre, Riyadh	2001	30	302	992
28.	Pyongyang Hotel, Pyongyang, N. Korea	1995	105	300	984
29.	First Canadian Place, Toronto	1975	72	298	978
30.	Wells Fargo Plaza, Houston	1983	71	296	972

Table 1: The world's tallest buildings

Before 9/11 the World Trade Center twin towers were 1353 feet high, when built the tallest in the world, with 110 floors.<sup>4</sup> Besides symbolising an unjust world trading system, their height made them an excellent target for those wishing to symbolically reduce the power, success and importance of the US. This symbolic ideological statement, depends on or is reflected in the groups of metaphors illustrated and the conceptual structure which underlies them.

### *2.2. Race is colour; good is pure/clean/white*

Racial classification is very much a cultural construct rather than a scientific one. DNA evidence fails to support a scientific classification of race (Marks, 2002, pp. 65-67).

The overwhelming bulk of detectable genetic variation in the human species is between the individuals within the same population. About 85% in fact. Another 9% of the detectable variation is between populations assigned to the same "race"; while interracial differences constitute only about 6% of the genetic variation in the human species'(Marks, 2002, p.82).

But imperialism needs to classify racially – if people are different then we can treat them differently. Colour was a convenient mechanism for constructing different races. For example in Table 2 Linnaeus correlated colour and facial characteristics with the four humours of medieval anatomy/physiology, and with stereotypes of temperament and personality.

Colour-coding labels might be thought of as metonymic, but many Africans are dark or light brown, Caucasians have pinky-grey skin, Mongolian races have olive-coloured or light brown skin, and none could be literally described as red.

	<b>American</b>	<b>European</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>African</b>
Colour	Red	White	Yellow	Black
Temperament	Irascible, impassive	Vigorous, muscular	Melancholy, stern	Sluggish, lazy
Humours	Choleric–yellow bile–gallbladder	Sanguine Blood–heart	Melancholy Black bile–spleen	Phlegmatic Phlegm–pituitary
Face	Thick straight black hair	Long blond hair, blue eyes	Black hair dark eyes	Black kinky hair, silky skin, short nose, thick lips, females with genital flap, elongated breasts
Personality	Stubborn, happy, free	Sensitive, very smart, creative	Strict, contemptuous, greedy	Sly, slow, careless
Covered by	Fine red lines	Tight clothing	Loose garments	Grease
Ruled by	Custom	Law	Opinion	Caprice

Table 2. Linnaeus's Classification of the species *Homo Sapiens* in *System Naturae* (1798) (Adapted by adding row 4) (quoted in Marks 2002 p. 57)

Caucasians tend to accept the label **white** and Afro-Caribbeans to reject the label **black**, because of the themes GOOD IS CLEAN/

WHITE, and EVIL IS DARK / BLACK: **white knight** 'a rescuer a company from financial difficulties'; **fair** 'morally correct or just'; **whiter than white** 'with a reputation for high moral standards'. **Black**: 'bad' (*the future of the environment is very black*), or 'cruel or wicked' (*this is a blacker crime than most I've investigated*); **black mark** 'fault or mistake that has been noted'; **blackguard** 'a wicked person'; 'illegal' as in **black market, black economy**.

Prejudice continues. In a programme of DNA testing designed to uncover unjust convictions 'approximately 60% of all our wrongful convictions were black men wrongfully convicted of sexually assaulting, or sexually assaulting and killing, white women' (Novak, 2003).

'Non-Caucasians' turn these metaphors into disputed terms, referring to themselves as **people of colour**, since in EXCITEMENT IS LIGHT/COLOUR **colourful** means 'lively, interesting, amusing and exciting' in opposition to **colourless, dull, grey, leaden, drab, pallid, monochrome** all mean 'boring, unexciting'. Perhaps people of colour, could begin to refer to whites as **colourless**.

In sum, the racist and imperialist enterprise, is predicated on strict racial divisions, an optical illusion using the metaphor of colour as a code.

### 2. 3. *Disease is invasion*

Disease of any kind (whether caused by bacteria/viruses or not) is constructed as an **attack** by **invaders** 'viruses or bacteria', or **foreign bodies** from outside. (A recent TV series *The Body Invaders* ended with a programme about arthritis and rheumatism!) The bacteria **invade** 'enter the body', and may **strike down** 'cause illness or death to' the victims, if they **succumb** 'become ill'. However, the body may **defend** itself, **fight, combat** 'struggle to survive' the disease, through **resistance** 'immune response'. Medicine can attempt to **conquer** or **vanquish** 'eliminate' a disease once and for all (though defence establishments still stock them for biological warfare).

There are problems with this metaphor in 2 areas: antibiotic resistant bacteria; and auto-immune diseases.

Following the metaphor theme, attempts are made to kill the bacteria with antibiotics but resistant strains develop. For example *staphylococcus aureus* is resistant to penicillin and methicillin and, since 2002, to vancomycin. A new approach is to prevent bacteria communicating, since they only multiply when they know they are numerous enough to escape the control of our immune systems. Research is attempting to interfere with their signaling mechanisms, so that even if they are present in sufficient numbers, they will not know that, and will remain benign (Watts & Geoff, 2003, p.30).

