2
Metaphor in Political Discourse

2.1 Metaphor and political thinking

2.1.1 Introduction – Gordon Brown's 'moral compass'

In this chapter I will develop the argument that in political contexts metaphor can be, and often is, used for ideological purposes because it activates unconscious emotional associations and thereby contributes to myth creation: politicians use metaphor to tell the right story. I explain my understanding of the term 'metaphor' and provide a number of illustrations of the everyday, conventional metaphors that are the bread and butter of political language. I hope to demonstrate how, rhetorically, metaphors contribute to mental representations of political issues, making alternative ways of understanding these issues more difficult and in so doing 'occupy' the mind. However, I will also explain how metaphors are contested by illustrating how the same type of metaphor may be used by a politician's critics to convey a completely different evaluation from the one that was originally intended. In doing this I hope to show – both in this chapter and the remainder of the book – how analysis of metaphors contributes to our knowledge of political rhetoric by enabling us to understand how world views are communicated persuasively in language.

In this section I will illustrate how metaphor becomes persuasive through establishing moral credibility (ethos). When announcing his successful candidacy for leadership of the Labour Party in May 2007 at a critical point near the beginning of the speech leading up to the announcement, Gordon Brown used the expression 'moral compass':

> For me, my parents were – and their inspiration still is – *my moral compass*. The *compass* which has guided me through each stage of my

life. They taught me the importance of integrity and decency, treating people fairly, and duty to others. And now the sheer joy of being a father myself – seeing young children develop, grow and flourish – like for all parents, has changed my life. Alongside millions juggling the pressures of work, I struggle too to be what I want to be – a good parent.

The moral compass metaphor makes an appeal based on ethos as he describes himself as struggling to pass on a legacy of good parenting that he has inherited from his parents. By referring to 'like for all parents', he is broadening the metaphor frame to imply that he is a benevolent and typical 'parent' of Britain; he is activating a highly pervasive conceptual metaphor in politics: THE NATION IS A FAMILY. Ideas of the national family (as in 'motherland' and 'fatherland') are persuasive because the family symbolises a source of security, and the desire to protect the family is at the basis of moral systems and therefore contributes to the impression that a politician has the right intentions. The metaphor fitted with a political image based on high morals that had gained credence as he was already well known to the British public – having been Chancellor of the Exchequer for a number of years. Lakoff sees 'family' metaphors as central in political discourse and argues that different projections of the metaphor distinguish between left- and right-wing world views:

> I believe that the Nation As Family metaphor is what links conservative and liberal worldviews to the family-based moralities we have been discussing. I believe that this metaphor projects the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent moral systems onto politics to form the conservative and liberal political worldviews. (Lakoff 2002: 154)

When referring to 'his moral compass' Brown may have been drawing on THE NATION IS A FAMILY metaphor, although it was not entirely clear what type of parent he considered himself as he goes on to say: 'These are for me the best of British values: responsibilities required in return for rights; fairness not just for some but all who earn it.' The idea of 'earning' fairness is a point of view associated with a 'strict father' as it implies a frame of 'moral accounting'; this is the idea that moral issues are discussed as if they were financial ones, as in expressions such as 'incurring a moral debt', the 'cost' of war, or 'paying the price' for a belief. Brown was successful in his bid for leadership of the party but it may be that his rhetoric contributed to an uncertainty as to whether

he would be a 'strict father' or 'nurturant parent'; this uncertainty may have contributed to his lack of success in the General Election.

The 'moral compass' metaphor was taken up extensively by Brown's critics; for example, it occurred over 200 times in the Conservative newspaper *The Daily Mail*, to question whether or not he did have the right intentions. These counter-representations portray Brown as a hypocrite, for example: 'He always kept his head down when the going got rough for Blair but we knew all along he was in there, plotting his next career move with the aid of his "moral compass".'[1] Other right-wing newspapers also used the metaphor for negative counter-representation, for example *The Sunday Times* wrote: 'Brown's moral compass seems to have lost its bearings; instead of pointing true north, it now seems to be jittering in the direction of ravening ambition.'[2] An aspect of the source domain – here the instability of a compass – were exploited to argue that Brown's moral values were also likely to change. Mio (1997) provides evidence that metaphors extending an opponent's metaphor are more effective than those that introduce a new source domain. Analysing the source domain of a metaphor is therefore a way of exploiting it persuasively in political discourse.

Linguists describe the interacting effect between some words and their associated senses as semantic prosody (Louw 1993). These do not always fit with our expectations; for example, while we may expect words associated with the family to be positive, we might be surprised to find that words associated with 'conflict' also have a positive association in the British press – such senses do not usually appear under the definition of 'conflict' in a dictionary. In an analysis of press sports reporting I discovered that they were ubiquitous and invariably associated with attributes that appealed to positive emotions such as strength, courage and determination in notions such as a 'relegation battle' or to 'surrender' (Charteris-Black 2004). By this association such metaphors have ideological potential because they evoke ideas based on having the right intentions because protecting the nation from invasion is morally justified. In British culture it seems that conflict metaphors activate mental representations of the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk in 1940 that was associated with national survival and these associations are then exploited in sports reporting. The

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[1] 'Is Gordon any Better than Tony?', *Daily Mail*, 11 September 2006.
[2] 'Gordon Brown Betrays us all to Deliver his Diana Moment', Minette Marrin, 14 February 2010.

ideological potential of metaphor works by accessing powerful underlying cultural evaluations that originate in personal, social and national struggle.

