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# 1

## Persuasion, Legitimacy and Leadership

### 1.1 Language and leadership

Within all types of political system, from autocratic, through oligarchic to democratic, leaders have relied on the spoken word to convince others of the benefits that arise from their leadership. The more democratic societies become, the greater the onus on leaders to convince potential followers that they and their policies can be trusted. As Burns (1978: 18) explains: 'Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers.' The argument that I will develop is that the most important type of behaviour by which leaders mobilise their followers is their linguistic performance. In democratic frameworks it is primarily through language that leaders legitimise their leadership.

In democracies voters make decisions on the basis of overall impressions of the reliability, honesty, morality and integrity of politicians as much as on their actual policies. Multiple factors influence the impressions we have of politicians; we gauge their personality through aspects of appearance – physical features, dress etc. – and through visual aspects of their behaviour such as mannerisms and gesture. Indeed we are only partially conscious of how a bundle of interacting attributes contribute towards our judgements of a politician's credibility as a leader. Various media make different demands on human communication resources: dress and gesture are important in face-to-face communication; voice quality in radio communication and facial features and face and eye movements are particularly important in television because of the potential for close-ups. Though successful performance requires skill in all of these – as

confirmed by the political success of professional actors such as Ronald Reagan and, more recently, Arnold Schwarzenegger – it is *linguistic* performance that is common to *all* these communication media. This is why language is crucial in the gentle arts of persuasion and impression management through which leadership is performed.

In this book I will explore some of the linguistic performances of those who are recognised as highly successful political leaders in twentieth-century western societies. I will argue that choice of language in general and metaphor in particular is essential to their overall persuasiveness. Identification of the cognitive and affective basis of metaphor can explain why it is necessary for successful leadership. I will also argue that metaphor is systematically related to other linguistic strategies and propose that it is central to the creation of persuasive belief systems. This, I suggest, is because it exploits the subliminal resources of language by arousing hidden associations that govern our systems of evaluation. The subliminal potential of metaphor is not one that has previously been identified in relation to political discourse and is, I suggest, central to the performance of leadership.

I employ an empirical method to investigate the relation between language and leadership. First, I identify the rhetorical features used by some of the most reputed twentieth-century British and American political orators. I then identify their metaphors and classify these according to their linguistic content (i.e. their 'source domain') and according to what they describe (i.e. their 'target domain'). Once I have collated metaphors in this way, I employ cognitive semantics to identify certain propositions or assumptions that underlie metaphor use. In simple terms this means inferring from a group of language uses an underlying proposition that seems to explain systematic correspondences between their linguistic choices and metaphorical meanings. An example may serve to make this approach clearer. The following metaphors were all chosen from Party Conference speeches of Margaret Thatcher and they concern different areas of policy such as inflation, home ownership and schools:

Inflation threatens democracy itself. We've always put its victory at the top of our agenda. For it's a battle which never ends. It means keeping your budget on a sound financial footing.

Home ownership too has soared. And to extend the right to council tenants, we had to fight the battle as you know, the battle in Parliament every inch of the way. Against Labour opposition. And against Liberal opposition.

A new battle for Britain is under way in our schools. Labour's tattered flag is there for all to see. Limp in the stale breeze of sixties ideology.

In each case the use of the word 'battle' is a metaphor from the domain of conflict to describe a different type of political situation. This implies the underlying propositions:

OPPOSING INFLATION IS A BATTLE

OPPOSING POLITICAL OPPONENTS IS A BATTLE

In each case the metaphor 'battle' describes different political actions. The basis for this association can be represented with a general statement that captures an underlying assumption on which they are based to yield a 'conceptual' metaphor: POLITICS IS CONFLICT. As Burns notes in his classic study of leadership:

Leadership as conceptualized here is grounded in the seedbed of conflict. Conflict is intrinsically compelling; it galvanizes, prods, motivates people...Leadership acts as an inciting and triggering force in the conversion of conflicting demands, values, and goals into significant behaviour. (Burns 1978: 38)

There is also evidence in choices of words such as 'victory' and 'tattered' that there are strong evaluations associated with political actions. This value system is described with the language of military combat – of victory and defeat – and so linguistic choices communicate that this leader places a positive value on competitiveness. This value system reflects a general view of human and social relations that informs the use of language. In cognitive terms we can say that the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS CONFLICT describes the idea underlying Margaret Thatcher's conflict metaphors. Understanding the systematic nature of metaphor choices is therefore necessary if we are to understand how entire belief systems are conceived and communicated. This is because metaphor is a stylistic characteristic of the persuasive language of political leadership.

In this chapter I will first introduce some general ideas concerning the making of political speeches; I will then explain what I mean by 'persuasion' and its relationship to rhetoric. I will discuss the role of metaphor in developing political arguments, its relation to ideology and myth, origin in cognitive semantics and role in critical linguistics. I will consider how our understanding of the language of political leaders

may be enhanced by an investigation of the interrelatedness of persuasion, rhetoric, metaphor, ideology and myth. In the following chapters I will then illustrate how a number of famous twentieth-century political leaders have successfully exploited metaphor and myth in their use of rhetoric in the persuasive communication of ideology.

## 1.2 The art of speech making

Classical rhetoric identified three main contexts within which speeches could occur. First is the *genus deliberativum* – a speech that needs to be persuasive because it deals with an important controversial topic within a public setting; next is the *genus iudicium* for making judicial decisions. Finally, there is the *genus demonstrativum* – or epideictic address that is undertaken for some form of display (as in eulogies) (Sauer 1997). This book will necessarily concentrate on the first of these types of speech. However, all of these types assume that speeches are only given to live audiences who were present at the speech event.

Classical rhetoric also distinguished between issues of structure and style. Structure was concerned with the sequencing of components of a speech that govern the audience's ability to follow an argument. Initially there is a need to gain a hold on the audience through *heuresis*, 'discovery', and then to proceed according to a plan (*taxis*). Stylistic choices of language were known as *lexis* in classical terminology. Taken together *heuresis*, *taxis* and *lexis* were necessary in the conception of a speech but equally important were issues of performance or delivery; these included techniques of memorising and gesture. Persuasive rhetoric would be characterised by the fluency that comes from concealing the presence of a pre-existent text and accompanied by appropriate gestures.