Auto-immune disease occurs when the lymphocytes cannot recognise what is self and what is non-self. They then begin to inflame the body's own cells, causing diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, and inflammatory bowel disease. Scientists in the University of Iowa (Weinstock, Elliott, Summers & Khurram Qadir, 1999) have suggested a link between these bowel inflammations and the absence of parasites in the gut.

Humans and other animals have been living with helminths, or worms, since the dawn of time, and our intestinal tracts have adapted to their presence. They normally dampen some aspects of our mucosal immune response. Thus, without them the human body may over-produce powerful substances that can cause excessive inflammation of the intestinal tract (Weinstock, Elliott, Summers & Khurram Qadir, 1999).

Acting according to the metaphor of these worms as invaders, we have eradicated them from our gut. Perhaps this was an example of symbiosis, not a disease caused by invaders that need to be exterminated. There is some evidence that reintroducing these worms into mice can protect them from inflammatory bowel disease (Weinstock, Elliott, Summers & Khurram Qadir, 1999) and trials with humans are under way.

In these developments we see the ideology/metaphor of violence as giving way to the ideology of communication, balance and symbiosis.



#### 2.4. Sex is violence—rape

Many metaphors for sex have sources taken from violence. This began in classical times, where **phallus** meant ‘sword’, and **vagina** meant ‘sheath or scabbard’, an association still found with **sheath** meaning ‘condom’. The male is usually constructed as the aggressor, so that the penis is **chopper, weapon**, or, a gun with which a man can **shoot his load** ‘ejaculate semen’. By violence men may achieve their **conquests** ‘women they have had sex with’ and are **lady-killers** ‘seducers’. Sex is also associated with men hitting women as in **wham-bang-thank-you-mam** ‘a very quick act of sex’, **knock off** ‘have sex with a woman’, **gang bang** ‘group rape’. Other verb lexis is gender-neutral as **hit on** ‘indicate your sexual attraction for’, **bang, bonk** ‘have sex with’. An attractive person of either sex is a **knockout**.

Is there a connection between these metaphors, especially those constructing the sexual act of men as aggression, and the increasing incidence of rape? In the States, according to the National Victim Center, 683,000 women are raped each year (1992). And in the UK between 1976 and 1997 the number of women reporting rape increased by over 500%. Yet convictions have remained almost static.

Year	Reported Rapes	Convictions	Convictions Rate
1977	1015	324	32%
1987	2471	453	18%
1993	4589	482	10%
1994	5032	460	9%
1995	3986	578	14%
1996	5759	573	10%

Table 3. The attrition rate for rape in England and Wales<sup>5</sup>

What patterns of social roles can we see within this phenomenon or rape, and how do they connect to the patterns that we saw in the metaphors of SEX IS VIOLENCE?

(1) Men are usually the aggressors, and women victims, both in the metaphors and reality. An estimated 91% of victims of rape are female and 99% of offenders male. (Bureau of Justice Statistics 1999). 93% of women and 86% of men who were raped and/or physically assaulted since the age of 18 were assaulted by a male. (National Violence Against Women Survey, 1998).<sup>6</sup>

(2) Rape is usually carried out by someone known to the female victim. 1 in 7 married women said they had been raped by their husbands, both in the US<sup>7</sup> and the UK<sup>8</sup>. 97% of callers to the hotlines of the UK Rape Crisis Centre knew their assailant.<sup>9</sup>

Do many men regard coercive or violent sex as a quite normal way of relating to somebody close to them, just as it is quite normal for them to use the language of aggression when talking about sex? 84% of college males who committed rape, denied that it was rape (Warshaw, 1994). And do male judges have the same attitude? (See Table 3)

<b>PHYSIOLOGICAL PHENOMENA</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>METAPHOR THEME IN 'METALUDE'</b>
Change in body temperature	Drop in body temperature for FEAR	FEAR/UNPLEASANT EMOTION IS COLD
	Rise in body temperature for ANGER	ANGER IS HEAT
	Rise in body temperature for PASSION	LOVE/PASSION IS HEAT
Change in skin colour/skin condition	Redness in face and neck area for ANGER	(EMOTION IS LIGHT COLOUR)
Release of sweat, tears, saliva	Moist hands for FEAR, tears for SADNESS	EMOTION IS LIQUID?
Change of respiration and heart rate	Quickening of heartbeat for ANGER	(EMOTION/CHARACTER IS BODY-PART/FLUID ?)
Unnatural condition of	Feeling nauseated for DISGUST, FEAR	(BAD EMOTION IS DISCOMFORT/PAIN)?

