Ideology and metaphor

ANDREW GOATLY

'Power is high, sex is violence, disease is invasion'

This paper attempts to show the important role that *ideology* ('meaning in the service of power') plays in the nurturing and proliferation of *metaphors* and *metaphoric themes*, a psychological and linguistic role that is just as important as bodily experience. It discusses such themes as POWER IS HIGH, SEX IS VIOLENCE, DISEASE IS INVASION, and RACE IS COLOUR, attempting to show how they drive social practices. It also explores how the themes ACTIVITY IS GAME and QUALITY IS QUANTITY (along with such subthemes as TIME IS MONEY and HUMAN QUALITY IS WEALTH) have been implicated in the emergence of both capitalist economic philosophy and the Darwinism and neo-Darwinism which developed from it (as represented successively in Hobbes, Smith, Hume, Malthus and Darwin himself).

Introduction

Metaphor is explored here as a tool of ideology: that is, as 'meaning in the service of power' (Thomson, 1984). How metaphors are used to justify the exercise of power is clear from such examples as the following, in which a particular choice of words and images facilitates the elimination of street children by the police in Rio de Janeiro:

> 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

I shall however concentrate here on more conventional metaphors that can be found in any dictionary. The data is taken from my online database *Metalude*, which readers may wish to consult. The English version is available at <www.ln.edu.hk/lle/cwd/project01/web/home.html>, and the English-Chinese version at <http://www.ln.edu.hk/lle/cwd03/ lnproject_chi/home.html>. This identifies sets of metaphorical lexical items to be found in the contemporary lexicon of English, often called *conceptual metaphors*, which serve, as it were, as 'root analogies' or 'metaphor themes'.

I shall begin by discussing a number of topical metaphor themes, then briefly describe Lakoff's experiential hypothesis (1996), which emphasizes the bodily basis of these conceptual metaphors. However, in the main and final part of the article, I suggest that ideological influences are just as important as bodily experiences in the nurturing and proliferation, if not the origin, of metaphor themes. I also seek to substantiate this claim by showing how various ideological themes associated with early capitalism were developed through the philosophical tradition of Hobbes, Hume, Adam Smith, Malthus, and Darwin.

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High is for power, importance, and success

At least four metaphor themes in English use *height* as a source for positive meanings: GOOD IS HIGH, IMPORTANCE/STATUS IS HIGH, ACHIEVEMENT/SUCCESS IS HIGH, and POWER/CONTROL IS ABOVE. For example, *high* itself means 'having an important position or aspect' (*high up, high-powered*) while *upper* means 'of important status' (*upper class*) and *top* 'most important position' (*top job, top people, top dog, top priority*). In such phrases as *high places* and *high-handed*, *high* is a metaphor for power and dominance, in the same way as *over* and its synonyms mean 'in control of ' (as in *overlord, on top of, superior*).

The most powerful person is *at the top*. Success is conveyed metaphorically by *height* and by the highest points of objects (*peak, summit, apex, pinnacle, zenith*), all of which mean 'most successful period, point or stage of development' (*At the height of his career he was giving two concerts a week*). A person expected to be successful is a *high-flier*, for whom perhaps *the sky is the limit* ('there's nothing to prevent them achieving great success'), so they may go *onward and upward* into the *stratosphere*. The most successful of all *come out on top* and *tower over/above* the competition.

The confluence of these metaphor themes make 'height' an impressive symbol of power, success, achievement and importance. Like the biblical Tower of Babel, governments and corporations continue to build higher so as to express their political and economic power (Table 1). East Asia has 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' (*fall down, fall flat*) and *crash* and *collapse* mean 'fail' or 'fail completely'. When in danger of failure or losing power, both people and buildings may *totter*. To reduce people's power or bring about their failure, others may try to make them fall, *toppling, undermining* or *cutting the ground from under* them, *overthrowing* them and, once they are on the ground, *coming down on them like a ton of bricks*.

Before 9/11, the twin towers of the World Trade Center were 1,353 feet high: when built, they were the tallest in the world, with 110 floors (cf. http://www.great buildings.com/buildings/World_Trade_Center.html 20 Jul 03). Besides symbolizing 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 metaphors illustrated above and the conceptual structure which underlies them.

