

DÆDALUS

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Myth, Symbol, and Culture

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WINTER 1972: MYTH, SYMBOL, AND CULTURE

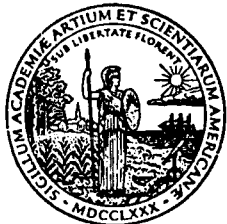
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JAMES W. FERNANDEZ

Persuasions and Performances: Of the Beast in Every Body . . .
And the Metaphors of Everyman

He who only cricket knows,
knows not cricket.

—C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*

Anybody who learns to become a crow can see
it . . . it is possible to become a lion or
a bear but that is rather dangerous . . . it
takes too much energy to become one.

—Don Juan in Castaneda, *The Teachings
of Don Juan*

A Cattle Complex

I AM situated as I write this between cows and rodents. At night the rodents rustle and gnaw in the attic while the cows and calves periodically shift their weight, stomp, and sigh heavily in the stable below. During the day the cattle are driven out and up to the pastures and the rats descend to their nests in the stable. The house is left to us and occasionally to a donkey who brays at being left in the stable during the day.

These animals have become very much a part of our world, although I cannot pretend they mean as much to me as to the Asturian mountain countrymen with whom we are living. We have been in these green mountains a bare two months and little yet can be said with confidence. Asturias is another part of Spain, green and lush, covered most often with celtic mists and clouds off the Cantabrian sea. It has scarcely a month of sunny weather a year. These mists evaporate on the high passes and divides—*los puertos*—that open out upon the Castillian plateau, brown and sere already with its summer burnt look under the Sahara sun.

The cattle in the summer are driven up to those *puertos* and hence they and those that go and live with them up in the *caserias* have more of the benefit of the sun. Men turn brown up in the *puertos* but the immaculate tan cow of Asturias, the *casina*, grazing back and forth between *sol* and *sombra*, retains her placid and reflective character. There is nothing in

these cows of the *vaca brava*—the brave black bulls of Salamanca or Andalucia. In fact one sees very few bulls at all. Heifers are carefully tended and brought to maturity for milk and progeny but *novillos* are butchered early for veal. Artificial insemination has been accepted everywhere.

Cows and calves have an enormous weight in village life. They are a constant topic of conversation. When one is shown the family pictures, photos of cows and calves are as likely to tumble out amidst the shuffle. And a family given a picture taken five years earlier of the father and baby posing before a cow team pulling a hay cart, spent most of an excited half hour remembering those cows with nostalgia. I don't know all there is to walking cows from the stable through the streets and up to the pastures. But there is a satisfaction in it for men and women that makes them highly resistant to government efforts to consolidate their scattered meadows—their stubborn *minifundia*. For if they were consolidated one would no longer walk one's cows about one's wide world. In part, of course, one is parading one's fortune. A good milk cow is worth several month's wages and a herd of fifteen is a sizable nest egg—to mix our metaphors.

The love of calves equals the *cariño* for young children. Both loves are very great and volubly expressed, and in the closest association. The urban middle class deplores the villagers' attitude toward education. "They raise them like calves that they should be strong and fecund, capable of climbing to the *puertos* in the summer and with enough fat to survive the winter." As for boys beyond five they are more likely to be treated as *quajes*, *rapaces*—fractious, superfluous elements in the society who serve principally to get into trouble, break things, soil clothes, interrupt their sisters who are working hard at various tasks. Girls grow up usefully to produce in their time more of the milk of human kindness and the babies upon which it can be lavished. This cattle complex has something to do with the quite central place of women in this society, and perhaps even with the Cult of the Virgin.

Asturian mountain character, formed by mists and the encirclement of the sierra and the following-after of cows, is unhurried, contemplative. It is austere even dour when compared with the ebullience of the Andaluz or the briskness of the Castilian. But if one is tempted to say that it is cowed by this round of life and the celtic twilight in which it develops, then one forgets that this is the only part of Spain never fully under Roman control, never conquered by the Moors—a rebellious outpost of Carlism in the last century and, in this century—in the militant collectivity of its miners—a turbulent challenge to many succeeding regimes including the present one.

One remembers that there are other animals men study to situate themselves. There are the bears in the forests whose demise in hand-to-hand conflict with the many folk heroes is celebrated in tale after tale. Of the donkey there is not much to be said. Other parts of Spain seem to be in

greater communion with its qualities as was Jimenez with Platero. Donkeys carry no names here—only wood, hay, manure, and blows. But of course, there are the rats whose furtive life is contrary to right nature. They come up at night and go down in the day and they are never to be seen. Women say to children "If you don't eat your food or keep yourself clean we will put you into the attic tonight and the rats will eat you," as they eat anything that is carelessly left around and not well formed, well disciplined, or well seen. And when one is very hungry one says "the rats are running around in the drawer," in chagrin that the stomach should have gotten so empty and oneself so careless as to be taken over by that furtive animal nature. It is not well formed or well seen to admit to hunger or to accept food, like rats, in any house other than one's own.

A cow in short is everything a rat is not and men are wise to draw the appropriate lessons that each nature has to teach. Men can be and are, through the diverse powers of culture, many things. Their choices are manifold. If they can look around and find some lesson in cows and calves, bears and rats, their choices are made easier.

The Study of Metaphor

This is as far as I can presently take the reader into the preoccupation with animals in the Asturian mountains—a paleolithic preoccupation, after all, throughout Franco-Cantabrian country. It seems apparent to me that the intimate contact these villagers have with these animals has an impact upon them. In a sense, those we domesticate have domesticated us and those we have not domesticated are still useful in measuring the achievement or excesses of our domestication. If life becomes too much a following about of cows, men may be excused for turning a bit bearish.