The *taxis* or structure of an argument contained five stages: the first was an introduction (*exordium*) in which the speaker aims to ingratiate the audience. Techniques could be orientated towards the audience such as flattery or an appeal to their goodwill, or orientated towards the speaker – as in a confession of inadequacy. Alternatively they could appeal to the *sharing* of interests between speaker and audience – as in the use of first-person plural pronouns. The next stage was the outline of the argument (*narratio*); the following stage was support of the argument with examples, precedents or analogies (*confirmatio*). There was then anticipation of counter-arguments (*refutatio*) and finally the *conclusio* in which there would be some form of appeal to the better instincts of the audience. We will find that many of these features continue to be used in contemporary political speeches.

Early modern studies of speech making were concerned with the management of the interaction between leaders and followers; for example, Atkinson (1984) uses the term ‘claptrap’ to refer to a range of strategies used by political speakers that could be investigated by measuring audience applause. Atkinson identified linguistic strategies such as – when introducing a politician – saying a few words about the speaker before actually naming him or her; he also identified strategies such as three part lists and the use of contrastive pairs. While his approach is admirable, I will argue that metaphor is equally essential to a leader’s persuasive force. This is especially the case when these other rhetorical strategies interact with metaphor since it is the combined effect of various strategies that is most effective in political speeches. The overlapping of diverse rhetorical strategies creates a powerful interplay that ensures persuasive political communication.

I would like to illustrate some rhetorical strategies first with reference to Tony Blair’s 2002 Party Conference speech and then with reference to Margaret Thatcher’s 1987 Party Conference speech. A strategy favoured by Blair is the use of pairs of clauses in which the syntax and lexis are matched to produce what are known as ‘sound bites’ – short, memorable and quotable phrases that encapsulate arguments. These pairs of clauses are also known as parallelisms, and are shown in Table 1.1:

Matched clauses are selected by Blair because they communicate assertiveness and simplicity: two traits that correspond with the

*Table 1.1* ‘Sound Bites’ in Tony Blair’s 2002 Labour Party Conference Address

- 
1. We’ve never been more interdependent in our needs and  
We’ve never been more individualist in our outlook.
  2. They want Government under them not over them.  
They want Government to empower them, not control them.
  3. Out goes the Big State. In comes the Enabling State.  
Out goes a culture of benefits and entitlements. In comes a partnership of  
rights and responsibilities.
  4. We give opportunity to all.  
We demand responsibility from all.
  5. I don’t have all the answers.  
I don’t have all the levers.
  6. You’ve lost your love of discipline for its own sake.  
I’ve lost my love of popularity for its own sake.
  7. We haven’t just nailed the myths about Labour of old;  
we’ve created some legend of achievement about New Labour too.
-

intention of the speech: to persuade the conference to support his policy in relation to Iraq. There is extensive evidence that other rhetorical features are effectively combined with clause matching; half the examples are combined with *antithesis* or contrast (1, 2, 4 and 6). And – since the goal of party unity is an important rhetorical objective of this type of speech – another half are used in conjunction with the pronoun ‘we’ (1, 4 and 7). I suggest that the combined effect of these linguistic features is to produce phrases that will catch media attention.

A favoured strategy for Margaret Thatcher is the rhetorical question responded to by a three-part list:

Just why did we win? I think it is because we knew what we stood for, we said what we stood for. And we stuck by what we stood for.

Mr President, Labour’s language may alter, their presentation may be slicker, but underneath, it’s still the same old socialism.

Here the third element summarises and reinforces what has gone before. Without the third element the *parison* would be incomplete – with it there is a clear signal to the audience that this is an optional (and optimal) point for applause.

Various research into conversation (Tsui 1994), and other forms of spoken interaction such as classroom discourse (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975), have indicated that spoken discourse is typically organised in terms of three parts. A first part, or initiation, a response and then, a required third part; the role of the third part varies according to the discourse setting. The motivation of the third element is not so much to convey information (as with the first and second parts) but to make the interaction socially acceptable and well formed in terms of the social relations that exist between the participants. In political speaking I suggest that the function of the third part is to reinforce the meaning of the first two parts by repetition and to indicate completion. This type of signalling of discourse structure is important in speech making because it indicates a transitional point, where there is the option of applause. As Atkinson argues:

In the first place, the speaker must make it quite clear to them that he has launched into the final stages of delivering an applaudable message. Secondly, he has to supply enough information for them to be able to anticipate the precise point at which the message will be completed. (Atkinson 1984: 48)

Margaret Thatcher's speech contains an example of *antithesis* in which sequencing and comparison are combined to contrast the period of the last Labour government prior to 1979 with the period after the third Conservative victory. The contrast between the 'then' of Labour and the 'now' of Conservatism forms a leitmotif running through the speech – as in the following:

The old Britain of the 1970s, with its strikes, poor productivity, low investment, winters of discontent, above all its gloom, its pessimism, its sheer defeatism – that Britain is gone.

And we now have a new Britain, confident, optimistic, sure of its economic strength – a Britain to which foreigners come to admire, to invest, yes, and to imitate.

Here the contrast between old Labour that is associated with disharmonious industrial relations and low productivity is contrasted through pairs with a new, efficient and productive Conservative Britain.

Apart from figures that exploit sequencing and comparison Margaret Thatcher employed other rhetorical resources such as biblical allusion:

Far be it from me to deride the sinner that repenteth. The trouble with Labour is they want the benefit of repentance without renouncing the original sin. No way!

Sarcasm:

I have a feeling that, if Dr Owen didn't know it before, he knows now: six inches of fraternal steel beneath the shoulder blades.

Sarcasm and irony are stylistic choices that communicate the attitudes of the speaker towards the topic.

What is important, though, about discursive modes and figures of speech is that they *act in combination with one another* rather than in isolation; indeed we often isolate them solely for the purpose of analysing effective communication strategies. Atkinson (1984: 48) wishes to

stress from the outset that the successful claptrap always involves the use of more than one technique at a time. This is because of the difficulties involved in co-ordinating the activities of a large number

of individuals, not all of whom can be relied on to be paying full attention to what a speaker is saying.

Biblical allusions, modes of discourse such as irony and sarcasm, recounting anecdotes and rhetorical questions are all ways of arousing audience interest and retaining the attention of the hearer. Successful leaders do not take audience attention for granted and hail their potential followers through a rich and varied range of rhetorical strategies: it is the combined effect of a variety of rhetorical strategies that comprise the language of leadership.