stomach/ bowels		BAD IS SMELLY (EXPERIENCE IS FOOD/EATING)
Bodily tension/release of tension	Fists and teeth clenched for ANGER	ANTAGONISM/ ANNOYANCE IS FRICTION
	Relaxation of body and lungs (sighing) for RELIEF	NERVOUSNESS IS TENSION
	Tension of muscles for ANXIETY	NERVOUSNESS IS TENSION
Specific kinds of physical movements	Slow shuffling movements for SADNESS	? SAD IS LOW
	Heavy walk, stomping for ANGER	(CONTROL IS PUSH/PUT DOWN??)
	Being startled for FEAR	(EMOTION IS MOVEMENT)
	Jumping up and down for JOY	HAPPY IS HIGH
	Touching, hugging, kissing for LOVE	RELATIONSHIP IS PROXIMITY/COHESION
	Grabbing for DESIRE	DESIRE IS ATTRACTION
	Approach for ENJOYMENT, PLEASURE	DESIRE IS ATTRACTION
	Approach for ANGER	ANTAGONISM ANNOYANCE IS FRICTION
	Moving away for FEAR	(NO RELATIONSHIP IS DISTANCE/SEPARATION)
	Slumping for SADNESS	SAD IS LOW
	Looking down for SADNESS	SAD IS LOW
	Looking with fixed gaze for WONDER	AWARENESS/INTEREST IS FIXING/CAPTURE

Table 4: An overview of physiological metonymies for basic emotions, based on Kövecses (2002, pp. 123-4, 134).

### 3. Experiential and cultural explanations for metaphor themes

The first attempt to explain metaphor theme patterns was Lakoff's Experiential hypothesis, which claims they have their source in our bodily infant experiences. For example, we experience the notion of proximity and warmth from being picked up, hugged or separated from our caregivers, so that RELATIONSHIP IS PROXIMITY, AFFECTION IS WARMTH. We experience gravity and the sense of vertical orientation as well – MORE IS HIGH and POWER IS HIGH. The first most obvious changes that we notice are movements, thus CHANGE and ACTIVITY IS MOVEMENT. We learn to crawl and eventually walk towards objects that we want giving us PURPOSE IS DIRECTION and DEVELOPMENT / SUCCESS IS MOVEMENT FORWARDS.

The experiential explanation of metaphor themes based on metonymies of bodily experience seems particularly powerful in target areas such as emotion. Zoltan Kövecses, who has explored this area in detail, produced a table indicating some of the most common bodily metonymies underlying emotion metaphor themes, which I have modified with additions of my own and links to *Metalude*. (See Table 4)

However, in some of the metaphor themes we have discussed cultural and social influences are apparent. POWER IS HIGH and, doubtfully, RACE IS COLOUR may have a metonymic experiential basis, which has been developed ideologically. But in other cases, there has been a clear shift in theory, so that at least in the West, DISEASE IS IMBALANCE (associated with medieval humoral theory) has been replaced by DISEASE IS INVASION as the dominant mode of thinking in medical circles, only lately being challenged. In fact it was Geeraerts and Grondelaars' (1995) discussion of the medieval humoral theories of health as balance of the four elements which began this debate.

I have investigated, recently, how a particular nexus of ideological metaphor themes were either produced or nurtured in the historical context of early capitalism /Protestantism. These themes can be traced through the philosophers Hobbes, Smith, Hume, Malthus, and Darwin

and relate to the resurgence of neo-Darwinism. The ideological position has two strands: the first starts with the idea that humans are basically aggressive, competitive and selfish, only altruistic to their family. Add to this the scarcity of resources, and humans, like animals, are involved in a competition for survival of themselves and their progeny, which, unless checked, results in violence and war. A second strand, encouraged by Newtonian mathematics, begins with the idea that quality can be expressed as quantity, and, more particularly, that well-being, relationships, time, indeed virtue itself, can be expressed or recognised in terms of money or material possessions.

In the rest of this paper I shall concentrate on (1) exploring the metaphorical moves by which activity is conceived as competition and conflict, and (2) the metaphorical reduction of quality to quantity.

### 3.1. *Competition and conflict*

Many important metaphor themes in *Metalude* associate activity in general with competition and conflict.

1. COMPETITION IS RACE
2. **ACTIVITY IS FIGHTING, SEX IS VIOLENCE, DISEASE IS INVASION**
3. **ARGUMENT IS WAR—FIGHTING or ATTACKING, or HITTING / PUNCHING or SHOOTING or WOUNDING / CUTTING**
4. ACTIVITY IS GAME—BALL GAME, CARD GAME, BOARD GAME, GAMBLING GAME

I cannot illustrate all these, but concentrate on the first two groups, (SEX IS VIOLENCE and DISEASE IS INVASION have already been explored).

#### 1. Competition is race

One of the most important clusters of conceptual metaphors or metaphor themes in the English language is ACTIVITY or PROCESS

IS MOVEMENT FORWARDS. This ramifies into other equations such as DEVELOPING / SUCCEEDING IS MOVING FORWARD, INTENSE ACTIVITY IS SPEED, SUCCESS / EASE IS SPEED, and ACTIVITY / COMPETITION IS RACE.

Basically, a process or activity, whether it involves movement or not, is conceptualised as motion. **Move** then means 'happen' and a **move** 'an action taken to achieve something', **in motion** 'happening or taking place'. Particularly activity/process is seen as going forwards as in **go on/forward** or **proceed**.