Race is *colour*, and good is *pure*, *clean* and *white*

Racial classification is cultural, not scientific. As noted by Marks (2002:65–67), DNA evidence fails to support a scientific classification of race:

> 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. (2002:82)

But imperialism, for example, needs to classify racially: If people are different, then they can be treated differently. Colour has been a convenient mechanism for constructing different races. For example, in 1798 the biological classifier Linnaeus correlated colour and facial characteristics with the four humours of medieval anatomy and physiology, as well as with stereotypes of temperament and personality (Table 2).

Such colour labels use the term for a characteristic to refer to those who possess it: Africans are taken to be *literally* 'black' although generally they are darker or lighter brown; Caucasians are considered 'white' although by and large they are pinkish-grey; Mongoloid peoples have olive-coloured or light brown rather than 'yellow' or 'red' skin.

Caucasians tend to accept the label *white* while Afro-Caribbeans tend to reject *black*, because of the metaphor themes GOOD IS CLEAN/WHITE AND EVIL IS DARK/BLACK. Consider, for example: *white knight* (nowadays 'a rescuer of a company from financial difficulties', like a former 'maiden in distress'); *fair* ('morally correct or just' as well as sunny, as in *fair weather*); *whiter than white* ('with a reputation for high moral standards'). Conversely, *black* means 'bad' ('The future of the environment is very black') or 'cruel/wicked' ('This is a

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Table 1: The world's tallest buildings

Rank	Building	Completed in:	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

blacker crime than most I've investigated'). A *black mark* is a fault or mistake that has been noted, a *blackguard* is a wicked man, and black is the colour of illegality in *black market* and *black economy*.

Prejudice based on the associations of 'black' people with both evil and crime continues. In a programme of DNA testing designed to uncover unjust convictions, 'approximately 60% of all wrongful convictions were black men wrongfully convicted of sexually assaulting, or sexually assaulting and killing, white women'(Novak 2003:49).

'Non-Caucasians', however, often turn such metaphors into disputed terms, referring to themselves as *people of colo(u)r*; in terms of

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Table 2: Linnaeus's classification of *Homo sapiens* in his *Systema Naturae* (1798)

(As in Marks, 2002:57, but adapted here by the addition of row 4)

	American	European	Asian	African
Colour	red	white	yellow	black
Temperament	irascible, impassive	vigorous, muscular	melancholy, stern	sluggish, lazy
Humours	choleric: yellow bile (gall bladder)	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 and 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

EXCITEMENT IS LIGHT/COLOUR, *colourful* means 'lively, interesting, amusing and exciting' as opposed to *colourless, dull, grey, leaden, drab, pallid,* and *monochrome*, all of which mean 'boring, unexciting': in effect 'colourless'.

It appears that the imperialist enterprise in recent centuries has been predicated on racial divisions: an 'optical illusion' that uses the metaphor of colour as a code.

Disease is invasion

Whether or not caused by bacteria/viruses, disease of any kind is usually constructed in current medical-science discourse as an *attack* by *invaders* or *foreign bodies* (viruses, bacteria). A recent TV series, *The Body Invaders*, ended with a programme about arthritis and rheumatism. According to this metaphoric theme, bacteria *invade* ('enter the body') and may *strike down* ('cause illness or death to') *victims* ('sufferers') who *succumb* ('become ill'). However, the body may *defend* itself, and *fight/combat* ('struggle to survive against') the disease, notably through *resistance* ('immune response'). Medicine may *conquer* or *vanquish* ('eliminate') a disease once and for all (but defence establishments still stock them for biological warfare).

However, there are problems with this metaphor in at least two areas of medicine: antibiotic-resistant bacteria and auto-immune diseases. Basing medical treatment on the 'battle' metaphor, attempts are made to kill the bacteria with antibiotics, but even so resistant strains develop. *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' that they are numerous enough to escape the control of our immune systems. Researchers are attempting therefore to interfere with their signalling mechanisms, so that even if they are present in sufficient numbers, they will not know this, and will remain 'benign' (cf. Watts 2003:30).

Auto-immune disease occurs when 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 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

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that can cause excessive inflammation of the intestinal tract.
(Weinstock., Elliott, Summers, & Qadir, 1999)

Acting according to the metaphor of these worms as invaders, we have eradicated them from our gut. Perhaps, however, their living in our gut was something closer to symbiosis than disease caused by invaders that need to be exterminated. Indeed, there is some evidence that reintroducing these worms into mice can protect them from inflammatory bowel disease, and trials with humans are now under way (same source).