2.1.2   What is metaphor?

What, given its ideological and myth-forming effect, is a metaphor? Aristotle (in *Poetics* [Ross 1952]: 1457b) defined metaphor as 'giving the thing a name that belongs to something else'. The etymological origin of the word 'metaphor' is from the Greek *metapherein* 'to transfer'; clearly, the central notion of metaphor is one in which meanings are transferred, the question is what they are transferred from and to – given that word senses are not stable over time. I will define a metaphor as a word or phrase that is used with a sense that differs from another more common or more basic sense that this word or phrase has. The sense that a word commonly has is its literal meaning; when analysing the conceptual basis of metaphor, we use the term 'source domain' to refer to this common-sense, literal meaning. The metaphoric sense differs from the common or basic sense and is known as the 'target domain' of the metaphor. So a metaphor is a shift in the use of a word or phrase by giving it a new sense. If the innovative sense is taken up, it will eventually change the meaning of a word that is used metaphorically. It is the shift in meaning that enables metaphors to evoke emotional responses and we should recall that 'motion' and 'emotion' have the same etymological source and so we may think of metaphors as bearers of affective meaning.

Metaphors arise from how language is used: *any* word can be a metaphor if the way that it is used makes it so. So metaphors come into being when there is a *change* in how a word is *used*: this is why metaphor is a feature of language use or 'discourse'. We understand the 'common' sense of a word as it appears in a dictionary, and so when it is not being used in this way we know that it is a metaphor. So, crucially, metaphor arises from our *expectations* about meaning that are based on our knowledge of how words have previously been used. So a pure metaphor is a word or phrase that undergoes a change of use from a common or basic sense to another sense that is contrary to the common use. Metaphor therefore arises *only* from discourse knowledge (or knowledge of language in use).

Expectations of the common senses of words vary between individuals according to their differing experiences of language and what for one speaker is novel may be familiar for another because experience of language is unique and personal. However expectations may be socially

influenced. A hearer may not initially experience a word as a metaphor, because he or she does not recognise the sense as differing in any way from the common, basic use, however, on knowing more about the earlier sense(s) of a word, the hearer may accept it as a metaphor when used in a new discourse context. Not to have this broader interpretation would otherwise exclude many political metaphors because – especially with rapid recycling in the media – they are often of this conventional type: we do not immediately recognise them as metaphors in the way that we might when encountering the same words in a poem.

For example, when a British politician refers to achievements on the way to an objective as 'milestones' a hearer who knows the literal meaning of 'a milestone' may consider this a metaphor, whereas someone who only ever comes across the word in political contexts may not consider it a metaphor because this hearer does not know the basic sense of 'milestone' – it is simply the conventional way of talking about political 'progress'. This is why people vary in how many instances of metaphor they find a particular text: this should not surprise us, nor should it be a problem. At any one instance in time a word may be *more* or *less* metaphoric for an individual speaker because judgements of what is normal, or conventional, depend on language users' unique experiences of discourse. Fortunately, much current metaphor research relies on multiple instances of language use stored on computers: these corpora as they are known give us the context necessary for disambiguation – allowing us to see how people use words as metaphors by giving them new senses. Not all individuals – because of their different experience of language – will agree on which words are metaphors, however they will hopefully be tolerant of what are metaphors for others. Waves of novel metaphors exist in an ocean of conventional metaphors. Metaphors change how we understand and think about politics by influencing our feelings and thoughts and the question I would like to answer in the next section is how do they do this?

2.1.3   The purpose of metaphor – conventional metaphor

In political rhetoric the primary purpose of metaphors is to frame how we view or understand political issues by eliminating alternative points of view. Politicians use metaphors for negative representations of states of affairs that are construed as problematic and positive representations of future scenarios that are construed as solutions to problems; they also use them for negative and positive representations of outgroups (i.e. opponents) and of in-groups (i.e. supporters) respectively.

So they combine the rhetoric of right thinking with sounding right and having the right intentions. Chilton (2004) summarises the legitimising purpose of political discourse as follows:

> . . . political discourse involves, among other things, the promotion of representations, and a pervasive feature of representation is the evident need for political speakers to imbue their utterances with evidence, authority and truth, a process that we shall refer to in broad terms, in the context of political discourse, as 'legitimisation'. Political speakers have to guard against the operation of their audience's 'cheater detectors' and provide guarantees for the truth of their sayings. (Chilton 2004: 23)

An important purpose of much metaphor use in political rhetoric is to establish the speaker as a legitimate source of authority by 'sounding right', and part of this in the democratic tradition is to attack political opponents and their ideas, not with weapons but with words – as Chilton explains:

> Delegitimisation can manifest itself in acts of negative other-presentation, acts of blaming, scape-goating, marginalising, excluding attacking the moral character of some individual or group, attacking the communicative cooperation of the other, attacking the rationality and sanity of the other. The extreme is to deny the humanness of the other. (Chilton 2004: 47)

I identified these delegitimising strategies in Chapter 1 where Margaret Thatcher framed political opponents as the enemy by using metaphors from the source domain of war. Many political issues are complicated and abstract – about which the majority of people have only a partial understanding (and often for example in the case of financial matters, none at all), so it is valuable to political audiences when abstract issues are explained by image-based metaphors that make them more intelligible by representing them as visual and tangible. Over time it is often such cognitively accessible metaphors that become conventionalised. As Mio (1997: 130) explains that: 'Because of information-processing demands, people cannot pay attention to all aspects of political evidence. Therefore, something is needed to simplify decision making, and metaphor and other shortcut devices (e.g. cognitive heuristics) address this need', so a metaphor like 'the winds of change' is more accessible

than a concept such as 'decolonization'. Metaphor therefore provides the mental means of accessing a concept by for example referring to something that is abstract such as 'immovability', 'justice' or 'victory' using a word or phrase that in other contexts refers to something material such as 'path' or 'road' or 'iron'. Part of right thinking is then to simplify abstract issues by activating pre-existing knowledge so as to comprehend them.