What all this points to, it seems to me, is the importance of the analysis of metaphors in anthropological inquiry. In fact, the analysis of metaphor seems to me to be the very nature of that inquiry. One always feels a bit sheepish of course about bringing the metaphor concept into the social sciences and perhaps this is because one always feels there is something soft and woolly about it. Yet one recognizes that the finest anthropological field studies¹ have been highly sensitive to figures of speech of all kinds and surely to metaphor. As one of our epigraphs reminds us, the anthropological literature on religion and folklore is full of those shape shifting and possessions which constitute in most dramatic form the assumption of a metaphoric identity. And even behaviorists recognize that metaphor is one of the few devices we have for leaping beyond the essential privacy of the experiential process.²

Indeed, metaphors jump out at us from every side in human behavior. As S. E. Asch has said, if we but reflect on it we find like Moliere's character "we have been speaking metaphor all our lives!"³ In November of 1970 the American press gave front page coverage to the director of the

Federal Bureau of Investigation. He called the former Attorney General a jellyfish. The Attorney General had criticized the director for imposing upon the bureau a preoccupation with the director's own image and for giving the bureau an ideological character.

Perhaps this was mere petulance. If so, the somber work of Herman Kahn may be more telling. In a book entitled *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios* (1965), Kahn takes two metaphors as models of international relations; that of the strike, on the one hand, in which both parties though antagonistic recognize mutual need, and that of the teenage game of chicken, on the other, in which both parties are concerned to establish their manly (or at least nonchicken) identity. In part Kahn takes these metaphors as analytic models to aid his understanding, but at the same time these metaphors can be adopted by actors. They can lead to performance and create a scenario. I will argue here that the metaphoric assertions men make about themselves or about others influence their behavior. Such assertions make manageable objects of the self or of others and facilitate performance. In respect to behavior such assertions—you are a chicken, I am not a chicken, you are a hawk or a dove or a rat or a donkey—provide images in relation to which the organization of behavior can take place. We can call them organizing or performative metaphors. I am going to define the uses of several kinds of metaphor, persuasive or collocative metaphor in the first place, and performative or organizing metaphor in the second. I am then going to ask how these metaphors operate in respect to culture conceived of as a "quality space."

Resistance to the study of metaphor arises for several reasons. One reason is that structural analysis in linguistics has made so important an impact on anthropological analysis. The burden of this influence rests upon the study of the discriminations and contrasts by means of which intellectual structures (paradigms and taxonomies) are built up. But a good reason for studying metaphoric assertion is that it is a way of avoiding building up precise intellectual structures. It is so congenial a thought style to many of the third world peoples anthropologists have studied because it has the profundity of a concrete immediacy. Many of these people incline to rhetorical devices of representation—iconic and enactive rather than symbolic forms of representation.⁴ They incline toward assessment by analogy. Our subtle analyses of the discriminations they make within various domains of their experience is matched by their subtlety in linking these domains in unexpected and creative ways.

If we have much to learn from painstaking dissections of our informants' kinship terminology, diseases, or firewood lexicon, we can also learn from their powers of extension and synthesis. More is involved in the games people play than the rules and boundaries by which they play them. Our epigraphs from the Trinidadian, James, and the Yaqui, Juan, remind us of that. We have only to consider the popularity of proverbs and riddles in

many parts of the world—a genre which rests in large measure upon leaping to metaphoric similarities between two distinct domains of experience.

Another reason for resistance to the study of metaphor arises from the fact that metaphor has so much to do with feelings. Such obscure matters have quite naturally provoked the distrust of social scientists. J. Piaget in his essay on structuralism⁵ strongly supports C. Lévi-Strauss's "penetrating critique of explanations in terms of affectivity," and lauds his axiom⁶ that that which is refractory to explanation cannot ipso facto serve as explanation.

One may well wish to create explanations by preventing what is refractory from intruding, but to deny its existence and importance is another matter. Emotions in human affairs may easily, and regrettably, outweigh the influence of logical structures. And those who want to write their ethnologies where they conceive the action to be, in the midst of affectivity and the conditioning of the emotions, are entitled to our attention. It is too easy to say that they are soft. In any case a false dichotomy can too easily prevail. Might not there be a structure to sentiment?

In respect to affectivity Robert P. Armstrong⁷ has recently given us a revelatory anthropological essay which seeks to dwell in the very center of what he calls "the affecting presence." He uses metaphor as a central term of analysis. His discussion of metaphor is essentially contemplative, as one would expect in an essay written from the aesthetic point of view. That is to say, Armstrong assumes the enduring status of the objects and events he studies as expressions of existing (universal or cultural) feeling states. But the student of behavior wants to know what metaphors do, where they come from, and how they emerge. How do they work in human affairs? To use Armstrong's own vocabulary: in the "affecting transaction" what emotions are transferred and how is this done? Perhaps metaphors are not alone arresting repositories of feelings. Perhaps they can be strategies taken in respect to feelings.

Metaphoric Strategies

Though I cannot do justice to all these questions I should like to approach them by defining metaphor simply as "a strategic predication upon an inchoate pronoun (an I, a you, a we, a they) which makes a movement and leads to performance." More can be said about metaphor than that, but it should carry us a little distance. There is nothing new in regarding a metaphor as a strategy. The notion is present throughout the work of Kenneth Burke⁸ and is expressed in his well-known definition of a proverb as a "strategy for dealing with a situation."⁹ Since a proverb, as we have said, rests upon a metaphoric sense of similarity between two domains of experience, Burke's definition applies equally to metaphor. A proverb in its way is, like the metaphors I will discuss, a predication upon an inchoate situation. It says that something much more concrete and graspable—a

rolling stone, a bird in the hand—is equivalent to the essential elements in another situation we have difficulty in grasping.

The strategic element in metaphor glares at us from this contretemps we have reviewed between the Attorney General and the director of the FBI. Obviously the director intended a put-down. It became the Attorney General's lot to put up or shut up. Already the reader will see that the language we both speak shows us a continuum: a continuum of ups and downs. As it happened, the Attorney General responded in balanced prose about the ideological conformity imposed upon the FBI and the director's preoccupation with his self-image. It is difficult to remember what he said, though the director's salty metaphor still sticks.