We see from such examples that, in cases of both antibiotic resistance and auto-immune disease, the DISEASE IS INVASION metaphor has proved less than helpful, and in recent developments of new treatments the ideology/metaphor of violence has begun to give way to an ideology/metaphor of communication, balance, and symbiosis.

Sex is violence

Many metaphors for sex have sources taken from violence. This is not particularly new, being traceable to classical times, where for example *phallus* meant 'sword' and *vagina* 'sheath/scabbard', an association still found in *sheath* meaning 'condom'. In this metaphoric theme, the male is constructed as the aggressor, so that the penis is a *chopper*, *weapon*, or *gun* with which a man can *shoot his load* ('ejaculate semen'). By such violence men may achieve *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-ma'am* (referring to a very quick act of sex), *knock off* ('have sex with' a woman), and *gang bang* ('group rape'). Other verb lexis is gender-neutral, as with *hit on* ('explicitly indicate your sexual attraction for') and *bang* and *bonk* ('have sex with') – and an attractive person of either sex is a *knockout*.

Is there a connection between such metaphors (especially those constructing the sexual act of men as aggression) and the incidence of rape? In the US, according to the National Victim Center, 683,000 women are raped each year (1992), while in the UK, between 1976 and 1997, the number of women reporting rape increased by over 500%. Yet convictions have remained almost static: cf. <http://www.rapecrisis. co.uk/statistics.htm> Rape Crisis Federation of England and Wales. The latest figures are worse, at 5.3% (Hinsliff, G. '"Law failing rape victims", says QC,' *The Observer*, 31 Jul 05: 50,000 rapes, 600 convictions).

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

- Men are usually the aggressors, and women the victims, in metaphor and in 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), <http://www2.ucsc.edu/rape-prevention/statistics.html> UCSC Rape Prevention Education
- Rape is usually carried out by someone known to the victim: 1 in 7 married women said they had been raped by their husbands, in both the US <http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~ad361896/anne/cease.html> and the UK <http://www. rapecrisis.co.uk/statistics.htm>. 97% of callers to the hotlines of the UK Rape Crisis Centre knew their assailant. <http://www.rapecrisis.co.uk/statistics.htm> (Rape Crisis Federation of England and Wales, Kate Painter, 1991).

Do many men regard coercive or violent sex as a normal way of relating to somebody close to them, just as it is normal for them to use the language of aggression when talking about sex? 84% of college males who committed rape denied it was rape (Warshaw 1994). Do male judges have the same attitude? See Table 5.

Experiential and cultural explanations for metaphor themes

The first attempt to explain metaphor theme patterns was Lakoff's Experiential hypothesis, which claims that they have their source in bodily (infant) experiences. For example, we experience proximity and warmth from being picked up and/or hugged, whence RELATIONSHIP IS PROXIMITY and AFFECTION IS WARMTH. We experience gravity which gives extra power to us if we are in a higher position, so that POWER IS HIGH, and we see that the larger the number of things piled vertically the higher the pile, so that MORE IS HIGH. The first obvious changes we notice as infants are movements: hence,

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Table 3: Physiology, its realities, and its metaphors

Physiological phenomena	Example	Metaphor theme
Change in body temperature	Drop in body temperature for FEAR	FEAR AND UNPLEASANT EMOTION ARE COLD
	Rise in body temperature for ANGER	ANGER IS HEAT
	Rise in body temperature for PASSION	LOVE/PASSION IS HEAT
Change in skin Colour/condition	Redness in face and neck area for ANGER	EMOTION IS COLOUR/LIGHT
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 stomach/bowels	Feeling nauseated for DISGUST, FEAR	(BAD EMOTION IS DISCOMFORT/PAIN) ?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
	Approaching for ENJOYMENT, PLEASURE	DESIRE IS ATTRACTION
	Approaching 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

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CHANGE IS MOVEMENT 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 FORWARD.

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, delineates some of the most common bodily metonymies underlying metaphor themes of emotion. I have modified these with additions (and links to *Metalude*, online) to produce Table 4.

However, in some of the metaphor themes discussed here cultural and social influences are apparent. POWER IS HIGH and, more doubtfully, RACE IS COLOUR may have a metonymic experiential basis, which has 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 humoural theory) has been replaced by DISEASE IS INVASION as the dominant mode of thinking in medical circles (only lately challenged). Indeed, it was Geeraerts and Grondelaars' discussion (1995) of the medieval humoural theories of health as balance of the four elements which began this debate.