The metaphors most commonly used by politicians lie between new and familiar uses of language; politicians are not poets and so their language is characterised by *conventional* metaphors such as 'the path of justice' or 'the road to victory'. In a study I undertook comparing the use of metaphor by male and female politicians I interpreted the greater use of conventional metaphors by male politicians as arising from their longer experience of political discourse (Charteris-Black 2009b) – metaphors contribute to sounding right. Though occasionally they may speak of 'an iron curtain descending across Europe' (Churchill), 'the winds of change' (Macmillan) or 'a river of blood' (Powell), and these expressions were originally creative, they gradually became conventionalised to become the quickest way of referring respectively to the Cold War, decolonisation and immigration anxieties. But this will happen to varying degrees: compare 'the Iron Curtain' with the 'Iron Lady' – the first became highly conventional quite rapidly whereas the second retained its status as an innovative metaphor much longer, perhaps because of the greater unlikelihood of a woman made of metal as compared with curtains made of metal.

The sorts of words that are used metaphorically are influenced by the values placed on what these words refer to when used literally in different cultures. For example, some cultures place a negative value on physical conflict and so avoid metaphoric uses of 'fight' and 'battle' in leisure and entertainment contexts such as sport. In Asia the expression 'Bamboo Curtain' was used in place of 'Iron Curtain' to refer to the boundary between Communist China and its non-Communist neighbours because bamboo is more part of everyday experience than iron. Words readily become used as conventional metaphors when they transfer a set of readily available cultural knowledge associations.

To be persuaded, the audience should initially be aware of some mild difference between an original or common sense of a word or phrase, and a novel sense: otherwise classification as a 'metaphor' would be a purely academic exercise only possible for linguists who knew earlier senses of a word. However, over time, repeated use erodes the status of a word or phrase as a metaphor, so, for example, once the 'Iron

Curtain had descended across Europe' it became the *only* way of talking about Soviet–Western relations. When metaphors displace other ways of talking about the same thing, language has acted upon the world by colonising rival ways of thinking about it, and in doing so frames our understanding of the political world.

My thinking about metaphor owes a huge debt to extensive work of others, some of which I will mention at this point. Conceptual metaphor theory owes its birth to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and the field of research continues to take its inspiration from Lakoff (1991, 1993, 2002). More recent work such as Ahrens (2009), Musolff and Zinken (2009) and Semino (2008) all provide overviews of various aspects of metaphor in political discourse. Beer and de Landtsheer (2004) offer a valuable collection of empirical studies into metaphor and politics in diverse national settings. Other earlier research that formed a platform for this more recent work includes Cameron and Low (1999), Charteris-Black (2004, 2006, 2007, 2009a, b), Chilton (1996, 2004), Chilton and Ilyin (1993), Chilton and Schaffner (2002), Howe (1988), Jansen and Sabo (1994), Koller (2004), Musolff (2004, 2006), Semino and Masci (1996), Straehle et al. (1999), Thornborrow (1993) and Voss et al. (1992). All the research has contributed to a burgeoning and rich tradition of research into various aspects of metaphor and political discourse.

2.2 Metaphor in political persuasion

2.2.1 Right thinking

Metaphor is an effective means for politicians to develop persuasive arguments by applying what is familiar, and already experienced, to new topics to demonstrate that they are thinking rationally about political issues. For example, both Margaret Thatcher, and the current Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, have used metaphors based on ordinary household budgeting to argue about how to manage a nation's economy – for example the need not to spend more than one earns. People understand more about their personal finances than they do about national finances. Thatcher often used a metaphor based on this understanding:

> Protecting the taxpayer's purse, protecting the public services – these are our two great tasks, and their demands have to be reconciled. How very pleasant it would be, how very popular it would be, to say 'spend more on this, expand more on that'. We all have our favourite

causes – I know I do. But someone has to add up the figures. Every business has to do it, every housewife has to do it, every Government should do it, and this one will. (14 October 1983)

Here public expenditure is discussed in terms of the family budget: the principles of a housewife managing a household budget are used to argue by analogy a case for how the government should manage the national budget. It implied that a nation should avoid living beyond its means just as a family should 'cut its coat according to its cloth'. Personal debt arising from domestic expenditure was likened to the national debt caused by government overspending. The reactivation of the historical sense of economics as 'household management'[3] creates a metaphor concept based on personification by which abstract financial decisions of government are described as if they were the more familiar financial decisions made by families. The metaphor extends the knowledge that the audience already has to new situations that are more complex and leads them to make inferences on the basis of this extended meaning – even though in reality personal and national finances work in rather different ways.

   In political argumentation metaphors frequently become dialogical as they are employed by different political interests for their own purposes. It is part of right thinking that metaphor scenarios are employed to frame arguments in a way that is favourable to the case being proposed by the speaker; they do this through a process of foregrounding and revealing some aspects of a political issue and at the same time concealing other aspects by putting them into the background. I will illustrate this by examining a few well-known metaphors that have been used in relation to British foreign policy since the Second World War, one of which I have already mentioned. When Churchill spoke of 'an Iron Curtain descending across Europe' this brought to the fore the idea that Europe would be divided by a solid barrier that would not be easily moved, it predicted and contributed to reality, but it concealed any human agency for the descent of the Curtain: as if it were wound down by an invisible hand in a theatre. The idea of irreversibility and permanence would have been different had a term such as 'silk curtain' been used.

   Similarly, when Harold Macmillan spoke of a 'wind of change blowing through this continent' it again concealed agency and represented

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[3] 'Economics' originates from the Greek *oikonomikos*, 'household management'.

change as if it were inevitable because of the limits of control we have over natural processes: we may harvest the wind, or find the answer in it, but we cannot stop it blowing. It concealed the fact that the Conservative government of the time was not prepared to fight to retain what remained of the British Empire and this was a way of facilitating decolonisation by representing it as beyond the control of politicians. Most would agree that it fitted with new political realities but it did so rhetorically in a way that would escape blame falling on the government of the day!