With a slight modification this metaphor merges into DEVELOPING/SUCCEEDING IS MOVING FORWARD. An 'improvement or successful development' is an **advance, progress** or a **leap**; if you 'succeed or improve' you **go places, go far/a long way, or forge ahead**.

The intensity or rate at which an activity or process takes place is then associated with **speed/pace: quick, fast, rapid, swift, brisk** are such familiar metaphors that they are quite difficult to recognise as such; **rush** and **hurry** not only mean to move fast but 'do something/ act quickly' (*he rushed his homework in order to watch the World Cup match*).

These speed metaphors often double up as metaphors for success. In our society, obsessed with time and efficiency, to complete something quickly also implies completing it successfully.

Moreover, in our late capitalist society, it is ideologically significant that these metaphors for activity and success should have developed into the highly elaborated metaphor theme of a competitive race.

**Race** can mean 'competition for power or control' (*Maud and Andrew are involved in a race for promotion*), the **rat race** 'ruthless competition for success'. Before the (horse) race or competitive activity starts you will know who is taking part – **the field**, who is **in the running**, and **the favourite** or the **outsider** 'contestant considered likely/unlikely to win'. 'At the beginning of the race/activity' or **from the word go**, someone may **jump the gun** 'do something too soon' or be a **non-starter** 'person or idea that has no chance of success', or be **quick/slow off the mark** 'be quick/slow to act or to react to an

event', while others have a **head start** 'advantage in an activity or competition' (*good education gives your child a head start in life*). When the race/competition starts you **jockey for position** 'try to get into a more powerful or advantageous situation' such as the **inside track**.

During the race or activity you may find it difficult to **stand the pace** 'be able to cope with all the demanding activity', and be tempted to stop for a **breather** or **breathing space** 'period of rest or change' before getting your **second wind** 'extra energy in completing a difficult task'.

Equality of speed will be a metaphor for competitive equality, so if you **keep up with** people you 'do work as well as other people', but if you **get behind** you may still be able to **catch up with** 'reach the same standard or level as' someone else (*he's much better than me at maths, I doubt whether I can catch up with him*).

Leading in a race will indicate interim success: you may be **streets ahead** 'much better or more advanced in a field of activity', **make the running** 'be more active than others', **set the pace** or **be the pacemaker/frontrunner** 'the most successful in a particular field or activity', and **streak ahead, pull ahead, get ahead** or **outdistance** 'be more successful than others' (*Airbus outdistanced Boeing in sales in 1999*). Getting behind in the race will indicate interim failure: you may **trail**, be **behind**, or **lag behind** 'be less successful than'.

Winning the race is the ultimate success—as the slogan says "It's all about winning". This may be uncertain until the final moment, so it's down to the wire, and you may overtake the leader at the last minute – pip at the post 'beat by a small margin'. Your list of successes and failures will be your track record.

## 2. Activity is fighting

The second major metaphor theme stressing the competitive nature of activity is

ACTIVITY IS FIGHTING. Many verbs for types of fighting can be applied to other activities: fight 'work hard to achieve', battle, wrestle, struggle, grapple with 'attempt to achieve something in a difficult

situation' (*I've been wrestling/struggling with this maths problem for hours*). As for nouns we have: fray, blitz/ assault 'great effort to do something' (*schools are having a blitz on raising AIDS awareness*). Battles can be a series: a campaign or crusade 'long, determined attempt to achieve what one believes in'. To fight these battles you may need a weapon, arsenal 'means of achieving something' or firepower 'ability to act energetically and successfully'.

A **front** will be 'a particular area of activity' (*she's very creative on the design front*), and leaders are in the **vanguard** or the **front-line** (*the minister is in the front line of the drugs awareness campaign*). Activities are the beginning of an attack: **come to grips with / square up to** 'confront and deal with effectively and with determination' (*I've finally come to grips with quadratic equations*), **take up the cudgels for** 'support someone strongly' (*the unions took up the cudgels for the retrenched staff*). Activity can also be seen as striking: **have/make a stab at** 'make an attempt at' (which if you do 'completely and without limitation' you do **to the hilt**), **strike a blow for** 'do something to support a cause or principle' (*he struck a blow for the cause of handicapped children*). To give up, fail in or cease an activity is to **fight a losing battle** 'try to do an impossible task' (*they were fighting a losing battle trying to save my father from cancer*), be **on the ropes** 'doing badly and likely to fail' in which case you might as well **give in/admit defeat**, or, in boxing terms **throw in the towel/sponge**.

### 3.2. Competition and conflict in philosophers

These metaphor themes reinforce the emphasis on competition and conflict that was recognised, if not celebrated, as a defining feature of economic and biological life in Hobbes, Hume, Smith, Malthus and Darwin.

#### Hobbes

Hobbes is probably most famous for his claim that in its natural state society is at war:



... so that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First competition; secondly diffidence; thirdly, glory... during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war where ... every man is enemy to every man; [in] continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short"(Hobbes, 1997, p.70).