I have recently investigated how a particular nexus of ideological metaphor themes was produced or nurtured in the context of early capitalism/Protestantism. These themes can be traced through the philosophers Hobbes, Smith, Hume, Malthus, and Darwin and relate to neo-Darwinism. The ideological position has two strands:

- The first starts with the idea that humans are basically aggressive, competitive and selfish, and only altruistic to their family. Add to this any scarcity of resources, and humans, like animals, become involved in a competition for survival of themselves and their progeny, which, unless checked, results in violence and war.
- The second, 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 remainder of this paper I shall concentrate, first, on exploring the metaphorical moves by which activity is conceived as competition and conflict, then on the metaphorical reduction of quality to quantity.

Table 4: The attrition rate for rape in England and Wales

Data: Rape Crisis Federation of England and Wales, Kate Painter (1991)

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%

Competition and conflict

Many important metaphor themes associate activity in general with competition and conflict: COMPETITION IS RACE; ACTIVITY IS FIGHTING, SEX IS VIOLENCE, DISEASE IS INVASION; ARGUMENT IS WAR: FIGHTING/ATTACKING, HITTING/PUNCHING, SHOOTING OR WOUNDING/CUTTING; ACTIVITY IS GAME: BALL GAME, CARD GAME, BOARD GAME, GAMBLING GAME. I will concentrate here on the first two groups, SEX IS VIOLENCE and DISEASE IS INVASION having already been examined.

Competition is a 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 A RACE. Basically, a process or activity, whether it involves movement or not, is conceptualized as motion. *Move* then means 'happen', *a move* is 'an action taken to achieve something', and *in motion* is 'happening or taking place'. In particular, ACTIVITY/PROCESS is seen as *going on, going forward*.

With minor modification this merges into DEVELOPING/SUCCEEDING IS MOVING FORWARD. An 'improvement or successful development' is *progress,* an *advance,* or a *leap*; if you 'succeed'

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Table 5: An overview of physiological metonymies for basic emotions

(based on Kövecses 2000:123–4, 134)

Physiological phenomena	Example	Metaphor theme in 'Metalude'
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/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 stomach/bowels	Feeling nauseated for DISGUST, FEAR	(BAD EMOTION IS DISCOMFORT/PAIN) ?BAD IS SMELLY (EXPERIENCE IS FOOD/EATING)
Bodily tension/release of tension	Fists and teeth clenched for ANGER	ANTAGONISM/ANNOYANCE IS FRICTION
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	Jumping up and down for JOY	HAPPY IS HIGH
	Touching, hugging, kissing for LOVE	RELATIONSHIP IS PROXIMITY/COHESION
	Grabbing for DESIRE	DESIRE IS ATTRACTION
	Approaching for ENJOYMENT, PLEASURE	DESIRE IS ATTRACTION
	Approaching for ANGER	ANTAGONISM/ANNOYANCE IS FRICTION
	Moving away for FEAR	(NO RELATIONSHIP IS DISTANCE/SEPARATION)
	Slumping or looking down for SADNESS	SAD IS LOW
	Looking with fixed gaze for WONDER	AWARENESS/INTEREST IS FIXING/CAPTURE

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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 hard 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*). Such speed metaphors often double up as metaphors for success. In contemporary society, obsessed with time and efficiency, to complete something quickly also implies completing it successfully.

Moreover, in late capitalist society, it is ideologically significant that metaphors for activity and success should have developed into the highly elaborated theme of a competitive race. *Race* can mean 'competition for power or control' (*Maud and Andrew are in a race for promotion*), and the *rat race* means 'ruthless competition for success'. Before a (horse) race or competitive activity starts you will know who is taking part (*the field*), who is *in the running*, and who is *the favourite* or *the outsider* (the contestants likely or unlikely to win). At the beginning of the race/activity (that is, *from the word 'go'*), someone may *jump the gun* ('do something too soon') or be a *non-starter* ('a person or idea with no chance of success') or be *quick/slow off the mark* ('be quick/slow to act or react'), while others have a *head start* ('an advantage in an activity or competition': *good education gives your child a head start in life*: like a horse who is 'ahead' in a race).

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 *a breathing space* ('a 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 work as well as they do, 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 so much better than me, 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* ('be 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*). If things do not go well, you may *trail, be behind*, or *lag behind* ('be less successful than' the rest).

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, who will then be *pipped at the post* ('beaten by a small margin'). And your list of successes and failures will be your *track record*.