Metaphors provide the ammunition for debate – since nowhere is Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR more appropriate than in political debates. Once a particular metaphor scenario has entered political discourse it becomes difficult to displace and demonstrates its rhetorical success; as Semino (2008: 117) puts it: 'once a particular metaphor occupies a prominent position in the public domain, it can be alluded to and exploited in different ways by different participants in political debates'. Typically, skilled debaters will not reject a particular metaphor outright but will draw on different aspects of the source domain to extend the metaphor to generate a different inference from the one intended by the person who first used it, as we saw when the press media picked up on and exploited Gordon Brown's use of the 'moral compass' metaphor.

Musolff (2006) employs the term 'metaphor scenario' to refer to the explanatory but also potentially argumentative role for metaphor that combines what I refer to as 'right thinking' and 'telling the right story'. A scenario provides details of the scenes and plot and therefore turns a series of political events such as the negotiations between European states over EU membership into a narrative about marriage and relationships that is accessible – because – like a televised soap opera – it involves love and sex. In the classic scenario countries joining the EU are described as 'getting engaged', 'marrying', 'flirting' and 'getting into bed' with each other. However, our knowledge of the problematic nature of human relationships also has the potential to be used in political debates to construe other representations so they might also 'fall out of love with', or 'divorce' each other. Another European example was the discussion of European monetary union as 'a train' in which all the cars of the train – representing the economies of each of the separate nations – needed to travel at the same speed (Semino 2008: 94) which argued for convergence and against late arrivals joining the euro.

Metaphor can be used to legitimise and to delegitimise political actors; for example, Sandikcioglu (2000) contrasts positive self-representations

of the West as the centre of Civilisation, Power, Maturity, Rationality and Stability with negative frames of Other representation: Barbarism Weakness, Immaturity, Irrationality and Instability. Such contrasting evaluations were also found in press reporting of political ideas, as Musolff (2003) identifies how even the same metaphor of 'a two-speed Europe' can be positively evaluated by the German press while negatively evaluated in the British press. Similarly, Tony Blair was mocked in the House of Commons for having reversed an earlier decision on whether to have a referendum over the proposed EU constitution; this is because he claimed in his September 2003 Conference speech to 'have no reverse gear',[4] and his positive self-representation was explicitly challenged. In this way metaphors may be turned against their authors and a rhetorical strategy that was intended to legitimise may be used to undermine this. Skill in debate depends on speed and versatility in extending a particular metaphor to the speaker's own goals.

2.2.2   Myth making: telling the right story

In this section, I will illustrate how one of the main rhetorical purposes of metaphor is to contribute to developing political myths that I have referred to as telling the right story. One of the major advantages of metaphor is that, because it is not too specific or precise, it is open to multiple interpretations and like many persuasive mental representations, allows hearers to bring their own meanings to a text. I would like to illustrate this first with reference to the central and all-pervasive myth of American politics: 'the American Dream' and then with reference to what I suggest is an equivalent 'British Dream' proposed by Margaret Thatcher (although this metaphor is never actually used and is only implied). I will first briefly illustrate the 'American Dream' metaphor:

> I came to this hallowed chamber two years ago on a mission: *To restore the American dream* for all our people and to make sure that we move into the 21st century still the strongest force for freedom and democracy in the entire world. (Bill Clinton, 24 January 1995)

> This is our time – to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids; to restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace; *to reclaim the American dream* and reaffirm that fundamental truth – that out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope,

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[4] Semino (2008: 81ff.) provides an analysis of this metaphor and I discuss it further in section 2.3.

and where we are met with cynicism and doubt, and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: yes, we can. (Barack Obama, 15 June 2008)

Like all myths, the American Dream serves as a narrative that spans geographical space and historical time and is therefore expressed with a high level of certainty. The narrative activates a set of positive associations and may broadly be paraphrased as 'hopes for a future that is better than the present'; but the nature of these hopes varies according to the individual and the groups with whom he or she identifies. The metaphoric use of 'dream' therefore creates a very flexible myth of an imagined ideal future that accommodates to personal desires. The narrative is based on aspirations for the future that are based on a golden age of the past – notice the use of 'restore' and 'reclaim' in the extracts above. Most versions of this myth are historically rooted in the notion of an ideal community based on religious values that have been lost. The myth originates in the historical memory of many present-day Americans that they came to North America to build a better life that was free from the persecution, poverty or famine that they had experienced elsewhere. However, it does not have ubiquitous appeal since there are those whose lives are very far from what they had hoped for and others, such as first nation ('native') Americans, who never felt part of the narrative in the first place – since their dream time pre-dated the arrival of the white man.

But the flexibility of the 'dream' metaphor enables it to be used to refer either to personal hopes – since real dreams are only experienced individually – or, more metaphorically, to social hopes, as when people unite to understand and realise a shared social purpose. Although the narrative appears simple, drawing on bodily experience of sleep, it is its very flexibility (since really we can dream or imagine anything we want) that allows it to be ideologically exploited in political debate. There is no single 'right story' and an attractive myth is one that can tell many different stories. It is this versatility that activates what has been described as a logico-rhetorical module (Sperber 2001). The interpretation of a 'dream' as private or personal is a right-wing republican myth, while the idea that a dream being social is a left-wing democratic myth, the fact it can be either activates the logico-rhetorical module. Such variation in interpretation led to different political arguments as to who exactly would have access to the American Dream. The anti-Vietnam War, post-war baby boom generation claimed that *all* were 'entitled' to the American Dream, whereas supporters of an American global hegemony based on

capitalism held that the American Dream had to be earned and therefore, by implication, was only available to those who worked hard. This interpretation appealed to the work ethic value system associated with Protestantism and was the basis of the moral accounting myth that I have summarised in section 2.1.1 (Lakoff 2002).