Although politicians have frequently relied on ghostwriters in the past, in modern times increased reliance on speechwriters raises important issues of authorship. The use of speechwriters may be seen as part of a wider process of media management 'whereby political actors may seek to control, manipulate or influence media organizations in ways which correspond with their political objectives' (McNair 2003: 135). The role of speechwriters is to develop a rhetoric that reinforces the myths that assist in creating a politician's image. Speechwriters only choose words that fit the politician's image and what is important is how the politician is presented. In the world of contemporary political marketing, authorship relies on a team of skilled individuals – each with their own areas of expertise. But rhetoric can only communicate effectively when it complies with the myths of a unique political image that is 'owned' by the politician.

Though modern political speeches are generally the outcome of a collaborative effort, choices of language are intended to create the myths that will legitimise the individual politician who delivers them. The political speaker is more than a mere mouthpiece in this process because ultimately he or she has the opportunity to edit the content of the speech and to improvise in its style of delivery. Though the words he or she utters may originate in the minds of invisible others, the politician is ultimately accountable for them. What is said is recorded in official sources (e.g. *Hansard*) and may subsequently be quoted back to the source who cannot deny or disown it. The role of speechwriters is, then, to support the marketing of a 'brand' that is created by the individual politician and therefore it is the politician who must be considered as the author of his or her speeches.

### 1.3 Persuasion and rhetoric

Rhetoric is the art of persuading others, therefore rhetoric and persuasion are inseparable since any definition of rhetoric necessarily includes the idea of persuasion. The essential difference between the two is that rhetoric

refers to the act of communication from the hearer's perspective while persuasion refers both to speaker intentions and to successful outcomes. Hearers are only persuaded when the speaker's rhetoric is successful. In classical antiquity the definition of rhetoric was *ars bene dicendi*, the art of speaking well in public (Nash 1989). As Sauer (1997) notes, this definition requires a *comparative* judgement because it assumes that some people speak better than others do – this is evident from speech events such as debating competitions and parliamentary debates. The most rhetorically successful speech performance is the most persuasive one as measured by followers' responses. Rhetoric may therefore fail if it is not persuasive.

The classical tradition of rhetoric went beyond the orator's act of communication to his qualities of character, or *ethos*. A model orator was necessarily morally virtuous (*vir bonus*) and could only persuade if his behaviour met with social approval. So successful rhetoric entailed both an effective heuristic or *logos* (the content of a speech), and a speaker who was ethically beyond criticism. There is, then, an inherent tension between evaluation of *the linguistic choices* that form a text and evaluation of *the behaviour* of the speaker. It is failure to understand this tension that has historically led to the emergence of a negative sense of rhetoric as over-decorative use of language; this sense assumes that rhetoric is style alone and not also the values and behaviour, or *ethos*, of the speaker. We find it also in phrases such as 'empty rhetoric' or 'rhetorical ploy' that refer to language use independently of behaviour. It is because of the semantic colouring that has occurred in the historical evolution of the term rhetoric that we need to consider the more inclusive notion of persuasion.

Persuasion is an interactive communicative process in which a message sender aims to influence the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of the message receiver (cf. Jowett and O'Donnell 1992: 21–6). It is important to distinguish the two roles in the communication process. In persuasion the active role of the sender is characterised by deliberate intentions: persuasion does not occur by chance but because of the sender's purposes. As Jamieson (1985: 49) argues:

Intention is a kind of focussing device in the imaginative consciousness; it concentrates and thus it excludes; it is a selective device, selecting an image to be raised into consciousness from a range of alternatives. Without intention, nothing has prominence, therefore one has to intend when one imagines.

Although the receivers' role is passive, if persuasion is to be successful the message needs to comply with their wants and needs, their desires

and imagination. In democratic political contexts the intention of aspirant leaders is to attract potential followers to themselves or to their policies. This occurs initially at the stage of election when the politician is seeking to gain votes, and subsequently when the politician is persuading other politicians to vote for their policies so they become law.

Jowett and O'Donnell (1992) argue that there are three ways in which the persuader may seek to influence the receiver of a persuasive message; these are response shaping, response reinforcing and response changing. However, I think these can be simplified to two: persuasion either seeks to *confirm* or to *challenge* existing beliefs, attitudes and behaviours – persuasion is never devoid of intention. However, in both cases persuasion involves exploiting *existing* beliefs, attitudes and values rather than introducing completely new ones. As Jowett and O'Donnell put it:

People are reluctant to change; thus, in order to convince them to do so, the persuader has to relate change to something in which the persuadee already believes. This is called an 'anchor' because it is already accepted by the persuadee and will be used to tie down new attitudes or behaviors. An anchor is a starting point for a change because it represents something that is already widely accepted by the potential persuadees. (1992: 22–3)

This is particularly true in political contexts where the majority is often unsure or uncommitted on the detailed content of policy. They respond more effectively to messages that explain proposed actions with reference to familiar experiences; successful politicians are those who can develop their arguments with evidence taken from beliefs about the world around them. Messages become persuasive when they evoke things that are already known or are at least familiar. As Jowett and O'Donnell go on to say:

A persuader analyses an audience in order to be able to express its needs, desires, personal and social beliefs, attitudes, and values as well as its attitudes and concerns about the social outcome of the persuasive situation. The persuader is a voice from without speaking the language of the audiences' voice within. (ibid.: 25–6)

Metaphor is a very effective means through which potential leaders can communicate with the 'voice within' because it creates evocative

representations of the speaker and their policies by arousing emotions and forms part of the process by which an audience reconstructs the causal relationships of an argument.

Central to classical rhetoric were the notions of *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*. Aristotle argued that in addition to taking a stance that was morally worthy (*ethos*) and proofs to support argument (*logos*) the successful rhetorician should also be able to arouse the feelings (*pathos*). This could be done both through considering fundamental human experiences such as life and death and an argument that appealed to the feelings. I would like to illustrate how Tony Blair did this in his October 2002 conference speech. This was a difficult speech because of his stance in relation to the evolving crisis in Iraq where he was attempting to support a largely unpopular policy of direct military intervention by the USA. He is believed to have dispensed with the services of New Labour speechwriters and authored most of the text himself. Consider first the sections of the speech that establish his *ethos*:

The value of progressive politics – solidarity, justice for all – have never been more relevant: and their application never more in need of modernisation.