Because our natural passions "carry us to partiality, pride, revenge and the like" each family and nation is naturally competes or fights against its neighbours, and the winners in the struggle are celebrated (Hobbes, 1997, p.93).

Remember that Hobbes witnessed the civil war in England, and the wars, financed by the wealth of early capitalism, which ravaged Europe for three quarters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Tawney, 1938, pp. 86-87).

## Hume

Humans' natural competitiveness and the need for government to restrain it through justice is a theme taken up by Hume. "Anger and hatred are passions inherent in our very frame and constitution. The want of them, on some occasions, may even be proof of weakness and imbecility"(Hume, 1969, p. 655). Humans, being naturally selfish, are inevitably in conflict with each other, "as the self-love of one person is naturally contrary to that of another" (Hume, 1969, p. 581).

Like Hobbes, Hume saw a foreign threat as the origin of the civil society of sovereign nation states (Hume, 1969, p. 591). Increasing wealth leads to war and fighting which in turn leads to government by monarchies. These are established and legitimised through violence. "'Twas by the sword, therefore, that every emperor acquired, as well as defended, his right; and we must ... allow, that the right of the stronger, in public affairs, is to be received as legitimate, and authorized by

morality, when not opposed by any other title" (Hume, 1969, p. 610). This is the ideology of might is right/good, or, foreshadowing Darwin, the survival of the fittest. In terms of metaphor themes the equation GOOD = POWER, is derived from GOOD IS HIGH and POWER IS HIGH.

### Adam Smith

Smith argues that the sovereign's standing army becomes necessary even in peace time to protect the government from the internal dissent caused by civilised debate, so that military spending increases in step with civilisation (Smith, 1991, p. 470). For Smith wealth, military expenditure and civilisation/empire go hand in hand:

In modern war the great expense of fire-arms gives an evident advantage to the nation which can best afford that expense; and consequently to an opulent and civilised, over a poor and barbarous nation ... The poor and barbarous find it difficult to defend themselves against the opulent and civilised. The invention of fire-arms, an invention which at first sight appears to be so pernicious, is certainly favourable to the permanency and to the extension of civilisation (Smith, 1991, p. 471).

This telling passage gives respectability to the idea that ACTIVITY IS FIGHTING, like Hume, exploits the equation, military POWER = GOOD, but it also anticipates discussion below of QUALITY IS WEALTH.

For Smith competitive drives should be harnessed for economic development, driven by supply and demand. When the demand exceeds supply "a competition will immediately begin among them ... according either as the greatness of the deficiency, or the wealth and wanton luxury of the competitors, happen to animate more or less the eagerness of the competition" (Smith, 1991, pp. 59-60). Anything which

interferes with competition is pernicious, e.g. wage regulation, monopolies and export subsidies (Smith, 1991, p. 383).

### Malthus

Malthus shifted the focus of competition to the biological. Competition for resources will naturally lead to hostility, violence and predation:

They [plants and animals] are all impelled by a powerful instinct to the increase of their species; ... and the superabundant effects are repressed afterwards by want of room and nourishment, which is common to plants and animals; and among animals, by their becoming prey of each other (Malthus, 1992, p. 14).

So the most important preventive check on population growth is starvation and war, though in civilised societies this can be prevented by female sexual abstinence (Malthus, 1992, p. 43).

### Darwin

Charles Darwin borrowed from Malthus, depicting life as an inevitable struggle for survival, due to pressures on food supply. "... the struggle for Existence amongst all organic beings throughout the world, which inevitably follows from the high geometrical ratio of their increase.... This is the doctrine of Malthus, applied to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms" (Darwin, 1991, p. 3).

Darwin tends to emphasise competition among species, rather than interdependence. He claims to use the term "struggle for existence" in a metaphorical sense (Darwin, 1991, pp. 47-48), but he develops military metaphors [my boldings] throughout *The Origin of Species*.

**Battle** within **battle** must continually be recurring with varying success.

What a **struggle** must have gone on during long centuries between the several kinds of trees, each annually scattering its seeds by the thousand; what **war** between insect and insect—between insects, snails and other animals with birds and beasts of prey! (Darwin, 1991, p. 55)

We forget that each species ... is constantly suffering enormous destruction at some period of its life, from **enemies** or from competitors for the same place and food (Darwin, 1991, p. 51).

Those with the competitive advantage will win the battle and drive the inferior to extinction.

... each new variety and ultimately each new species, is produced and maintained by having some advantage over those with which it comes into competition; and the consequent extinction of the less-favoured forms almost inevitably follows (Darwin, 1991, p. 281).

An important ideological feature of the theory is that competition determines structural traits (Darwin, 1991, p. 57). If we accept that our fundamental traits are determined by success in the war of competition for survival, and that the best win the war, the logical conclusion is that the best are the most warlike, as in Hume and Smith POWER / ACHIEVEMENT / SUCCESS = GOOD. Moreover, competition being a positive force for development, the more dense the population, and the more intense the competition, the better suited the winners for imperial domination (Darwin, 1991, pp. 157-158).