What both versions of the narrative share is that although the dream is in the future, they imply action or experience in the present. Some of the most common verbs that precede the expression in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)[5] are: the verbs 'chase' and 'pursue' (32 and 27 occurrences respectively) which imply a future orientation. However, there are also those who are 'living' or have 'achieved' the American Dream (74 and 31 occurrences respectively) – meaning that their past efforts have already realised the dream. The rhetorical effect of metaphor originates in the connotations aroused by words from their basic, literal senses. When 'dream' means 'hope', we experience positive connotations that are not fully explicit in the everyday sense of 'dream'. Yet, like a nebula, these positive associations of hope, and the value placed on optimism in American culture, circulate around the word 'dream' and provide the potential for its use in mythic narrative. Equally, the creative extensions of the metaphor can express a sense of disillusionment and deep pessimism by using its antonym 'The American Nightmare'– as for example in a CBS debate on the topic of the global credit crisis:

> It would have been illegal during most of the 20th century, but eight years ago Congress gave Wall Street an exemption. And it's turned to have been a very bad idea. Unidentified Man 1: 'The term "derivative" is almost becoming a household word.' Unidentified Woman 1: 'The cat's kind of out of the bag here.' Senator Richard Lugar: 'This is not the American dream. It's an American nightmare.' (COCA)

It is the opportunity for multiple interpretations that has enabled the metaphor 'The American Dream' to be used in political argumentation to express contesting versions of the myth.

I would now like to illustrate how on other occasions politicians may express contested myths within their own discourse by offering one myth that provides a positive representation of their own party and an alternative counter-myth about the opposing party. Margaret Thatcher

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[5] Available at http://www.americancorpus.org/

employed metaphor in combination with other rhetorical strategies in developing a political myth that was a British version of the American Dream: Britain could, like America, become a successful free enterprise economy. In her 1987 Conference address at Blackpool (after her third consecutive election victory), a relation of contrast, or antithesis, underlay Thatcher's representation of the policies of the Labour Party when they were in power with current Conservative policies. The basic contrast can be summarised by two conceptual metaphors that account for a range of actual metaphors that she used to represent each party's position: CONSERVATIVE POLICY IS A LIFE FORCE and LABOUR POLICY IS A DEATH FORCE. These conceptual metaphors interact with the other rhetorical strategies such as three-part lists and contrasting pairs to legitimise the free market. I will indicate metaphors using italics:

> All too often, the planners *cut the heart* out of our cities. They *swept aside* the familiar city centres that had grown up over the centuries. They replaced them with a wedge of tower blocks and linking expressways, interspersed with token patches of grass and a few windswept piazzas, where pedestrians fear to tread.

> Oh! the schemes won a number of architectural awards. But they were *a nightmare* for the people. They *snuffed out* any *spark* of local enterprise. And they made people entirely dependent on the local authorities and the services they chose to provide. . . .

> So *dying* industries, *soulless* planning, municipal socialism – these deprived the people of the most precious things in life: hope, confidence and belief in themselves. And that *sapping* of the spirit is at the very *heart of urban decay*.

> Mr President, to *give back heart* to our cities we must give back hope to the people.
> And it's beginning to happen.

> Because today Britain has a strong and *growing* economy. Oh yes, *recovery* has come faster in some parts of the country than others. But now it is *taking root* in our most depressed urban landscapes. We all applaud the organisation 'Business in the Community' – it is over 300 major firms that have come together to assist in reviving the urban communities from which so many of them *sprang*.

Each of the first three paragraphs contains a three-part list that identifies three negative characteristics of Labour policy (the context shows

that Labour is equated with urban planners). The creation of a scape-goat for negative social phenomena is an important way of pre-empting criticism of the effect of Conservative policies. The fourth paragraph highlights the positive results of Conservative policy that will legitimise free enterprise by offering it as a British version of the American Dream.

An evaluative framework is created by the contrast that is set up between two interacting chains of metaphor. The first is associated with the negative feelings aroused by death images and includes: *cut the heart, snuff out, dying, sapping, decay*; the other is associated with the positive feelings aroused by life images: *spark*, *give back heart, growing, recovery, take root, sprang*. The first chain associates Labour policy with death while the contrasting chain associates Conservative policies with life. These two interacting metaphor chains are employed in a set of contrastive pairs – both at level of the individual paragraph but also over larger units of text because death metaphors are employed throughout the first three paragraphs, while life metaphors occur only in the last paragraph. The use of the address term 'Mr President' serves to draw attention to the switch from the chain of death metaphors to the chain of life metaphors. Inevitably, these associations are likely to arouse powerful feelings. So here metaphor – both in terms of individual metaphor choices and the conceptual level – combines with other rhetorical strategies such as three-part lists and contrasting pairs to tell a story about free enterprise as a British version of the 'Dream'.

Further evidence occurs in the conclusion to the speech, where she returns to the life–death theme:

> But the philosophy of enterprise and opportunity, which *has put the spark back into* our national economy – that is the way – and the only way – to *rejuvenate* our cities and restore their confidence and pride.

The two italicised phrases are life images – one is based on an inanimate notion (fire) while the other is based on an animate one (youth). Both animate and inanimate images serve to reinforce each other and the use of transitive verbs implies the positive effect of the free enterprise that characterised the British version of the Dream. Leadership is based on such imaginative rhetoric because even though the evidence from reality may be limited, metaphor assists in the creation of a reality by a politically motivated representation that is based on fundamental knowledge that death is to be avoided and life embraced.