One of the goals of the speech was to integrate the international issue of Iraq and domestic issues such as reform of the public services and this explains the selection of broad notions such as ‘solidarity, justice for all’ that could apply equally to foreign and home policy. He openly addresses the key leader’s role of decision-making:

Let us lay down the ultimatum. Let Saddam comply with the will of the UN. So far most of you are with me. But here is the hard part. If he doesn’t comply then consider . . . Sometimes and in particular when dealing with a dictator, the only chance of peace is readiness for war.

He admits directly that from a leader’s perspective the decision is difficult but takes a firm and direct stance in relation to the issue. This is stated explicitly later on:

The right decision is usually the hardest one. And the hardest decisions are often the least popular at the time.

The rhetorical goal is to establish his *ethos* by convincing the audience that though difficult decisions may not be popular, they are, nevertheless,

right – and this accounts for the main argument of the speech which is introduced at the beginning and repeated at the end:

We are at our best when we are boldest.

This short alliterative statement introduced by the first-person plural pronoun indicates firmness of stance and reluctance to compromise or take half measures as regards domestic and international policies. The speech was well received because it appeared to be ethically motivated – although it entailed following the foreign policy of a right-wing government in the USA and involved the country in an unpopular war.

Other parts of the speech switch from ethos to pathos by shifting from broad abstract issues to particular personal ones; these are illustrated by recounting narratives drawn from personal experience:

From progress here to life and death, abroad, it is happening. A month ago I visited Beir district Hospital in Mozambique, there are as many doctors in the whole of Mozambique as there are in Oldham. I saw four children to a bed, sick with malaria. Nurses dying of AIDS faster than others can be recruited. Tens of thousands of children dying in that country needlessly every year. I asked a doctor: what hope is there? Britain is our hope, he said. Thanks to you we have debt relief. Thanks to you we have new programmes to fight AIDS and malaria.

Here it is the *particular* children that he saw and the *particular* conversation he had that evoke feelings that would probably not be aroused simply by descriptions of general social problems without cameos of personal experience.

Within the contemporary context, the media have a powerful influence on how persuasion is performed. Speeches are encountered in the domain of the home and therefore the tone and style of delivery need to be intimate and domesticated. Through his or her ubiquitous presence on television or radio the speaker becomes an intimate voice and while politicians may no longer need to kiss a baby, they must at least look like someone who we would readily invite into the private world of the home. Exposure is also crucial to politicians working with the media in mind: political speeches are now designed to contain phrases that are brief, topical and frequent so that they can be readily taken up as ‘sound bites’ to be constantly recycled through the broadcast media. Persuasive political phrases must necessarily be creative and appealing incantations in order to compete for attention with the ever-increasing artfulness of

advertisements through an ever-increasing number of media channels. One of the characteristics of successful politicians in the twenty-first century will be the ability to adapt their rhetorical method to different contexts and cultures of consumption.

Although the media may be novel there is nothing inherently novel about the communicative purpose of persuasion since this takes us back to the classical notion of *pathos*: the ability of the speaker to arouse the emotions of his audience. Aristotle's important development of Plato's thinking on rhetoric is that he clarified the relationship between cognition and emotional response; prior to Aristotle, emotion was seen as *opposed to* reason and as likely to *impair* judgements. However, Aristotle identified that – just as emotional responses could be influenced by reasoned persuasion – so reasoned persuasion could be influenced by the emotions. In this work I will argue that analysis of metaphor provides insight into the interdependency of emotion and cognition. I will also comment on how the demands of modern cultures of consumption entail that the persuasive potential of the medium of communication is necessarily taken into account.

#### 1.4 Metaphor

In this section I will define and discuss some aspects of metaphor and in the following one I will define and discuss ideology and myth. However, it is important that we start with a general understanding of their interrelationships. I suggest that ideology, myth and metaphor are similar in that they share a common discourse function of persuasion and the expressive potential for cognitive and emotional engagement. They differ in the extent to which appeal is made to conscious cognition or to unconscious association. As with reasoned argument (or *logos*), ideology appeals through *consciously* formed sets of beliefs, attitudes and values while myth appeals to our emotions (or *pathos*) through *unconsciously* formed sets of beliefs, attitudes and values. Metaphor is an important characteristic of persuasive discourse because it mediates between these conscious and unconscious means of persuasion – between cognition and emotion – to create a moral perspective on life (or *ethos*). It is therefore a central strategy for legitimisation in political speeches.

Metaphor influences our beliefs, attitudes and values because it uses language to activate unconscious emotional associations and it influences the value that we place on ideas and beliefs on a scale of goodness and badness. It does this by transferring positive or negative associations of various source words to a metaphor target. These associations may not

be ones that we are fully conscious of because they have an emotional basis. Metaphorical meaning is determined by the sorts of connotations aroused by the words in their normal non-metaphorical or literal use. This is known in linguistics as semantic prosody (Louw 1993). For example, we may not be aware that words associated with conflict often have a *positive* association in British discourse. However, in an analysis of press sports reporting I discovered that they were ubiquitous and invariably associated with attributes that appealed to the emotions such as strength, courage and determination (Charteris-Black 2004). This association may explain why, as we saw in section 1.1, Margaret Thatcher chose to use them so frequently. The discourse role of metaphor is to legitimate policies by accessing the underlying social and cultural value system.

Aristotle (in *Poetics*, Ross 1952: 1457b) defined metaphor as ‘giving the thing a name that belongs to something else’. The etymological origin of the word metaphor is from the Greek *meta*=with/after and *pherein*=bear, carry; clearly, the central notion of metaphor is one in which meanings are transferred. The notion of movement is very important in metaphor because it is the possibility of movement and change that creates the potential for metaphor to evoke emotional responses. We should recall that motion and emotion have the same etymological source and – given this – it is not surprising that metaphors are emotion-arousing bearers of meanings. Metaphors move us because they shift the way that we understand the world and influence our feelings about it.