The Attorney General had various options. He could put up by staying in the same metaphoric domain. He might have responded, in turn, that the director was a walrus, or more sharply a shark, or a Portuguese man-of-war, or an octopus—"a thousand tentacled octopus releasing the ink of ideological obfuscation over the land." Or the Attorney General might have shifted to another domain, the familiar gastrointestinal one. Here the opportunities are rich. Perhaps the director thought of himself as a man of heart or real guts. The Attorney General could put him down by referring to him as an old flatus. That would have deflated him!

Of course people do not simply jump into a strategic posture willy-nilly. They do occupy positions, by force of their social condition and the fate of physiology, both in their own estimation and the estimation of others. Everyone knows where the director stands and has stood foursquare for fifty years. If we had not followed his pronouncements over that time as he has admirably constructed his agency brick by brick we might gather it from his concentrated boxer's gaze—his bulldog jaw. As for the Attorney General, who built nothing but occupied an existing edifice of office with compassion and intelligence, we see something of his position in his long bloodhound's face, his aristocratic nose, his troubled eyes. These are prepossessing men and to some extent are prepositioned—prepostured as are we all. We see that the bulldog who knows throughout his fiber the mass and power of his opponent must be impatient with the bloodhound who does not really know his opponent except as traces in the air to be followed with uncertainty amidst a multitude of other stimuli. The bloodhound lives in a much more complicated world than the bulldog, but the bulldog has reason to believe that his is the more real.

We will assume that metaphoric strategies involve the placing of self and other pronouns on continua. The salient continuum here chosen by the director to confirm his position is the hard-soft one which is omnipresent in American life, as far as men are concerned. The first strategy of anyone who puts forth a metaphor in predication about a pronoun is to pick a domain of equivalence whose members have some apt shock value when applied to a pronoun and give perspective by incongruity. Almost

any domain will do if people know enough about it and the strategist is ingenious.

The strategy is to make it appear that the incumbent occupies a desirable or undesirable place in the continuum of whatever domain has been chosen. As Aristotle says, "To adorn, borrow metaphor from things superior, to disparage, borrow from things inferior." And while metaphors may be put forth in an honest attempt to assess the position the pronoun actually occupies as a consequence of its physical and social condition, we are generally inspired to metaphor for purposes of adornment or disparagement. If a pronoun inspires predication we generally want to move it about on the continuum. We want to put down or put up.

The second strategy belongs to the subject upon whom a metaphor has been predicated. If he does not accept the way he has been moved, he may choose to reorient the continuum. Reorientation is obtained first by finding members of the domain relatively less desirable and more opprobrious than the metaphor with which you are saddled: for jellyfish return octopus. Better a jellyfish than an octopus if one must dwell in the sea. For the one floats blithely upon its surface and the other is sinister and sunk in its tangled depths. We see here, incidentally, a complexity in metaphor which we should not deny though we will for the main part ignore it. A number of continua may be involved in any metaphoric predication. In the above example we have hard and soft, light and dark, above and below, grasping and relaxing. The continua may be so melded as to be indistinguishable, or they may be in an interesting state of tension.

Reorientation is obtained secondly by suggesting an alternative metaphor better placed on the continuum or continua. If a hawk calls you a dove, you suggest rather owl. Reorientation is obtained thirdly not by finding even more undesirable members of the domain or by offering an alternative metaphor but by giving a positive interpretation to what is ostensibly undesirable. If you are made out to be a bleeding heart on the corporeal continuum you return numbskull. For there is, after all, nothing intrinsically good about the end of any continuum. No culture is so unambiguous about its choices that a clever man cannot turn a continuum to his advantage. In a culture that lauds whiteness there is yet an attraction and an energy to blackness. In a competitive culture the last shall yet be first.

The final strategy in this enterprise of metaphoric placement is to change the venue. One simply chooses to pass beyond a boundary and as a consequence, it is another ball game. If one is disadvantaged in the domain of sea creatures, one shifts to the domain of corporeality and a desirable position in the gastrointestinal continuum.

The Quality of Cultural Space

In the intellectual sense the movement accomplished by these metaphors is from the inchoate in the pronomial subject to the concrete in the

predicate. These are basic if not kernel predications in social life which enable us to escape the privacy of experience. For what is more inchoate and in need of a concrete predication than a pronoun! Personal experience and social life cries out to us, to me, to you, to predicate some identity upon "others" and "selves." We need to become objects to ourselves, and others need to become objects to us as well. At the earliest moment our infants receive metaphoric attributions: they become sweet peas, tigers, little bears, kittens, little fish. How often those earliest objects are animals. And how inclined we are to comb the world for cunning animals to surround our children with. Is it that without them we feel helpless to give definition to the infantile inchoate? For millennia of course we have been in the most intimate contact with animals who have provided us with just such reference points in our quest for identity. But intellectual concretization is not the movement we are really interested in.

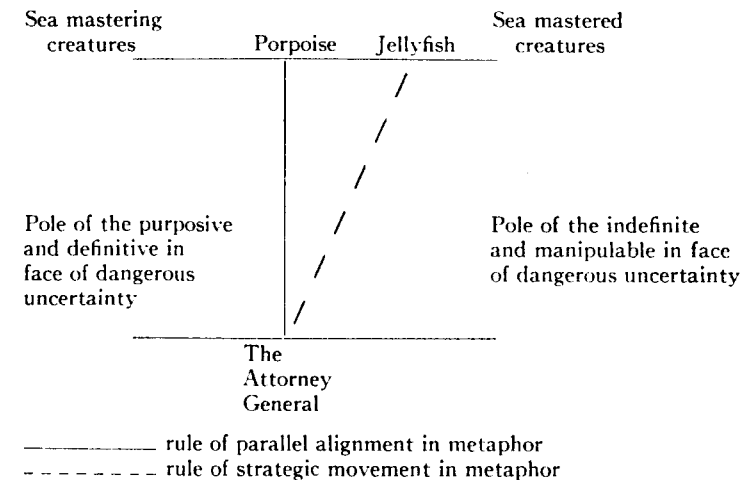
Let us say of George that he is a lobster. Men, faced with the inchoate pronoun, always have hard alternatives. Most reasonably we can appeal for clarification to the customary domains to which the subject belongs and offer a predication by superordination or subordination within that domain. Of George we say: he is a teller, he is a banker, he is a businessman, he is a Harvard alumnus, he is a father, he is an adult, he is a homo sapien, he is anthropoid, he is a vertebrate, and so on. Of course men belong to a number of domains and hence in qualifying the inchoate pronoun we must choose one domain or another: the domain of business activity, of educational activity, of domestic activity, of phylogenetic classification. We can combine domains but that always makes for problems—if not for us, surely for George. He is an ivy league anthropoid, or a businesslike father.