There is extensive evidence in the speeches of Margaret Thatcher that she is able to draw on life images to convey very strong and potent

political evaluations. Further evidence of the role of language in leadership occurs in her first conference address after Britain's victory against Argentina in the Falklands War:

> This is not going to be a speech about the Falklands campaign, though I would be proud to make one. But I want to say just this, because it is true for all our people. The spirit of the South Atlantic was the spirit of Britain at her best. It has been said that we surprised the world, that British patriotism was rediscovered in those spring days. (October 1982)

Here 'patriotism' is associated with 'spirit' which is, in turn, associated with 'those spring days'. Had Thatcher simply used an expression such as 'earlier in the year', the emotional impact of her oratory would have been reduced: 'spring' is an iconographic choice that activates the same underlying conceptualisation CONSERVATIVE POLICY IS A LIFE FORCE that contributed to the British version of the American Dream; this was a persuasive story because it assumed that Britain still had imperial aspirations.

2.2.3 Evaluating metaphor in political persuasion

We may think of metaphor as intellectually seductive in argument precisely because it gains the hearer's submission, and eventual compliance, by taking as a premise something that the hearer already believes in and so avoids arousing Chilton's 'cheat detectors'. A crucial issue in evaluating the act of persuasion is the question of the extent to which an audience is aware of the seductive intentions of the speaker: where they lack such awareness there is the risk of manipulation. Van Dijk explains the difference between persuasion and manipulation and the consequences of the latter as follows:

> . . . in persuasion the interlocutors are free to believe or act as they please, depending on whether or not they accept the arguments of the persuader, whereas in manipulation recipients are typically assigned a more passive role: they are *victims* of manipulation. This negative consequence of manipulative discourse typically occurs when the recipients are unable to understand the real intentions or to see the full consequences of the beliefs or actions advocated by the manipulator. This may be the case especially when the recipients lack the specific knowledge that might be used to resist manipulation. (Van Dijk 2006: 361)

Metaphor can be manipulative but is more commonly persuasive. What we may note from images such as the 'Iron Curtain', the 'moral compass' and the 'rivers of blood' is that they are sufficiently vague to permit multiple interpretations and such vagueness is highly attractive in political debate because the politician cannot be subsequently held to account. For example, American politicians cannot be held responsible for their failure to realise the American Dream since the notion itself is sufficiently vague that we would never know when it had been attained. It is an idea that, like paradise, is just around the corner at an indeterminate point in the future. Yet at the same time these images are striking and memorable: it is often the iconicity of metaphors that leads to them becoming historical myths. It is through such encoding processes that social cognition is influenced by highly symbolic forms of mental representation.

Metaphor is a figure of speech that is typically used in persuasive political myths and arguments; this is because it represents a certain mental representation that reflects a shared system of belief as to what the world is and culture-specific beliefs about mankind's place in it. It offers a way of looking at the world that may differ from the way we normally look at it and, as a result, offers some fresh insight. Because of this cognitive and culturally rooted role, metaphor is important in influencing emotional responses; as Martin (2000: 155) proposes: '...where affectual meaning is evoked, a distinction can be drawn between metaphorical language which in a sense provokes an affectual response...and non-metaphorical language which simply invites a response'. Metaphor *provokes* affective responses because it draws on value systems by exploiting the associative power of language; these systems may be embedded in a culture where certain types of entity are associated with positive or negative experiences, or they may be universal. As I have illustrated above, these associations may not always be ones of which we are conscious and successful leaders are those who can subliminally connect with our experiences of life and death.

When evaluating metaphor we should therefore always consider how far metaphors *conceal* a speaker's intentions; one of the purposes of this book is to develop a public awareness of rhetoric so that manipulation is more readily identified when it arises from metaphor. This is important because of the inherently persuasive power of metaphor. A greater understanding of how metaphor can be persuasive is a way of ensuring that audiences are not manipulated – even though they may be persuaded, as when they recognise that the implications

of speakers' metaphors comply with their own best interests. When they do, the metaphors demonstrate that the speaker has the right intentions.

2.3   Critical metaphor analysis and cognitive semantics

Critical metaphor analysis is an approach to the analysis of metaphors that aims to identify the intentions and ideologies underlying language use (Charteris-Black 2004: 34). There are three stages to this approach: first metaphors are identified, then they are interpreted and then explained. Metaphors are identified using the criteria of whether a word or phrase is used with a sense that differs from another more common or more basic sense as demonstrated by identifying a source domain that differs from the target domain. This is a necessary stage for metaphor identification because without two separate domains there can be no transferred meaning. In each of the following chapters I illustrate some of the considerations that were used in identifying metaphors in the sections entitled 'Metaphor analysis'.

To assist in the interpretation of metaphors I employ the cognitive semantic approach towards metaphor. This was originated by Lakoff and Johnson's classic work *Metaphors We Live By*, and modified in later work (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1999, Lakoff 1987, 1993, 2002, Lakoff and Turner 1989, Johnson 1987). The basic claims of this approach are that the mind is inherently embodied, thought is mostly unconscious and abstract concepts are largely metaphorical (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 3). The claim of conceptual metaphor theory is that because thought has evolved out of the sensory, motor and neural systems, metaphorical expressions originate in underlying (or conceptual) metaphors that originate in human bodily and neural experiences of space, movement, containment, etc. (Johnson 1987). There is a single idea (a proposition or a conceptual metaphor) linking a physical with a non-physical experience – that underlies a number of different metaphoric uses of language. I will illustrate the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY by considering a few metaphors from Tony Blair's speech at the Labour Party Conference in 2003:

> I remember when *our journey* to Government began ... And what I learnt that day was not about the far left. It was about leadership. Get rid of the false choice: principles or no principles. Replace it with the true choice. *Forward or back. I can only go one way. I've not got*

a reverse gear. The time to trust a politician most is not when they're taking the easy option. Any politician can do the popular things. I know, I used to do a few of them.