Charteris-Black (2004: 21) defines a metaphor as ‘a linguistic representation that results from the shift in the use of a word or phrase from the context or domain in which it is expected to occur to another context or domain where it is not expected to occur, thereby causing semantic tension. It potentially has linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive characteristics.’ There are several important features of this definition; first a metaphor is first and foremost a *linguistic* phenomenon – though it does have pragmatic and cognitive characteristics. Secondly, because metaphor is an aspect of language use, *any* word form can be a metaphor if the context makes it such. Next, the shift implies that there is a *change* in use and therefore there are *two* domains: a source where the word ‘normally’ occurs and a target where it does not. Crucially, metaphor is therefore a matter of our *expectations* – based on our previous experience of language. It is a *relative* rather than an absolute phenomenon because the meanings of words change at different rates for different individuals according to their differing experiences of language. What was once literal may become metaphorical for speakers as a whole but may also

be *more* or *less* metaphorical for an individual speaker at any one time because judgements of what is normal depend on language users' idiosyncratic experiences of language (cf. Goatly 1997).

Metaphor's linguistic characteristic is that it causes semantic tension either by reification or personification. Reification is referring to something that is abstract using a word or phrase that in other contexts refers to something that is concrete: for example, if a political leader speaks of 'the path of justice' or 'the road to victory'. Personification is referring to something that is inanimate using a word or phrase that in other contexts refers to something that is animate; for example, if a leader refers to a country as the 'Motherland' or the 'Fatherland'. Another type of personification is what I call depersonification (Charteris-Black 2004: 21), that is referring to something that is animate using a word or phrase that in other contexts refers to something that is inanimate: for example, when the phrase 'collateral damage' is used to refer to the innocent and unintentional victims of bombing. Underlying this semantic tension are the emotional associations that words have for us.

Metaphor's pragmatic characteristic is that it is motivated by the underlying purpose of persuading. This purpose, which is obviously central in political speaking is often covert and reflects speaker intentions within particular contexts of use. The cognitive characteristic is that a metaphor is caused by, and may cause, a shift in the conceptual system. The basis for the conceptual shift is the relevance or psychological association between the attributes of the original referent of a metaphor (i.e. of a word in its source domain) and those of the metaphor target. This relevance or association is usually based on some previously unperceived similarity between source and target and is often determined by the values placed on them by cultures. For example, cultures may place different values on physical conflict. Therefore when these metaphors are used in politics they transfer a set of culturally based psychological associations and beliefs that we have about conflict on to political issues, thereby causing us to think about them in a new way.

## **1.5 Metaphor in political argumentation**

There has been a recent expansion of investigation into the role of metaphor in political discourse. This can be classified in terms of the types of text selected as data by researchers and the authors of these texts. There are press reports of politics that are authored by journalists and others working in the press and the media; there are speeches, policy statements, press conferences and political debates authored by

politicians and their political advisers; and there are creative works authored by fictional writers. In the following I will concentrate on the first two of these types.

Musolff (e.g. 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2003) has undertaken a range of interesting studies of metaphor in the reporting of political issues in the British and German press. He traces in particular how the same metaphor can be adapted over time according to the specific needs of users in specific discourse contexts. He undertakes detailed studies of metaphors from the domains of transport and health but sees no tidy correspondence between the pragmatic or discourse effect of metaphor and actual linguistic forms. Others find a more consistent matching of pragmatic effect and linguistic form; for example, Santa Ana (1999) found evidence of negative evaluation in a metaphor *IMMIGRANTS ARE ANIMALS* underlying the reporting of immigration issues in the *Los Angeles Times*. White and Herrera (2003) found evidence of negative evaluation in the metaphor *MONOPOLIES ARE DINOSAURS* in their analysis of the press coverage of corporate takeovers. Other studies of press political reporting include Pancake (1993) and Zinken (2003). One of the characteristics emerging from metaphor studies of press reporting is that metaphors provide colourful and accessible means of explaining abstract notions. They can also be used to convey the values of the journalist (or the newspaper for whom they are writing) and thereby influence the reader's interpretation of current political issues. Speakers cannot escape metaphors that have become the established ways of referring to political ideas but these metaphors can be modified to accommodate shifts in political position.

Our understanding of metaphor as a persuasive and rhetorical instrument is developed further in the second type of research concerned with the way that metaphors are used discursively by politicians as strategies for advocating their own policies or opposing the policies of others. A good example of this work is Rohrer (1995) who examines the metaphors used by President George Bush Senior to conceptualise the political situation in the Persian Gulf in the pre-war period of August 1990 to January 1991. In particular, he contrasts the larger metaphor systems of *THE PERSIAN GULF CRISIS IS WWII* with *THE PERSIAN GULF CRISIS IS ANOTHER VIETNAM* as he argues:

Nowhere else does the adoption of a metaphor system result in as stark a difference in the engendered inferences, because although the 'WWII' metaphor and the mapping of Hitler onto Hussein would result in an imperative to go to war, the 'VIETNAM' metaphor's focus on war as chaotic, unpredictable, and perhaps ultimately unwinnable would

reject a decision to go to war in favor of continued sanctions. (Rohrer 1995: 118)

Other research in this tradition includes Chilton (1996); Chilton and Ilyin (1993); Howe (1988); Jansen and Sabo (1994); Lakoff (1991); Semino and Masci (1996); Straehle et al. (1999); Thornborrow (1993); and Voss et al. (1992) some of which I have outlined in an earlier work (Charteris-Black 2004).

Political leaders become persuasive when their metaphors interact with other linguistic features to legitimise policies. Leaders use metaphors that will represent their own policies in a positive light and or will disparage those of opponents. Chilton summarises the legitimising purpose of political discourse as follows:

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

However, it is interesting that when he analyses the linguistic strategies he gives just as much importance to what he refers to as delegitimation as he does to legitimisation and argues that:

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

Indeed metaphor is often used both to legitimise and to delegitimise in the same text; for example, Sandikcioglu (2000) contrasts positive self-representations of the West as the centre of Civilisation, Power, Maturity, Rationality and Stability with negative frames of Other representation: Barbarism, Weakness, Immaturity, Irrationality and Instability. Such contrasting evaluations were also found in press reporting of political issues as Musolff (2003) identifies how the same

metaphor of a two-speed Europe can be positively evaluated by the German press while negatively evaluated in the British press. Similarly, at the time of writing, Tony Blair has been mocked in the House of Commons for having reversed an earlier decision on whether to have a referendum over the proposed EU constitution; this is because he claimed in his September 2003 conference speech to 'have no reverse gear'.<sup>1</sup> In this way metaphors may be turned against their authors and a strategy of legitimisation may become one of delegitimation.