But to say of George that he is a lobster is to learn something very different about him. For it is to follow a different kind of logic in defining George than the logic of superordination or subordination within customary domains. George is not really an anthropoid. He really has, logically, more backbone than that. But in a deeper sense perhaps he does not. Perhaps he is a scuttling, snappish, popeyed, soft-centered, rigidly defensive creature. It is true that the mind by abstractions can integrate all its experiences. Thus, at a very high level of abstraction both George and lobster are members of the same domain. They are both metazoa. But for all practical purposes we see how metaphor accomplishes an unaccustomed linking of domains.

The shift in feeling tone—of adornment and disparagement—is also most always present and may be the dominant impulse to metaphor. Every metaphor has its mood which has motivated its employment and is perhaps a major part of the satisfaction of having employed it. Metaphor is, like synesthesia, the translation of experience from one domain into another by virtue of a common factor which can be generalized between the experiences in the two domains. These generalizable factors can be of

a variety, but there are two main kinds: structural and textual.¹⁰ In the case of structural metaphor the translation between realms is based on some isomorphism of structure or similarity of relationship of parts. By textual metaphor we mean an assimilation made on the basis of similarity in feeling tone. Thus in synesthesia when we speak of music being hot we are moving from one domain of experience, that of sound, to another, that of temperature. The Law of Parallel Alignment prevails. That is, in the domain of sound the rapid beat of jazz music has a parallel intensity on the scale of fast to slow to that on the temperature scale of hot to cold. Somehow that which is hot feels like that which is rapid of rhythm.

The metaphors in which we are interested make a movement. They take their subjects and move them along a dimension or a set of dimensions. They are not satisfied with parallel alignment, if indeed that were possible, given the inchoate nature of the pronomial subject. The Attorney General is really not as soft as a jellyfish, but the strategist hopes that saying it will move him and make it so in the eyes of others. On the continuum of purposiveness in the domain of sea creatures, the Attorney General is, perhaps, *really* a porpoise. The strategy is to make him out a jellyfish.



Behind this discussion, as the reader will have perceived, lies a topographic model of society and culture. I am inordinately attracted to it, but it may be useful. Culture from this view is a quality space of "n" dimensions or continua, and society is a movement about of pronouns within this space. Of course, pronouns move about by many means of locomotion, but the metaphoric assertion of identity by the linking of domains is one important way.

Since it is so difficult to think of a space as defined by "n" dimensions, we may have a Euclidean space by taking, for illustrative purposes, Charles E. Osgood's semantic space.¹¹ This space is defined by the three dimensions of goodness, potency, and activity. The meaning that Osgood's method explores and plots in semantic space is connotation—the feelings held about various concepts. Similarly, the topographic model proposed here would suggest that in cultural life pronouns come to possess appropriate or inappropriate feelings of potency, activity, and goodness attached to them. Language has devices of representation at its disposal, mainly metaphor, by which pronouns can be moved about—into better or worse position—in quality space. Social life from the perspective of this model is the set of those transactions by which pronouns, the foci of identity, change their feeling tone—the sense of potency, activity, and goodness attached to them.

Lest our discussion evolve into an "idee fixe" we had best remind ourselves that metaphors can serve a variety of functions: informative, expressive, declarative, directive, and so forth. I do not pretend that what I want to say about metaphor here encompasses all these uses. The point is that there is an important social use of metaphor involving the occupancy of various continua which in sum constitute a cultural quality space. Persuasive metaphors situate us and others with whom we interact in that space.

Some Fang Metaphors of Debate and Supplication

If we have spent some time here among cattle and rodents and with the implications of an acrimonious exchange that arose between two government officials, it is only because what that husbandry and that politics teaches us is an everyday lesson and a commonplace of the idiom of interaction in many cultures known to anthropologists. I learned a good deal about the skillful use of metaphor some years ago sitting day in and day out in the "palabra house" of the Fang people of western equatorial Africa. The Fang are a neo-Bantu culture practicing slash and burn agriculture in the equatorial forest. They rewarded me for paying such unrelenting attention to things that had no obvious personal implications with the sobriquet "the dispeptic one" (*nkwan minsili*)—that is, he who is sick by reason of the many questions he has on his stomach. In some quarters I was at first known as *nsinga*, the cat, probably because I was obliged to insinuate myself a bit too much. In any case having laid out our definitions and our model, I would like to discuss some metaphors characteristic of the Fang and say something about the continua upon which these metaphors operate.

The Fang institution of the palabra or council house (*aba*) is the most salient in the lives of men. Activity in the *aba* is almost constant, whether it be the manufacture of various crafts, folkloric performances of an evening, or the daily discussions, debates, and moots involving marriage,

divorce, brideprice, fraternal rights and debts, territorial claims, and inheritance. The Fang are a very open, unstructured, and egalitarian society and men are not appointed nor do they gain permanent positions as judges (*nkik mesang*) in village moots and litigation. But men are selected to hear and make judgments in the conflicts of others by virtue of a reputation they have achieved. And though selections are made on an ad hoc basis according to the affair at hand, the same set of men tend to appear as judges in repeated instances.

In general these men are called upon because they have a reputation, *ewôga*, that is a kind of authority granted to them because they are listened to (*wôk*, to listen, understand) and can make themselves understood. To say that they have this authority because they are eloquent, or persuasive, or intelligent, or wise is to deal in abstract descriptions which, though used by the Fang themselves, do not capture the metaphoric predications upon these people on the basis of which their reputation is established. One does not start out in any convincing way saying of a man he is wise, or eloquent. One starts by saying that he breaks palabra (*a buk adzô*) or he slices them (*a kik adzô*). For if you are so clumsy, however powerful, as to break apart a palabra you leave jagged ends which are hard to fit back together again. You do not resolve it; you simply put it off to another day when it shall surge forth again in perhaps more festered condition. But if you cut or slice it, the two parts may be easily put back together again.