We have now explored the first strand to do with competition and conflict, in relation to the themes ACTIVITY/COMPETITION IS RACE and ACTIVITY IS FIGHTING. The second metaphorical line depends on reducing qualities to quantities.

### 3.3. Quality as quantity

Pythagoras was the first to begin to equate quality with quantity, when he discovered with a vibrating string that the pitch of a note (quality) was related to the length (quantity). This equation is apparent in a number of English metaphor themes. 'The general characteristics of a situation' is **the long and the short of it**, a situation with a surprising quality is **nothing short of, calibre**, literally 'the width of a gun's barrel' means 'quality or standard of ability', **dimension** means 'aspect or quality' (*the harpsichord adds a whole new dimension to the music*). If you 'make a judgement about the quality of something' you **measure**, or **gauge** it or **size it up** (*he sized up the situation and decided he had better quit his job*). If you 'find out or know someone's character' you **take/have the measure** of them and if satisfactory they **measure up**. To 'find out the quality of an idea' you **try it on for size**. These metaphors are a symptom of our modern mathematical culture, which is obsessed with the need for measurement. The whole basis of logical quantification depends on the notion of linear scales. If these are in fact metaphors, then mathematics and logic do not represent some transcendental reality but are themselves metaphorically determined (Chilton, 1996, p. 56).

#### 3.3.1. Quantifying time

The early capitalist period increasingly conceptualised time in terms of quantity rather than quality. The qualitative differences of natural time, such as the seasons or day and night, and of calendar time, such as saints days and working days, were more and more replaced by homogenous clock time. Clocks were set up in the middle of towns to indicate to workers when to begin and end work, for example in the textile industry where work had to be synchronised with heating of dyeing vats.

To conceive time as continuous, homogenous and measurable, in short, linear, it helps to recruit the metaphors of PERIOD IS LENGTH / DISTANCE. Many extremely common figurative expressions refer to

time in terms of distances or lengths: **time scale**, **time span**, or **stretch** (*after an 18-month stretch in the navy he gave up*). **Long** and **short** are well-known universal metaphors for duration. If time is a space through which we travel than it can be seen as a path so that **in the course of/along the way/throughout** mean 'during a time or event'. The **end** literally 'the extreme position or part of an object or space' means 'the last part of a period of time'.

Even as early as 1700, as the tempo of work in English factories became incessant, unrelenting and exacting, employers started using time sheets and work schedules (Rifkin, 1987, p. 107). Time is now metaphorically divided up into spaces that are to be filled. **Space** is 'time to do something' (*I need some space to consider my future*) and **place** is the 'stage or time at which to do something' (*this is not the place for a lengthy discussion*). This time may be **vacant**, **unoccupied** 'free, with nothing to do' or **empty** 'without purpose or meaning' rather than **full** 'busy, extremely active and satisfying'. You may wish to **pack** or **squeeze in** activities 'force into a limited period of time'. According to the Protestant work ethic **empty** has to be pejorative.

The idea of time as a space to fill entails the notion of a **time limit**, 'a period during which something must be completed'. Successful adherence to the schedule means finishing **inside** or **within** these limits 'in less than period of' (*you must complete this project within three weeks*). These metaphors reinforce the notion of deadlines.

A slightly different metaphorical slant on schedules and synchronicity combines TIME IS MOVEMENT with ACTIVITY/PROCESS IS MOVEMENT FORWARDS. Then one's activity has to stay level with the time available for performing a task, in a kind of **race against time** 'attempt to complete before time runs out'. You may be **ahead of** or **behind** schedule (*we're ahead of schedule in completing the building*), and need to **keep up with** or **catch up with** you work. Under this system, symbolised by the conveyor belt, "the worker became an automaton, no different from the machines he interacted with, his humanity left outside the factory gate" (Rifkin, 1987, p. 130).

Remember Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*.

### 3.3.2. *Time is money/commodity*

Another way of measuring time is in terms of money, following Benjamin Franklin:

He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labours and goes abroad, or sits idle one half of that day, though he spend but six-pence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon that the only expense; he has really spent, or rather thrown away, five shillings besides (Quoted in Gleick, 1999, p. 239).

Metaphorically TIME IS MONEY / COMMODITY which you can **spend** or **invest**, be **economical** with 'use less time' or pay with as in **cost** 'cause to lose (a period of time)' (*shoplifting could cost you your future*). As a commodity you may **buy time** 'obtain or be allowed more time', if you can **afford** or **spare** the time you 'devote time to something when it is difficult for you' (*Could you spare the time to write me a reference*). Near the end of life you may **live on borrowed time** 'continue living beyond the time you were expected to die'. You can **save** time, **waste, squander** it 'use time badly', **use it up**, so that you **run out of** it 'have none left'. The depth of this conceptualising as a commodity can be seen in the difficulty of providing a meaning which does not itself use the same metaphor.

Different people's time may not be equal in value. In cultures of inequality we have pyramidal time where the lowest paid workers earn far less than the most highly paid (chief executives earn up to 140 times more than the workers in the same company in the US). We have long ago lost the ancient Greek idea that quantifiability means equality: arithmetic should be taught in democracies, for it teaches relations of equality; geometry alone should be reserved for oligarchies, as it demonstrates the proportions within inequality (Foucault, 1972, p. 219).