I would like to illustrate how Margaret Thatcher employed metaphor in combination with other rhetorical strategies in the creation of such strategies of legitimisation and delegitimation. In her 1987 conference address at Blackpool (after her third consecutive election victory), a relation of contrast, or antithesis, underlay Thatcher's representation of the policies of the Labour Party when they were in power with current Conservative policies. The basic contrast was between underlying metaphors for each party's policy: CONSERVATIVE POLICY IS A LIFE FORCE and LABOUR POLICY IS A DEATH FORCE. These conceptual metaphors interact with the other rhetorical strategies such as three-part lists and contrasting pairs to legitimise the free market. I will indicate metaphors using italics:

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Blair's use of the metaphor was itself an allusion to Margaret Thatcher's 1980 conference address in which she used the phrase 'The Lady's not for turning' to convey her intention to continue with her policies in spite of a deepening recession and rising unemployment (cf. Jones 1996: 27).

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

Each of the first three paragraphs contains a three-part list that identifies three negative characteristics of Labour policy (the context shows that Labour is equated with urban planners). The creation of a scapegoat for the negative social phenomena is an important way of pre-empting criticism of the effect of Conservative policies. The fourth paragraph highlights the positive results of Conservative policy and legitimises free enterprise.

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

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

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

The two italicised phrases are life images – one is based on an inanimate notion (fire) while the other is based on an animate one (youth). Both animate and inanimate images serve to reinforce each

other and the use of transitive verbs implies the positive effect of free enterprise. Leadership is based on such imaginative creations because even though the evidence from reality may be limited, metaphor assists in the creation of a perceived reality that corresponds with political motives.

There is extensive evidence in the speeches of Margaret Thatcher that she is able to draw on life images to convey very strong and potent political evaluations. Further evidence of the role of language in leadership occurs in her first conference address after Britain's victory against Argentina in the Falklands war:

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

Here 'patriotism' is associated with 'spirit' which is, in turn, associated with 'those spring days'. Had Thatcher simply referred to 'April and May', or used an expression such as 'earlier in the year', the emotional impact of her oratory would have been quite different. The choice of 'spring' is an iconographic choice that activates the same underlying conceptualisation CONSERVATIVE POLICY IS A LIFE FORCE.

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

## 1.6 Ideology and myth

The concept of ideology has become very important in critical linguistics and accounts of ideology (e.g. Flood 1996 and Hawkins 2001) distinguish between different definitions of ideology according to whether they carry a negative or a neutral sense. The negative sense can be summarised as 'false consciousness' and the neutral sense as 'a comprehensive and coherent social perception of the world' (Hodge and Kress 1993: 15). My own understanding of ideologies is that they provide coherent and comprehensive representations of reality that serve as the basis for engaging in social life. They are group perceptions that provide a focus to the belief system of the group and an underlying rationale for the forms of action in which its members typically engage. As Seliger (1976: 14) proposes, ideologies are:

Sets of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, and specifically political action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order.

I see ideology as a higher level concept that incorporates both systems of belief that are linked to political practice as well as those that are linked to religious practice. This view fits with the Hodge and Kress view of ideology:

As a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view. Ideology is thus a subsuming category which includes sciences and metaphysics, as well as political ideologies of various kinds, without implying anything about their status and reliability as guides to reality. (Hodge and Kress 1993: 6)

I will therefore define ideology as a belief system through which a particular social group creates the meanings that justify its existence to itself, it is therefore an exercise in self-legitimation. I will propose that metaphor is a very important linguistic and cognitive resource employed by political leaders for achieving this goal. By making decisions about what is right and wrong, good and bad, an individual engages in a process of self-legitimation that places him-, or her-, self within a social group that shares those meanings. Language and communication play important parts in this process because ideology is a consciously formulated set of ideas that comprise an organised and systematic

representation of the world and therefore forms the basis for acting in the world.

The essence of legitimisation by political leaders is to identify a set of values regarding what is good and bad because these beliefs as to what is good and bad form the basis for political action. Communication style is essential to legitimisation – as Jamieson (1985: 74) suggests:

Persuasiveness of a non-rational kind persists in natural language, particularly in the ethical use of words. Ethical language, words used to convey concepts relates to value judgement, of duty, moral obligations, of feelings towards things, people and events (like ‘duty’, and ‘ought’, ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’) appear not to carry information in terms of knowledge or beliefs, but to convey manner or to exhort.

Legitimation is not therefore a rational process and leaders employ ethical language as the basis for an emotional invitation to share a perception of what is right and wrong. As I have illustrated above, political leaders who base their metaphors on the lexicon of conflict – employing words such as ‘battle’ and ‘fight’ – have the power to arouse emotions that are associated with physical combat such as pride, anger and resentment. These emotions then evoke strong feelings of antipathy towards an entity whom they identify as ‘the enemy’ – or the villain – and strong feelings of loyalty and affection towards a ‘hero’ figure, typically themselves. Metaphor is not the only way of articulating ideology since an ideology may also draw on a single abstract domain (based, for example, on notions of class or notions such as ‘God’). However, because metaphor draws on two domains by relating abstract notions to our experience of concrete realities, it is an effective way of making an abstract ideology accessible because it is affective. Political leaders are usually very effective at making the abstruse and abstract seem personal and responsive to real human emotions and it is this skill that enhances their legitimacy.

A very common way of communicating ideology is through myth. A myth is a story that provides an explanation of all the things for which explanations are felt to be necessary. These could be the origins of the universe, the causes of good and evil, the origin of the elements, of male and female or anything else that is believed to be mysterious. Myth engages the hearer by providing a narrative that embodies a set of

beliefs expressing aspects of the unconscious. It provides a narrative-based representation of intangible experiences that are evocative because they are unconsciously linked to emotions such as sadness, happiness and fear. Its function in discourse is to explain with a view either to entertainment or gaining power. Myth is therefore a two-sided weapon that can be used for evaluation with a positive or a negative purpose.