In an egalitarian society where there is no effective hierarchy to enforce judgments, the slicing of a palabra demands careful ambiguity of statement. Aphorisms and proverbial statements, various kinds of metaphor in short, are very suitable for such purposes for they provide ways of commenting upon the essentials of experience in one domain by extending these essentials to analogous experiences in another domain. The essential wisdom of the comment may be preserved in the extension while a painful and indeed unenforceable precision is obscured.

But the point I wish to make is that the metaphoric description of juridic techniques—he is a slicer or he is a breaker of palabras—refers the listener to the domain of what we may call forest work. In Western culture we can easily understand the difference between breaking and cutting. But the distinction is much more loaded with meaning in Fang culture, where everyman, if he was to provide successfully for himself and his family, had to work the forest skillfully. He had to be a craftsman carefully cutting and not breaking raffia palm wands, lianes and other fibers, and all the various woods of the forest. Out of the equatorial forest Fang men make their shelters, their essential tools, their comforts, and their admirable carvings. For a people heavily involved in forest exploitation and forest crafts, the linking of this realm to techniques of argument and judgment is particularly convincing. Men cannot well survive nor be esteemed if they break rather than carefully cut in either arena.

Nkikmesang a kui elik—"The judge has arrived at the *elik*," the site of the former village deep in the forest. The implication is that the judge has found the old clearing in the forest where the resentments which have given rise to the present conflict lie. By casting light on these resentments he has clarified them, if not cleared them up. He has made his way skillfully through the forest (the affair). He has also—this is implied in returning to the *elik*—encouraged in the parties in conflict the sentiment of their common origins. One basic use of the variety of metaphor we have under view here is to encourage social sentiments—the primordial sentiments of a community and a common belonging or, on the other hand, of a lack of community and an exclusion. The apt judge is he whose verbal powers are able to encourage in the disputants a sentiment of common belonging.

Let me mention a final metaphor in this domain—there are so many—which are predicated upon participants. Not only is the *palabra* an obstruction which must be carefully sliced, it is also, as we have seen, a forest that one must wend one's way through. The clumsy disputant or judge chops down the forest, but that only leads to a conflagration. The able judge leads the parties in his judgment carefully through the forest to the discovery of the *elik*. And the able litigant as well should be capable of wending his way through the forest. In the process of argument a litigant (*nteamadzó*) may be complimented or may compliment himself on being an *nyamoro nsóm adzó*, "a mature man and a hunter in the affair." He is proceeding carefully and skillfully through the "forest." He breaks no twigs. By his verbal powers he reaches the "game" and makes it his own. Should he wish to disparage his opponent, he may refer to him as *nyamoro ózem*—"a man mature as the bearded monkey" (*cercopithecus talapoin*). With his beard he may appear as a full man but he is a chatterer not a debater. He does not dominate the "forest" by making his way skillfully through it, but simply plays around within it failing, as we would say, to know the forest for the trees. Moreover, rather than the hunter he is the hunted—in short, the dominated in the *palabra* situation. Here is another continuum, hunter-hunted or more abstractly dominating-dominated.

There are then a variety of continua upon which these *palabra* metaphors operate: slicing-breaking (chopping), skillful hunting-clumsy hunting (pathfinding), hunting-being hunted. By examination of this variety of continua we may come to the conclusion that we are dealing with one factor only, competence-incompetence. But such an abstraction does not capture a rich domain of Fang experience—the domain of forest and woods working—to which the events of the *palabra* house are referred by metaphoric extension. Because of the complexity of the *palabra* situation, it seems, it is difficult to see what makes a good litigant or judge. Metaphor extends that inchoate experience to more concrete domains of Fang experience where comparisons in performance are more easily recognized.

Everyone knows the difference between a good and a bad hunter. The evidence comes home in his bag. In the adversarial situation of the *palabra* house the strategy is to situate oneself advantageously and one's opponent undesirably in respect to the continua which characterize the relevant domains of metaphoric reference. The sum of the relevant domains and the set of respective continua constitute the quality space of Fang litigation. In that quality space, reputation is not first a matter of wisdom or eloquence. It is a matter of cutting or slicing, pathfinding, hunting. By such metaphoric predications do the Fang come to know their judges.

The adversary nature of life in the *palabra* house may perhaps give a special quality to the use of metaphor that we find there. Let us submit this proposition—that metaphors operate in respect to quality space—in another situation. Let us examine the metaphors put forth in supplications to divine powers (*evangiles*) in a Fang syncretist cult called Bwiti.¹² This cult has been active among the Fang since the First World War. Originally it was a reworking of various western equatorial ancestor cults, but recently it has been incorporating many Christian elements. One might say, of course, that the members of Bwiti do exist in an adversary relationship with the condition of the African in the colonial world. And they are using metaphor to situate themselves more desirably in respect to that condition.

The packing of meaning is typical of Bwiti sermons, but it happens that the particular branch of this cult from which the *evangiles* are taken (*Asumege Ening*—New Life) puts exceptional value on recondite speech and regards it as a sign of power in the cult leader. This packing of imagery and the illusive and often determinedly arcane manner in which sermons are put forth has led me elsewhere to discuss them as "unbelievably subtle words." As subtle as they may be, we may note a resonance with those metaphors of the *palabra* house which extend to the domain of forest work. The following text is taken from the *Evangile Fete Kumba*, the September 1959 Bwiti festival held before planting and preparation of the earth. It was given by the cult leader at Kougouleu chapel (Kango District, Gabon Republic), Ekang Engono, called *Akikos Zambé Avanga*.