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 problem for hours*). As for nouns, we have: *fray* ('joining the fray'), *blitz* ('Schools are having a blitz on raising AIDS awareness') or *assault* 'great effort to do something'). Battles can be part of a *campaign* or a *crusade*: long determined attempts to achieve what one believes in. A *front* will be 'a particular area of activity' (*She's very creative on the design front*) and leaders are said to be in the *vanguard* or the *frontline* (*The minister is in the front line of the drugs awareness campaign*). To fight these battles you may need a *weapon,* an *arsenal* ('a means of achieving something'), and *firepower* ('the ability to act energetically and successfully').

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*); and *take up the cudgels for* ('support someone strongly', as in *The unions took up the cudgels for the retrenched staff*). Activity can be seen as striking: *have/make a stab at* ('make an attempt at', which, if you do it 'completely and without limitation', you do *to the hilt*), and *strike a blow for* ('do something to support a cause or principle', as in *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', as in *They were fighting a losing battle trying to save her father*

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from cancer). To *be on the ropes* is 'doing badly and being likely to fail', in which case you might as well *give in/admit defeat*, or, in boxing terms, *throw in the towel/sponge*.

Competition and conflict as viewed by philosophers and other commmentators

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.

Thomas 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, reprinted 1997:70).

Because our natural passions 'carry us to partiality, pride, revenge and the like', each family and nation naturally competes or fights against its neighbours, and the winners in the struggle are celebrated (Hobbes, reprinted 1997:93). He 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 (cf. Tawney 1938:86–87). He believed that a strong sovereign was necessary to avoid the war and civil strife which results from bellicose human nature.

David Hume

People's 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, reprinted 1969:655). 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, reprinted 1969:581).

Like Hobbes, Hume saw a foreign threat as the origin of the civil society of sovereign nation states (1969:591). Increasing wealth leads to strife which in turn leads to government by monarchies. These are established and legitimized 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: 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: 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: 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 the 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 1991:59–60). Anything which interferes with competition is pernicious, e.g. wage regulation, monopolies, and export subsidies (1991:383).

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Thomas 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: 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: 43).

Charles Darwin

Darwin borrowed from Malthus, or at least found his own views in *The Origin of Species* confirmed by him: both depicted life as a 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 1859 [1991: 3]). He tends to emphasize competition among species, rather than interdependence. He claims to use the term 'struggle for existence' in a metaphorical sense (1991:47–48), but develops military metaphors [my underlines] 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!
- 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.

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. (1991:281).

An important ideological feature of the theory is that competition determines structural traits (1991:57). 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 (1991:157–58).

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. I have shown how metaphors of achievement are metaphorically transformed in metaphors of competition, and how activity in general is constructed as fighting. These reinforce the early capitalist ideology and its celebration or recognition of competition. The second metaphorical line depends on reducing qualities to quantities.

Quality as quantity

Pythagoras was the first to begin to equate quality with quantity, when he discovered, with a vibrating string, that the pitch (quality) of a note was related to its length (quantity). This equation is apparent in a number of English metaphor themes. Thus, 'the general characteristics of a situation' is *the long and the short of it*, a situation with a surprising quality is *nothing short of…*, while *calibre* (literally 'the width of a gun's barrel') means *quality or standard of ability*, and 'dimension' means *aspect or quality* (as in *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 1996:56).

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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 the distinction between saints days and working days, were more and more replaced by homogenous clock time. In the industrialising late Middle Ages 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 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'.

As early as 1700, as the tempo of work in the factories became incessant, unrelenting, and exacting, employers started using time sheets and work schedules (Rifkin 1987:107). Time was now, metaphorically, being divided up into spaces 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 [them] 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 also 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 the period of' (*You must complete this project within three weeks*). These metaphors reinforce the notion of a 'deadline', itself a metaphor.

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 [something] 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* your work. Under this system, symbolized 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 1987:130). Remember Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*.

To sum up, the industrial practices of working according to clock time, time sheets, deadlines and in step with conveyor belts were all reinforced by metaphors of time (LENGTH, LIMITED SPACE, RACING) which enabled the domination of humans by machines for the benefit of the bosses/capitalists.

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: 239).

Metaphorically, TIME IS MONEY/COMMODITY, which you can *spend* or *invest*, be *economical* with, so as to 'use less time', or pay with, as in 'cause to lose (a period of time)', while shoplifting could cost you your very 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?*). And near the end of life you may *live on borrowed time* ('continue living beyond the time when you were expected to die'). You can *save*, *waste*, *squander* it or *use time badly* or just *use it up*, so that you *run out of* it ('have none left'). The depth of this conceptualizing as a commodity can be seen in the difficulty of providing a meaning which does not itself use the same metaphor.