Cassirer (1946: 49) proposes that the origin of religious myth is in a desire to provide a rational answer to the problem of death in a language that was understandable to the primitive mind. Myth was a way in which death could be explained as a change in the form of life. He quotes Euripedes: 'Who knows if life here be not really death, and death be turned into life?' The forces that underlie all mythology and religion could also be said to characterise Thatcher's use of metaphors discussed above to describe Labour policies for urban development as related to death and the Conservative policy of urban renewal as related to a life force. Her oratory provides extensive evidence that a subliminal use of metaphor can activate two of the deepest human emotions: love of life and fear of death. It is hard therefore to deny that success as a leader is based on sophisticated handling of myth.

I propose that metaphor analysis is a methodology for the identification and description of what Flood refers to as a political myth. This is 'An ideologically marked narrative which purports to give a true account of a set of past, present, or predicted political events and which is accepted as valid in its essentials by a social group' (1996: 44). As Geiss (1987: 29) notes 'a political myth is an empirical, but usually not verifiable, explanatory thesis that presupposes a simple causal theory of political events and enjoys wide public support'. Words such as 'purport', 'not verifiable' and 'simple' imply a perspective that is *independent* of those who accept myths and the presence of others who challenge the easy causal explanations offered by them. Critical examination of rhetoric is necessary in order for a narrative explanation to be classified as 'a myth' rather than 'a truth' and I propose that analysis of politicians' metaphors is central to an exercise in drawing distinctions between myth and reality.

An example of a political myth is the attitude to immigration conveyed by Norman Tebbit in the now famous claim that Britain was in danger of being 'swamped' by immigrants – clearly the association of being overwhelmed by something unpleasant, as if in a swamp, has a strong negative force. The myth is that the number of immigrants will outnumber the number of natives so that the latter become absorbed by the former; in fact in multi-racial societies it is often the immigrants that are absorbed into the native 'swamp'. The 'swamp' metaphor arouses

feelings of fear and it is interesting that the same metaphor has been revived at the time of writing in connection with asylum seekers who some New Labour politicians claim to be swamping the country. Critical Metaphor Analysis reveals that evaluations implied by political myths are positive or negative and is a method for understanding *how* political myths communicate ideology.

Another example of a metaphor that is sometimes used in a political myth is the use of a verb such as 'creep' to evoke a negative evaluation by attributing movement normally associated with an animal or an insect to a human agent. This would be an easy way to activate unconscious fears of animals that move slowly close to the ground with a view to hunting a human prey. In this respect metaphor is involved in myth creation since it activates an unconscious response (the negative emotion of fear) based on a culturally influenced perception (e.g. that insects or animals that move slowly, close to the ground are dangerous). Systematic use of metaphor is part of an ideology because metaphor mediates between myth and ideology. Identification of the conceptual basis of metaphors is a way of explaining the associations that underlie metaphor. Since evaluation is central to ideology, the myths on which it is based can be revealed though analysis of the metaphors occurring in political speeches.

A final example of political myth is Thatcher's description of socialism with a range of metaphors evoking negative feelings. These were anything from an unreliable person, a second-hand car, to an illness or even original sin: the metaphors differ but they all draw on negatively evaluated cultural stereotypes. Second-hand cars are associated with unreliability in Britain and their salesmen have a low social status. The narrative theme of this political myth is that socialism is bad and will cause some form of social damage unless it is stopped; the argument is one in which an associative relation is treated as if it were a causal one. What is remarkable is the consistency and regularity with which Thatcher reiterated this narrative in her conference speeches. There is no room for compromise with anything that is represented as a form of social menace and arouses fears for self and the family. It is interesting how in the 1990s and after the decline of socialism as a political force, other political myths related to paedophilia, terrorism and Islam have emerged. There has been no shortage of demand for easy explanations of phenomena that are both potentially threatening and difficult to understand in an increasingly complex world.

Successful leaders rely on the recurrent power of imagery to activate culturally based schema of what constitute sources of fear and forms of

social menace; the aim of political policies is to eliminate this source of fear. Fear is, of course, very closely related to control since the more cause there is for fear of certain social groups (Muslims, terrorists, paedophiles, etc.), the greater the rationale for other forms of social control. These include monitoring prayer venues, use of the World Wide Web, and examining the contents of e-mail messages and chat room discussions. In this way the construction of political myth impinges very closely on the freedoms with which people live their lives. Creating simple causal explanations before the real causes are known leads to solutions being imposed that may not deal with genuine causes. As Jowett and O'Donnell suggest, a myth is a story in which meaning is embodied in recurrent symbols and events, but it is also an idea to which people already subscribe; therefore, it is a predisposition to act (Jowett and O'Donnell 1992: 215).

Edelman (in Geiss 1987) identifies three particular political myths as follows:

1. The myth of the Conspiratorial Enemy is a myth in which a hostile out-group is plotting to commit some harmful acts against an in-group. It is interesting to see how Reagan's representation of the Soviet Union as 'an evil empire whose leaders are the focus of evil in the modern world'<sup>2</sup> has been reinvented by George W. Bush's notion of an axis of evil comprised of countries who were purported to support international terrorism.<sup>3</sup>
2. The Valiant Leader myth is one in which the political leader is benevolent and is effective in saving people from danger by displaying qualities of courage, aggression and the ability to overcome difficulties. Geiss (1987) illustrates this with reference to John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.
3. The United We Stand myth is a belief that a group can achieve victory over its enemies by obeying and making sacrifices for its leader.

What is interesting as regards Edelman's myths is that they show how a discourse of legitimisation involves some form of threat, some form of response to that threat and the emergence of a valiant leader. In a discourse-historical analysis of four 'calls to arms' speeches by leaders

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Geiss 1987: 54.

<sup>3</sup> This was made in the State of the Union Address in January 2002 and referred specifically to the development of weapons of mass destruction in North Korea, Iran and Iraq.

Graham et al. (2004) identify four legitimisation strategies. These are appeals to a 'good' legitimate power source ('God', 'the people', 'the nation, etc.), appeals to history or historical mythology, the construction of a thoroughly evil Other (infidels, terrorists, etc.), and appeals for uniting behind a legitimate power source. While these correspond well with the first and third of Edelman's myths, they omit to mention that successful legitimisation in political speeches also makes claims for heroic leadership. Political power is not based solely in abstract systems of ideas and beliefs or ideologies – but in the flesh and blood presence of a leader. Ultimately many people evaluate ideologies and ideas on the basis of how they evaluate the individuals with whom they are associated. We now need to develop a methodology for exploring further how myths are systematically created and how their evaluations may be determined.