Blair creates a contrast between his supporters – 'modernising', New Labour whose critics accused it of lacking principles – and his opponents – traditional, 'Old' Labour and its claim to be based on principles. However, what was in reality a political choice between the left and right is represented as only a 'false choice' through metaphor (in italics) and is framed as 'going forward' or 'backward'. This frame is based on our embodied experience that we know what is in front of us (because we can see it) and that forward movement is inherently purposeful. These positive associations of forward motion show in expressions such as 'looking forward to' which is inevitably followed by something good (unless ironic). This positive self-representation is combined with the self-conviction that comes from the use of imperative forms ('get rid of', 'replace', 'trust'). It is reinforced by a proverb-like hyperbole – the image of a car without a reverse gear. Layer upon layer, the idea that he has the right intentions, is reinforced from all rhetorical angles, including pathos – as he then shifts to 'sounding right' by making a joke at his own expense.

   As I indicated in Chapter 1, the essence of politics is about building trust, and Blair did this by establishing his moral credibility by appealing to ethos through metaphors from the source domain of journeys and then an appeal to pathos through humour. The appeal to ethos demonstrates what I describe as 'having the right intentions' and the appeal to humour as 'sounding right'. In logical terms the purpose of the metaphor is to simplify the complexity of leadership by defining in the straightforward terms of making up your mind, taking a decision and keeping to it. A very similar journey-based metaphor had been used by Margaret Thatcher in September 1980: 'To those waiting with bated breath for that favourite media catchphrase, the "U" turn, I have only one thing to say. "You turn if you want to. The lady's not for turning"'; here she was conveying her intention to continue with her policies in spite of a deepening recession and rising unemployment (cf. Jones 1996: 27). Blair's use of the metaphor was an allusion as he was emulating Thatcher's leadership style, but needed to avoid repeating the phrase 'not turning' by using a synonym 'only go one way'. The idea of 'turning' is a metaphor grounded in physical experience and refers to 'changing one's mind'; both leaders rejected this as incompatible with a style of leadership that was based on conviction, resolution and certitude.

I suggest a conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS A JOURNEY is a specific realisation of LIFE IS A JOURNEY that explains the choice of phrases such as 'forward or back' and 'U-turn'. This means that there are a range of metaphors where a complex abstract target (POLITICS) is systematically related to a source domain that is better known because it is grounded in bodily experience of movement (JOURNEYS). The conceptual metaphor takes the form A is B and represents the experiential basis that underlies a set of metaphors. It does not mean that metaphors can *only* take this form or *predict* all the forms that will occur, but it explains a pattern of language use by representing what is normal or expected in language use. The journey metaphor frame provides a mental representation that allows the various aspects of political experience to be understood and expressed through embodied experience of movement. The journey schema is rhetorically attractive to politicians and leaders because it can be turned into a whole scenario when they represent themselves as 'guides', their policies as 'maps' and their supporters as 'fellow travelling companions'. All of these entailments of the source domain contribute to the trust they seek to establish. Identification of conceptual metaphors assists in explaining the ideological motivation of language use. The use of journey metaphors and political myths enabled conflict to be represented as ethically motivated in the discourse of Tony Blair. Critical metaphor analysis therefore enables us to identify *which* metaphors were chosen and to explain *why* these metaphors were chosen by illustrating *how* they contribute to political myths.

Political myths can be identified by identifying conceptual metaphors that account for systematic preference by a politician for particular metaphors. I am not proposing that critical metaphor analysis is the *only* method for understanding and explaining a political myth. A number of other and related methods have been developed in critical discourse analysis by researchers such as Chilton (1996, 2004), Hodge and Kress (1993), Fairclough (1989, 1995, 2000, 2006), van Dijk[6] (1995, 1998, 2006, 2008, 2009) and Wodak and Meyer (2009). Van Dijk summarises critical discourse studies as 'typically interested in the way discourse (re)produces social *domination,* that is, the *power abuse* of one group over others, and how dominated groups may discursively *resist* such abuse' (van Dijk 2009: 63) and goes on to state that scholars working in this field 'aim to analyse, and thus to contribute to the understanding

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[6] A full publication list for van Dijk is available at http://www.discourses.org/cv/Publications%20Teun%20A%20van%20Dijk.pdf

and the solution of, serious social problems, especially those that are caused or exacerbated by public text and talk, such as various forms of social power abuse (domination) and their resulting social inequality' (ibid.). Although the approach taken here is not directly oriented to power abuse of specific groups, it is motivated by providing insight into how power is maintained in democracies. This is because I am focusing on speeches by mainstream politicians addressed to the general public rather than to specific social groups.

Conceptual metaphor analysis is not the only way of identifying political myths; it is also possible to draw on other theories of metaphor such as blending theory. This theory proposes that metaphor is understood with reference to four distinct cognitive spaces. They arise when there is cross-domain mapping between two input spaces, a generic space that includes what is common to the two separate input spaces, and a blended space where the elements from the two input spaces are integrated; this blended space has an emergent structure where these fused elements can be elaborated. This theory challenges many assumptions in conceptual metaphor theory such as that the senses of words in 'source domains' are more basic or primary than the other senses in 'target domains'. By rejecting the distinction between source and target, it also rejects the idea of there being a direction of cognition from the literal senses to metaphoric ones. Instead, rather like gestalt theory, conceptual blending proposes that metaphor is holistic processing with only the blended integration taking place in the conscious mind. I will illustrate how the ideology behind some complex creative metaphors used by politicians can be analysed using blending theory. In this regard blending is simply a further theory that can be integrated into critical metaphor analysis.