### 3.3.3. *Quality is money/wealth*

Equating it with time is simply one example of money's use as a means of quantification, a common measure and means of exchange. "In the market place, for practical reasons, the innumerable qualitative distinctions which are of vital importance for man and society are suppressed; they are not allowed to surface. Thus the reign of quantity celebrates its greatest triumphs in 'The Market'. Everything is equated with everything else. To equate things means to give them a price and make them exchangeable" (Schumacher, 1999, p. 30). These moves of capitalist ideology produce or reinforce the metaphor theme QUALITY IS MONEY/WEALTH.

Positive qualities are often metaphorised in terms of wealth and money. **Wealth** 'large amount of desirable things' (*he uses a wealth of effective teaching techniques*), **asset** 'useful or valuable quality' or **capital, sterling** 'admirable in quality' (*he made sterling efforts to walk again after his car accident*), **bonus** 'pleasant additional quality', **dividend** 'advantage'.

The degree of something's positive qualities then becomes its **value/worth** (*he is of great value to the school*). 'To have extremely important or positive qualities' is to be **priceless** or **precious**. If beneficial and advantageous they go up in value: **appreciate** are **profitable** 'beneficial, useful' (*arguments at this point are not likely to be profitable*) and one can, **profit from, make capital out of** 'get an advantage from' them. (*Thatcher made political capital out of the Falklands War*).

So positive experiences become payments. If you receive payment it is to your advantage: **pay** 'give a benefit or advantage' (**payoff**), **earn** 'get a benefit or positive result', **repay** 'be worthwhile' (*reading stories to your young child will repay the effort in their later education*). Experiences can be **rewarding**, something you **cannot afford to** miss.

Negative results of past behaviour is the **price, cost** is the 'effort or negative effect of doing or obtaining something' (*the price for the war in Iraq should have been Bush's rejection at the last election*); **at**



**any price, pay (the price) for, count the cost of, cost you dearly** (*Clinton's sexual misbehaviour cost him and his party dearly*).

Heidegger points out that the market 'subjects all beings to the trade of a calculation that dominates most tenaciously in those areas where there is no need of numbers' (Heidegger, 1971, pp. 114-115).

For instance Lakoff has explored how even morality is metaphorically a transaction (Lakoff, 1996, p. 30). The lexis in RELATIONSHIP/AFFECTION IS MONEY/WEALTH can be seen in terms of reciprocation: **indebted to**, 'grateful for help given', **debt**, 'appreciation, gratitude', **owe**, 'feel gratitude and the need to reciprocate', **repay**, 'do something good to somebody in return for past favours', or, more contractually **pay your dues**, 'do your duty'.

Or moral accounting might take the form of Retribution: **pay back**, 'take revenge on someone who has treated you badly', **settle accounts** 'take revenge by repaying an insult or harm'.

If one behaves well one builds up **credit**, honour, pride, reputation so that people **appreciate** 'feel gratitude for' you or your actions.

### 3.3.4. Relationship as money/wealth in economic philosophers

The basis for this equation of relationships with monetary transactions is probably metonymic. Reputation, according to our economic philosophers lies mainly in having good credit, in meeting one's promises or covenants in returning loans or in trading (Hume, 1969, p. 552).

Benjamin Franklin makes clear the metonymic economic basis for relationships in a commerce-driven society, where "credit" ceases to be a metaphor:

The most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are to be regarded. The sound of your hammer as five in the morning, or eight at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; ... It shows, besides that you are mindful of

what you owe; it makes you appear a careful as well as an honest man, and that still increases your credit. (Weber, 1992, pp. 49- 50).

Phrases like “the commerce of the sexes” are quite widespread, especially in Malthus (Malthus, 1992, p. 59). Sometimes we are not sure whether he is speaking metaphorically of sex, or literally of money: “The only mode, consistent with the laws of morality and religion, of giving to the poor the largest share of the property of the rich, without sinking the whole community in misery, is the exercise on the part of the poor of prudence in marriage, and of economy both before and after it” (Malthus, 1992, p. 120).

But the metaphor theme also had a religious basis, or could be applied to man’s relationship with God. Benjamin Franklin had a tabulated statistical book-keeping of his progress in the different virtues and Bunyan compares the relationship between a sinner and his God with that of a customer and shopkeeper (Weber, 1992, p. 124).