Eboka tells us that the afterbirth of the spirit is the blood. Women must close the backdoor of the cookhouse before the setting of the sun. The member of Bwiti is buried in a white robe with ashes on his face for it is by means of fire that the Fang can chop down the trees to heaven. The spirit flees the body because of the noise of the body but when the body sleeps the spirit wanders fitfully. The Fang have come to divine that vibrating string on which music is made between heaven and earth—between God above and God below. That string is played sweetly. God below is the bath of the soul, the seat of the soul. For a child in being born falls to earth and must be cleaned of dirt that he may arise to the wind which is God above. Man can be tied as a package with that string—as his afterbirth is tied and buried in the earth—as the umbilical cord is tied and buried in the earth—as leftover food is tied in a leaf package to be eaten

later. We are all of us leaf packages of leftover food—the food of God above—we should not rot in that package for our brothers to eat us in witchcraft—we should open up that package so that God above may eat us—we should untie that string that leads us from God below to God above.¹³

Let us begin with the Bwiti name of the leader of the cult—*Akikos Zambi Avanga*. He is the “parrot’s egg—god who creates.” We also note the general name for the cult members—*Banzie* (angels, or those who fly). Both of these are metaphors of height, of loftiness, of heavenly connotation. The African gray parrot nests in the tallest trees of the equatorial forest and frequently in the *Adzap* (*minusops djave*), the sacred tree of the *Banzie*. The parrot has the power to speak. His red tail feathers have always been important in Fang ritual and folklore and are highly significant in Bwiti ritual which is organized around something they call the red “path of life and death” (*zen abiale ye awu*). The parrot is surely a liminal creature and difficult to categorize. But what I would emphasize is his occupancy of the high realms of the forest, his capacity to communicate, his characteristically purposeful, rapid, and unambiguous flight.

Now these metaphors are both very apt—that is, they make a proper movement—in respect to the situation of the Fang. For the Fang have in recent decades found themselves badly situated. As they would put it, they are too much of the ground—of things of dirt and earth and thickets. Figuratively, they find themselves meandering through dense undergrowth. Images of the ground and undergrowth abound in Bwiti *evangiles*. Clay and swamps and fens appear and men lost in the leaves of the underbrush who wander unable to see each other, let alone their tutelary supernaturals. There are powers of the below of course. These were the powers cultivated by the old religion—the ancestor cult and the witchcraft societies—powers of the dead, powers of the forest, secret powers of the living. Many of the Fang have come to adopt the generic term *Zame Asi*, God of the below, for these powers and their rituals. In Bwiti, Fang recognize the inescapable attraction of the evangelical God of the above, and in Bwiti they seek to establish by syncretism a communication between these two gods—a communication that is represented in this *evangile* by the vibrating cord of the one string harp, *béng*, seen as binding God below and God above together.

The metaphors of Bwiti *evangiles*—this should not surprise us—move the membership toward higher things—toward realms of the above. They do this by treating the members as *Banzie*—spirits of the wind. They do this by giving the leader his name—“the egg of the parrot”—the essence of the potential of superior knowledge. For the leader, like the parrot with his arresting cry and unambiguous flight, calls out to men below struggling and wandering in the suffocating thickets of the forest and gives them direction upwards.

Because this *evangile* does in fact give us a continuum of gods below

and above joined by a vibrating cord, it supports my point that metaphors operate upon continua—in this case belowness and abovelessness—moving people and things aptly about on the continua. I think this understanding is essential if we are to see how the *evangile* works, though admittedly the matter is not so simple. Rare is the communication between men and surely rare is the *evangile* that moves us only in one direction on one continuum. In the *evangile* given, something is surely said for belowness. Men are born to it. It gives them stability. They can stand on it though it dirties their feet and obscures their vision and, in the end, they stand on belowness, really, the better to launch themselves to abovelessness. The Bwitiest does not abandon *Zame Asi* in moving upwards. It is a rich source of creative tension in this cult to try to keep *Zame* below in mind as they search for the above. It is the tension between *Zame* above and *Zame* below that keep the cord vibrating.

To reduce any of these *evangiles* to movement on a continuum or a set of continua violates a deep richness they possess, a richness contained in some of their most apt metaphors. Consider the metaphor of man as a leaf package of leftover food tied by a string that should be connecting the below and the above. How aptly that image captures the notion of forest-bound man closed in by leaves. How aptly it captures the feeling of bodily decay, so widespread a feeling in the colonial period. How aptly it summarizes the anxiety Fang felt about the increase in witchcraft and the consumption of brother by brother. “Men are as food to each other.” At the same time there is a positive element in the image, for these leaf packets of leftover food are a great delight and solace to hunters and gatherers in the deep forest at noontime.

Who can deny that there are many subtle things to be said about the work of metaphor and symbol? Strategies may so often end in poetry, perhaps the ultimate strategy, where instead of being moved anywhere we are accommodated in many subtle ways to our condition in all its contrarities and complexities.

At the same time we should avoid making a mystery of these subtleties—making a seance out of science—if we can find a relatively reduced number of dimensions upon which we can follow essentials of movement in metaphoric predication. Despite all the things that can and must be said about the package metaphor, its object in the end is to convince the *Banzie* to disentangle themselves and become properly attached to the above.

The Performance of Metaphors

The metaphors which have interested us to this point have been mainly rhetorical. They have been put forth for reason of persuading feelings in certain directions. Still there are always the implications for action in

them. The metaphoric predication can be self-fulfilling. The king can be told so often that he is a lion that he comes to believe it. He roars at his subjects and stealthily stalks those he thinks are enemies to his interest. He finally springs upon them in fell and summary justice. In the privacy of our experience we are usually not sure who we really are. A metaphor thrust upon us often enough as a model can become compelling.

Such persistence in the application of metaphors does not often occur, so that persuasion does not usually pass over into performance. But at a deeper level of fantasy men may hold to predications which cause them irresistibly to organize their world, insofar as they can, so as to facilitate or make inevitable certain scenarios. It has been frequently remarked that the current American entanglement in Southeast Asia, complete with air cavalry, ranger battalions, and native scouts, is a scenario based upon a deep definition of our national pronouns as frontiersman or Indian fighter extending enlightenment and civilization over against the "hostiles" on the dark side of the frontier. Whether fantasies are lived out or not, they may still be defined as scenarios arising from metaphoric predication on pronouns.