However, different people's time may not be equal in money terms. In cultures of inequality we have *pyramidal time*, where the lowest paid workers earn far less than the highly paid,

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chief executives earning up to 140 times more than the general workers in the same company in the US. We have long ago lost the Greek idea that quantifiability means equality: that 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 1972:219).

Quality is money/wealth

Equating money with time is simply one example of its use as 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 (1999:30).

These moves of capitalist ideology produce or reinforce the metaphor theme QUALITY IS MONEY WEALTH. Positive qualities are often metaphorized 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 *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 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: that is, they *appreciate* and are *profitable* ('beneficial, useful': *Argument at this point is hardly profitable*) and one can *profit from* or *make capital out of* ('get an advantage from') them: *Thatcher made political capital out of the Falklands War*.

In this way positive experiences become payments. If you receive payment it is to your advantage: *pay* 'give a benefit or advantage' (a *payoff*); *earn* 'get a benefit or positive result', *repay* 'be worthwhile' (*Reading stories to your child will repay the effort in later education*). Experiences can be *rewarding*: something you *cannot afford to* miss. By contrast, negative results of past behaviour are the *price (you must pay)*, while *cost* is the 'effort or negative effect of doing or obtaining something' (*The price for the war in Iraq is still to be paid*); *at any price, pay (the price) for, count the cost of, cost you dearly* (*His sexual misbehaviour cost him 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 1971:114–5). Lakoff has explored how morality itself is metaphorically a transaction (1996, ch. 4). He shows how in RELATIONSHIP/AFFECTION IS MONEY/WEALTH the relationship can be seen in terms of reciprocation: *debt* 'appreciation, gratitude', *indebted to* 'grateful for help given', *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'. Moral 'accounting' might take the form of retribution: *pay X back* 'take revenge on someone who has treated you badly', *settle accounts (with)* 'take revenge (on someone) 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 and/or your actions, whereas, on the other hand, *debt* is close to *debit*.

Relationship as money/wealth in economic philosophy

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: 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 (quoted in Weber 1992:49–50).

Phrases like 'the commerce of the sexes' are quite widespread, especially in Malthus. Some-

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times 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 1992:59). But the metaphor theme also had a religious basis, or could be applied to man's relationship with God. Benjamin Franklin kept a tabulated statistical book-keeping record of his progress in the different virtues and Bunyan compares the relationship between a sinner and his God with that of customer and shopkeeper (Weber 1992:124).

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*), 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' (*a brazen attempt at bribery*), *tin god* 'person considered more important than they really are' (*Priests in Ireland used to be like tin gods*), *golden-hearted* 'generous, kind', *refined* 'extremely polite and cultured'. More positively still, a person can be seen as a *treasure*, *jewel* or *gem* 'kind, helpful or useful person' (*Our cleaning lady is a real treasure – She'll do anything we 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', or *undersell* 'underestimate' them (*Don't undersell yourself!*). Consequently, one may be *past one's sell-by date* or *left on the shelf* 'unmarried, without a partner'. This means of evaluation by monetary value even seems to extend to that frequent term *dear* 'beloved'.

In terms of ideology and economics, this is one of the most important metaphor themes because, by celebrating acquisitiveness as a sign of God's favour, it sets itself up against (especially medieval) Christian values of the sanctity of poverty. Hobbes was well down this road, thinking of human value in terms of the monetary value determined by supply and demand which determines the price a 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, 1997:50).

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' (1997:52–3). Hobbes sees anxiety about the future as a cause of religion: anxiety about the spiritual security of heaven after death, as well as the cause of the accumulation of wealth in this life. Indeed, in an increasingly secular society the latter might be thought to substitute for the former.

Echoing Hobbes, Smith had 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' (1991:326). Indeed, Smith gives the whole 5th section of Book 2 of *The Wealth of Nations* the title: 'Of our esteem of the rich and powerful,' and remarks that '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 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 1991:282).

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.

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

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itself for making their life a hell in this' (1938:265). Beggars are morally repugnant, so that 'dependent poverty ought to be held disgraceful' (Malthus 1992:101). Having 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 1992:248–9). 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 1992:263–4).

Which brings us full circle to the street children of Rio. ■

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