Nor does critical metaphor analysis limit itself to the analysis of metaphors; it is equally concerned with metonyms. A metonym is when a word, or phrase, is used to refer to something within the same semantic field; for example, in politics a date such as 9/11 was used to refer to the attack on the World Trade Center; the date in some way stands for, or symbolises, the event. Similarly, the names of capital cities, and sometimes specific buildings or addresses are used as a form of shorthand meaning the governments of nation states. The essential feature of a metonym is that the two entities that are associated are closely related (or 'congruous') in experience; this is not the case with metaphor that may associate entities that are cognitively distant from each other. Metonyms tend to be more invisible than metaphors and therefore have even more ideological potential through creating hidden

meanings and forming the very infrastructure of thought about political issues. However, they can be exploited creatively too; for example by blending: when Enoch Powell used the expression 'river of blood' in his anti-immigration speech in April 1968 he was blending two metonyms: BLOOD FOR CONFLICT and BLOOD FOR ETHNICITY – we know through our understanding of DNA that ethnicity and blood are closely related in experience and we also know that conflict is closely related, causally, with blood. It is the activation of metonymic thinking that made the image so powerful – especially when linked with a classical reference. Chilton (2004: 117) argues in his analysis of this speech:

> The speaker claims, explicitly or implicitly, to be not only 'right' in a cognitive sense, but 'right' in a moral sense. There is an important overlap in this domain with *feelings* as well as 'factual' representations. The speaker will seek to ground his or her position in moral *feelings* or intuitions that no one will challenge. The analysis suggests that certain intuitive, emotionally linked mental schemas are being evoked. Certain emotions that can be reasonably regarded as in some way basic are evidentially stimulated – most obviously fear, anger, sense of security, protectiveness, loyalty.

Figurative language – including metaphors and metonyms – is effective in combining this moral and emotional intuition. Similarly, in the lead-up to the Iraq War there was much discussion as to whether there was a 'smoking gun' that would prove that Iraq was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. Here 'smoking gun' was a particular type of metonym referring to all types of destructive weapon; in this case a single object stands for a whole script of events, the loading, aiming and shooting of a gun. The smoking gun activates a schema of intentional behaviour and therefore means 'evidence of culpability'. The metonym evokes emotions of fear and danger that arise from witnessing a gun crime. Metonyms therefore also contribute to sounding right.

In the second edition of this book I continue to suggest that persuasion in political speeches is realised through the effective choice of metaphors in combination with other rhetorical strategies. Critical metaphor analysis provides us with a methodology for the analysis and interpretation of ideology and illustrates how rhetoric is used for the purpose of legitimisation. Identification of conceptual metaphors is inevitably subjective, like all qualitative judgements, but the analytical method is clear and the reader is free to challenge metaphor

classifications. As I have argued in my definition of metaphor, there is an element of subjectivity in *all* experience of metaphor – and this is inevitable because it is not possible to anticipate or fully predict an individual's experience of discourse and the extent to which he or she will experience words as having meanings that are transferred from other contexts of use. This does not mean that language-based enquiry should be restricted to what is predictable. Identification and discussion of possible ideological intentions underlying metaphor choices through conceptual metaphor analysis is a way of forming theories about persuasive language use.

When analysing political speeches using critical metaphor analysis the cognitive semantic approach needs to be complemented with a summary of the social context in which the speeches were made and of the overall verbal context of metaphor. Cognitive characteristics of metaphor cannot be treated in isolation from other persuasive rhetorical features in the discourse context. One attraction of the cognitive semantic approach is that it allows us to compare how metaphor is used by different politicians, both in terms of what metaphors are chosen and the concepts, ideologies and myths that underlie these. Although politicians sometimes use different metaphors, others are common to many, and for most politicians metaphor is a method that enables them to display their expertise in political rhetoric through knowledge and command of one of its major linguistic characteristics. In order to understand questions such as *why* one metaphor is preferred to another we need necessarily also consider rhetorical issues such as the leader's intentions within specific speech-making contexts: metaphors are not a requirement of the semantic system but are matters of speaker choice. Cognitive semantics and critical metaphor analysis are important linguistic contributions towards a theory of rhetoric and persuasion for political communication.

2.4   Summary

In these first two chapters I have argued that metaphor is vital to the language of leadership because it mediates between the conscious and rational basis of ideology and its unconscious mythical elements. Metaphor draws on the unconscious emotional associations of words, the values of which are rooted in cultural knowledge. For this reason it potentially has a highly persuasive force because of its activation of both conscious and unconscious resources to influence our rational, moral and emotional response, both directly – through describing and

analysing political issues – and indirectly by influencing how we feel about things. It therefore plays a crucial social role in communicating ideology that I have argued is vital to the discourse of politics.

I have argued that metaphor does not work in isolation from other rhetorical strategies: to the contrary, I have outlined a range of strategies – such as metonymy – that occur independently or in conjunction with metaphor. Many of these strategies have continued in traditions of public speaking even after we have forgotten the classical rhetorical terms that were originally used to describe them. Metaphor becomes more persuasive when it is used in combination with other strategies. When a political leader employs a rhetorical strategy in isolation the audience is quick to identify that there is a conscious persuasive strategy at work. They become aware of the presence of a performer at work and their defences or 'cheat detectors' may be aroused against his or her linguistic exploits. However, when strategies occur in combination with each other, the audience is more likely to give itself over to the speaker because the focus of attention is on processing the message itself rather than on how it is communicated. Rhetoric therefore creates uncritical followers and political leaders may legitimise themselves most effectively through an interaction of rhetorical strategies because the total effect is greater than when each occurs separately. Persuasion is a multi-layered discourse function that is the outcome of a complex interaction between intention, linguistic choice and context.

The aim of this second edition is to raise further critical awareness of the rhetoric that is used by political leaders to persuade others of their thoughts, beliefs and values through establishing trust, convincing them that they are right thinking, that they sound right *and* can tell the right story. I propose that a better understanding of the conceptual basis for metaphor – and how this relates with other aspects of rhetoric and persuasion – will provide a clearer understanding of the nature of these thoughts, beliefs and values and the myths through which they are communicated. Critical awareness of how discourse is used to persuade and to create legitimacy is an important area of knowledge for those who wish to engage politically within a democracy. We can only ever have the possibility of trusting potential leaders once the language of leadership is better understood.