### 3.3.5. Human quality as wealth

As well as their relationships humans themselves can be equated or associated with wealth or money, as a more or less valuable substance or commodity. They may be a **product** ‘person created’ (*these children are the first products of the new school system*) which is **genuine** ‘sincere’ with a **trademark** ‘typical and identifying characteristic’, or may be a **fake** ‘impersonator, dishonest person’. They are valued like various kinds of metal: **brazen** ‘bold and unashamed’ (*it was a brazen attempt at bribery*), **tin god** ‘person considered more important than they really are’ (*Catholic priests in Ireland are often tin gods*), **golden-hearted** ‘generous, kind’, **refined** ‘extremely polite and cultured’. More positively still, people can be seen as a **treasure, jewel** or **gem** ‘kind, helpful or useful person’ (*my cleaning lady is a real treasure – she’ll do anything I need*) or **asset**, ‘person with a useful or valuable quality or skill for an organisation’, *he has been a great asset to the*

*department*). As commodities or products you can **sell** 'promote, praise', **oversell** 'praise excessively', and **undersell** them 'underestimate the value of yourself or others' (*don't undersell yourself by applying to a second-rate university*). Consequently you may be **past your sell-by-date** or **left on the shelf** 'unmarried, without a partner'. This means of evaluation by monetary value even seems to extend to the frequent **dear**, 'beloved'.

### 3.3.6. *Philosophers and human quality is wealth*

In terms of ideology this is one of the most important metaphor themes associated with our economic philosophers. This is because it sets itself up against traditional medieval Christian values of the sanctity of poverty by celebrating acquisitiveness as a sign of God's favour.

#### Hobbes

Hobbes is already well down this road, thinking of human value in terms of the monetary value determined by supply and demand which determines the price the buyer is willing to pay.

The value or the worth of a man, is as of all other things, his price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his power (Hobbes, 1997, p. 50).

Wealth is not only a worldly measure of human quality but also God's measure "Good fortune, if lasting, honourable; as a sign of the favour of God" (Hobbes, 1997, pp. 52- 53).

Hobbes sees anxiety about the future as a cause of religion, for example anxiety about the spiritual security of heaven after death, as well as the cause of the accumulation of wealth in this life. In fact, in an increasingly secular society the latter kind of material wealth might be thought to substitute for the former spiritual wealth.

## Smith

Echoing Hobbes, Smith has no difficulty in equating a man's worth with his wealth "We say of a rich man that he is worth a great deal, and of a poor man that he is worth very little money" (Smith, 1991, p. 326). Indeed Smith gives the whole 5<sup>th</sup> section of Book 2, the title: "Of our esteem of the rich and powerful" and remarks "nothing has a greater tendency to give us an esteem for any person, than his power and riches; or a contempt, than his poverty and meanness."

It seems to follow from this equation that increasing one's capital is a way of satisfying the instinct for improvement, and loss of riches, in particular bankruptcy, is shameful. "An augmentation of fortune is the means by which the greater part of men propose and wish to better their condition ... Bankruptcy is perhaps the greatest and most humiliating calamity which can befall an innocent man. The greater part of men, therefore, are sufficiently careful to avoid it. Some indeed do not avoid it; as some do not avoid the gallows" (Smith, 1991, p. 282).

For Smith's economic model it was vital that wealth be equated with virtue rather than vice, that the quantity of one's possessions should be an index of morality not evil. Avarice needs to be made innocuous in the eyes of society, in order for the market to operate effectively.<sup>10</sup>

## Malthus

Malthus relates riches and moral worth by proclaiming that the poor are morally worthless, or that poverty and vice correlate. As Tawney puts it, "A society which reverences the attainment of riches as the supreme felicity will naturally be disposed to regard the poor as damned in the next world, if only to justify itself for making their life a hell in this" (Tawney, 1938, p. 265). Beggars are morally repugnant, so that "Dependent poverty ought to be held disgraceful" (Malthus, 1992, p. 10). Having entirely negative value, the poor have no right to exist, and insisting on such a right is "an attempt to reverse the laws of nature". "If the society do not want his labour he has no claim of right to

the smallest portion of food, and, in fact, has no business to be where he is" (Malthus, 1992, pp. 248- 249). Moreover, the abandoned children of the poor are virtually worthless: "The infant is, comparatively speaking of no value to the society, as others will immediately supply its place" (Malthus, 1992, pp. 263- 264).

### Notes

1. Plenary talk at the conference on *Metaphor in Language and Thought*, Fluminense University, Niterói, Brazil, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005.
2. A fuller account of the relationship of metaphor to ideology, elaborating some of the ideas in this paper can be found in Goatly 2007, *Washing the Brain: metaphor and hidden ideology*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
3. The English version, <[www.ln.edu.hk/le/cwd/project01/web/home.html](http://www.ln.edu.hk/le/cwd/project01/web/home.html)>, and the English-Chinese version <[http://www.ln.edu.hk/le/cwd03/Inproject\\_chi/home.html](http://www.ln.edu.hk/le/cwd03/Inproject_chi/home.html)>).
4. Retrieved from [http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/World\\_Trade\\_Center.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/World_Trade_Center.html) -20th July 2003.
5. <http://www.rapecrisis.co.uk/statistics.htm> Rape Crisis Federation of England and Wales.
6. ibid
7. <http://www2.ucsc.edu/rape-prevention/statistics.html> UCSC Rape Prevention Education.
8. <http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~ad361896/anne/cease.html>.
9. <http://www.rapecrisis.co.uk/statistics.htm> Rape Crisis Federation of England and Wales, Kate Painter (1991).
10. Knud Haakonssen in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

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