In Bwiti we have a particular opportunity to witness metaphors arise in fantasy and be put into action. For the cult is especially attuned to fantasies and even promotes them through dependence upon the alkaloid narcotic *tabernanthe eboka*. The members of Bwiti feel that they obtain knowledge useful to ritual elaborations from their dreams and visions.

In a syncretist religious movement undergoing, before our eyes, its rapid evolution, we can readily discover what it is tempting to call the kernel metaphoric statements: the deep lying metaphoric subject (pronouns) and metaphoric predicate out of which by a series of transformations we see arise the complex surface structure of cult ritual. In my study of some six of these movements in Africa I have attempted to give an account of the organizing metaphors that appear time and again in ritual performance. These metaphors include the militant metaphor of Christian soldiering in the Apostle's Revelation Society in Ghana, the pastoral metaphor of the bull who crashes in the kraal in the Church of God in Christ in Natal, South Africa, the atmospheric metaphor of the circumambient Holy Wind (or Ghost) in Zulu Zionism, the linguistic metaphor of the voices of God in Christianisme Celeste in Dahomey, and the sylvan metaphor of the lost hunters and the parrot's egg in the Bwiti cult.¹⁴ These metaphors and their performative implications may be listed.

Metaphoric assertion

Performative consequence

We are Christian soldiers.

Our church activities must show our militance in fighting against the forces of the devil.

I (the pastor) am the bull who

In my sermons I must show my powers and

maintains order in the cattle kraal. You the members are the cattle I protect and invest with my substance.

I must lay on hands in the healing circles with such force that my power will shoot into the membership and they will be disciplined and directed. We must open ourselves up to the power of the pastor.

We are vessels of the Holy Wind.

Our actions must build up the presence of the wind around us and open us up so that we may incorporate it. We must fly.

We are the voices of God.

We must study the Bible so that we can learn God's language. We must concentrate our attention on sermons and seek speaking in tongues.

We are lost hunters in the forest searching for its secrets. I (the leader of this cult) am the parrot's egg holding a secret for which the membership must search.

Our liturgy and our leader must guide us through the forest and lead us to the secrets that the forest holds—principally communication with the wandering shades of the dead.

It should not be presumed that these are the only metaphors that appear in each of these cults though, I believe, they are the ones which set the dominant feeling tone of the cults and most do something for the members in a strategic sense.

Let us take just one metaphor from the Bwiti cult. It is a metaphor subsidiary to the one we have given above but it is in the same domain. It is the metaphor of the rituals of entrance into the cult house—*minkin*. The members say at this time *bi ne esamba* (we are a trading team). Historically the main association of this metaphor is with that adventurous team of young men that collected rubber and ivory at the turn of the century and took it to the coast to exchange for trade goods. These groups were characterized by high solidarity, the euphoria of hunting and gathering, and the satisfaction of a rewarding trading relation with the colonial world. It was a group with a sense of purpose which led to significant fulfillment. The aptness of this metaphor is readily understood when the goallessness, the lack of solidarity in village and kinship, and the high degree of ambivalence about the larger colonial world is grasped. For these conditions make for feelings to which the metaphor is a compensatory representation.

If metaphors are a compensatory representation in themselves, they are even more so when they are acted upon, when they are images in the sense of plans of behavior.¹⁵ In the case of the *esamba* metaphor, we see that it is an organizing force in the performance of the rituals of entrance and exit. These rituals, of course, are an accretion of many elements. But when we see narrow paths being cut through the underbrush on the margins of the village so that the membership at the midnight exit from the chapel can wend their way through the forest and then return, we have reason to assume a metaphor is being put into action as a plan of ritual behavior. And

when we see the rituals of entrance begin at the margins of the forest and dance as a tightly packed mass across the village plaza into the chapel, we have reason to assume we are seeing the realization of a metaphoric assertion. It is an old question as to how rituals arise. We may avoid the fruitless debate on the primacy of myth or ritual by stating simply: rituals are the acting out of metaphoric predication upon inchoate pronouns which are in need of movement.

People undertake religious experiences because they desire to change the way they feel about themselves and the world in which they live. They come into their particular cult with some constellation of feelings—*isolation, disengagement, powerlessness, enervation, debasement, contamination*—from which they need to move away. Metaphors put forth in these movements accomplish that. By persuasion and performance they operate upon the member allowing him eventually to exit from the ritual incorporated, empowered, activated, euphoric. They allow him eventually to exit better situated in quality space. Of course these are just psychological abstractions. My point here is that we come to understand these operations only if we study metaphoric predications upon pronouns as they appear in persuasion and performance. The strategy of emotional movement in religion lies in them.

Conclusion: What It Means to be Moved

The materials we have examined bear first on the way that appropriate impressions of persons are formed, but further they cast light upon the important question of the images of the ideal personality and how these images are generated. Boulding called our attention to the importance of this problem and to our persisting ignorance of how these images arise, compete, change, and decline. "Like the gods and goddesses of ancient mythology one almost gets the impression of ideal types battling above the clouds for the minds and allegiances of men. It is the fall of the ideal image that leads to the collapse of empires and the decay of cultures. Yet how little we know about the forces which support or destroy these powerful beings."¹⁶

I may not have accounted for the collapse of empires, but what I have said may relate to processes of decay in acculturation. It has been my view that the images of social beings are generated by metaphoric predications upon pronouns which are themselves the primary—if not primordial—ideal types. These metaphoric extensions generate qualities in pronouns. They invest pronouns with emotional meaningfulness if the domains into which extension takes place are important arenas of activity for the culture involved. If the forest, for example, becomes a less preoccupying arena of life for the Fang—as, in fact, because of their increasing activity along the arteries of commerce, it is—then it becomes harder and harder for the Fang

to form meaningful images of the peoples involved in the palabra house except by employing vitiated abstractions (wise, eloquent, forceful) or old metaphors dead or dying because they extend into moribund aspects of their lives. The vitiation of metaphor through drastic change in the domains of activity of a people is an aspect of acculturation that has not been fully enough explored. This vitiation makes it difficult for a people to have satisfactory feelings about their pronouns.

I have not been content, however, with examining the ways in which by use of metaphor we learn to have feelings about the qualities of people. I have suggested that there is a strategy involved in the adversarial condition of social life and that strategy involves placement of self or other on the various continua of the important domains of experience of a culture. The set of these continua define the quality space of that culture—the quality space within which the pronouns of that culture operate, or are operated upon.

It is my argument, therefore, that the systematic study of those most meaningful forms in human intercommunication—metaphors—involves among many other approaches the study of the movement they make in semantic space. A sensitive ethnography must obtain the metaphors that men predicate upon themselves so as to locate the movements they desire to make in the culture they occupy.

But we should not overestimate the applicability of this model. Though it indicates the method by which we must discover a structure of sentiment, it remains essentially topographic. To be a structural model¹⁷ it should specify the transformations to which the parts of the model are susceptible. Systematic description must show how the state of the space, that is the nature of the culture, imposes or inspires certain characteristic kinds of shifts in pronouns—toward, for example, greater potency or activity or goodness.¹⁸

In any event it is my view that these complicated and, so often, opaque structural matters must begin with a topographic model of quality space and with some idea of the movement that kernel metaphoric predications make in that space. And though this model may be problematic there is precedent in believing that our minds organize our perceptualized experiences by reference to their relative distances from each other on some pre-linguistic quality space which arises out of the very nature of life in a world defined by gravitational forces.¹⁹ Metaphoric predication would be the dynamic element in such a space. There may even be reason for believing, if we can learn from frogs in this regard, that what our ears, eyes, mouths are really telling our brains—or what the brain finally understands from what it is told—about the bloom and buzz of experience is the essential qualitative pattern of potency, activity, and goodness (edibility) of the things which catch our attention.²⁰

It will be enough if anthropologists pay attention in the field to the ways

in which men are aided in conveying inchoate psychological experiences by appealing to a range of more easily observable and concrete events in other domains of their lives. There must surely be some universals involved. It is likely that the domain of corporeal experience is used everywhere to clarify the heart and the head of many inchoate matters or the warmth or coolness of any personality. And it is likely, since the succession of bodily sensations is also a sequence of social experiences which arise to accommodate and control them as men mature, that the extension of social experience into the domain of corporeality and vice versa is also a universal.

While I first felt sheepish about taking up the problem of metaphor in the social sciences, I now feel more bullish. At the least we should have been tossed on the horns of the following dilemma which I believe fundamental to the understanding of culture. However men may analyze their experiences within any domain, they inevitably know and understand them best by referring them to other domains for elucidation. It is in that metaphorical cross-referencing of domains, perhaps, that culture is integrated, providing us with the sensation of wholeness. And perhaps the best index of cultural integration or disintegration, or of genuineness or spuriousness in culture for that matter, is the degree to which men can feel the aptness of each other's metaphors.

La Casona
El Pino
Alto Aller
Asturias

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13. The Fang from which this is a running translation is the following, a little over half of the full text: Ebôka a zô na: ku nsisim a ne meki. Nyi na nkawla mewala mesaman ye etun ôngoase mininga ye ayong nyingwan mebege a yian dzip nda mbi atarega. Môt a dzebe ye mfum étô ening mon Fang é dzô alé. Nsisim wa mara êkôkôm akale a ne engôngôm. Edô a ne oyô. Mwan Fang a nga sô a zu a sok beng nye na; Zame esi Zame ôyô. Nya na beng é ne nkôl, nya na e ne fe etuge nzum, nya na Nzame esi enye éne etok nsisim, Nzame oyo a ne mfonga. Minkol mite emyo Nyingwan Mebege a nga eka mwan . . . bininga bi kak êkôp. Bia bise bi ne nyim Zame. Edô nyim a nga sô sô etôm. Bôbedzang be dzi nyim . . . ô ta dzi nyim, nyim Nzame. Aki Kos Zambi Avanga enye a nga kôbô. Me mana dzô. Bi nga van tsi beng nyim Zame.
14. References to each of these cults and their organizing metaphors may be found in the following: Fernandez, "Revitalized Words from the Parrot's Egg and the Bull Who Crashes in the Kraal: African Cult Sermons," *Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society for 1966: Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts* (1967), pp. 45-63; *Microcosmogeny and Modernization*, Occasional Papers, Centre for Developing Area Studies, McGill University (1969), pp. 1-34; "Rededication and Prophetism in Ghana," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, no. 38, VII (1970), 228-305.
15. George A. Miller, E. Galanter, and K. H. Pribram, *Plans and the Structure of Behavior* (New York: Holt, 1960).
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18. Some of these things can be worked out with the model as it stands, where all we need to investigate are predications across domains of the form; P is A [I (a man) am a hawk]. Of greater interest are complex associations within and across domains of the form, still derived from these basic predications; P1 : P2 :: A : B [I (a man) am to you (a woman) as hawk is to dove]. For in these formulae we begin to get a sense of order in culture—a sense of congruences in sets of associations within and across domains. And beyond that and still of greater interest are the characteristic

transformations that metaphoric associations undergo in various bodies of expressive culture, such as ritual. These are purportedly summed up for us in the sybelline Lévi-Strauss formula over which so much blood has been shed.

$$f_x(a) : f_y(b) :: f_x(b) : f_{a-1}(y)$$

This may be read in terms of our argument here as: The emotional movement or function (x) accomplished by some metaphor (a) is to the movement (y) accomplished by some metaphor (b) as the appropriation by metaphor (b) of its complementary movement (x) is to the transformation of a previous metaphor (a) into a significantly new movement (a-1) of a new metaphor (y) itself transformed from a previous movement. The only thing this can mean in terms of our discussion here is that movement can be transformed into metaphor and metaphor into movement within a given quality space.

An article on "The Performance of Ritual Metaphors," which attempts to give an account of metaphoric transformations in ritual, will appear in a collection of articles on *The Social Use of Metaphor*, edited by David Sapir for Cornell University Press.

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