### 1.7 Critical Metaphor Analysis and cognitive semantics

Critical Metaphor Analysis is an approach to the analysis of metaphors that aims to identify the intentions and ideologies underlying language use (Charteris-Black 2004: 34). There are three stages to this approach: first metaphors are identified, then they are interpreted and then they are explained. Metaphors are identified using the criteria outlined in section 1.4 – as regards whether words cause semantic tension because they occur in unexpected contexts. In each of the following chapters I illustrate some of the considerations that were used in identifying metaphors in the sections entitled 'Metaphor analysis'.

To assist in the interpretation of metaphors I employ the cognitive semantic approach towards metaphor. This was originated by Lakoff and Johnson's classic work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), and modified in later work (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Lakoff 1987, 1993, and 2002; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Johnson 1987). The basic claims of this approach are that the mind is inherently embodied, thought is mostly unconscious and abstract concepts are largely metaphorical (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 3). The basis for their claim for conceptual metaphor is that because thought has evolved out of the sensory and motor systems, metaphorical expressions originate in underlying (or conceptual) metaphors that themselves originate in human bodily experiences of space, movement, containment, etc. (Johnson 1987). There is a single idea (a proposition or a conceptual metaphor) linking a bodily with a non-bodily experience that underlies a number of different metaphoric uses

of language. Consider the following that were used in a crucial speech made by Tony Blair:

Forward or back  
I can only go one way.  
I've not got a reverse gear.

This is our challenge.  
To stride forward where we have always previously stumbled. (30 September 2003)

Here a conceptual metaphor, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, explains the choice of words such as 'go one way', 'to stride forward', etc. This means that there are different metaphorical expressions in which an abstract target (i.e. LIFE) is systematically related to a source domain that is grounded in bodily experience (i.e. JOURNEYS). The conceptual metaphor takes the form A is B and represents the experiential basis that underlies a set of metaphors. It does not mean that metaphors can *only* take this form or *predict* all the forms that will occur but it explains what is probable rather than what is possible in language use. As with the account of metaphors in section 1.4 conceptual metaphors represent what is normal (or 'unmarked') in metaphoric use.

We can provide a very economical way of describing political myths by interpreting different metaphors with reference to conceptual metaphors, or propositions, that account for the relations between them. I am not proposing that Critical Metaphor Analysis is the *only* method for understanding a political myth. A number of other methods have been developed in Critical Discourse Analysis by researchers such as Hodge and Kress 1993; Fairclough 1989, 1995a, 1995b, 2000; and Wodak 1989. Wodak summarises the aims of Critical Discourse Analysis as being 'to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use' (in Wodak and Meyer 2001: 2); and comments that 'A defining feature of CDA is its concern with power as a central condition in social life, and its efforts to develop a theory of language which incorporates this as a major premise' (ibid.: 11).

As far as figurative language is concerned it is not only metaphor that is important in critical analysis; for example, when Enoch Powell used the expression 'Rivers of Blood' in April 1968 he was combining a metaphor CONFLICT IS BLOOD with a metonym BLOOD FOR RACE. A metonym is when a word, or phrase, is used to refer to something within the same semantic field – we know, for example, through our understanding of DNA that there is a semantic connection between ethnicity and blood. It is the

activation of both metaphoric and metonymic thinking that made the image so powerful – especially when linked with the classical reference to the River Tiber. Chilton (2004: 117) argues in his analysis of this speech:

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

It is primarily figurative language that causes this emotive response. Similarly, in the lead up to the Iraq war there was much discussion as to whether there was a ‘smoking gun’ that would prove that Iraq was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. Here ‘smoking gun’ was a metonym referring to all types of destructive weapon, but also evokes emotions of fear and danger that arise from witnessing a gun crime. Metonyms therefore also serve the purpose of political myth creation.

Identification of conceptual metaphors leads to the third stage of Critical Metaphor Analysis – explaining the ideological motivation of language use. For example, if we examine the words that a political leader uses from the semantic field of conflict, some may be literal (e.g. when referring to ‘defence’ policies) while others may be metaphoric (e.g. when ‘attacking’ political opponents). Identification of a conceptual metaphor such as POLITICS IS CONFLICT is a way of explaining the interrelation between such literal and figurative uses – it shows a proposition or assumption that underlies language use. It is also a way of explaining fundamental differences in ideological outlook; for example I will argue that POLITICS IS CONFLICT was systematically replaced by POLITICS IS ETHICS in the discourse of Tony Blair. Critical Metaphor Analysis therefore enables us to identify *which* metaphors are chosen and to explain *why* these metaphors are chosen by illustrating *how* they create political myths.

Metaphor is both pervasive and persuasive when employed discursively in the rhetorical and argumentative language of political speeches. For example, in his State of the Union Address in January 2002 President Bush said: ‘States like these (Iran, Iraq and North Korea) constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.’ He

concluded 'Our enemies send other people's children on missions of suicide and murder. They embrace tyranny and death as a cause and a creed.' Here, personifications such as 'embracing tyranny and death' and the use of 'evil' and 'creed' imply that: THE USA IS THE MORAL LEADER. Such uses of language show how the domains of ethics and politics become interconnected by metaphor. Critical Metaphor Analysis also shows how the metaphors of one social or political group may be taken over, exploited and developed by those of another for competing ideological ends.

In this book I argue that persuasion in political speeches is performed by a selection of metaphors in combination with other rhetorical strategies. Critical Metaphor Analysis provides us with a methodology for the analysis and interpretation of ideology and illustrates how legitimisation is performed linguistically. Identification of conceptual metaphors may appear subjective but the analytical method is clear and the reader is free to challenge metaphor classifications. There is an element of subjectivity in all experience of metaphor – this is inevitable because it is not possible to predict entirely emotional responses to language and this does not mean that language-based enquiry should be restricted to what is predictable. It is never quite possible to predict the precise combination of attributes that will make for a successful political leader. However, identification of possible intentions underlying metaphor choices through conceptual metaphor analysis is a way of forming theories about persuasive language and its relationship to the will to govern.

When analysing political speeches using Critical Metaphor Analysis the cognitive semantic approach needs to be complemented with a summary of the social context in which the speeches were made and of the overall verbal context of metaphor. Cognitive characteristics of metaphor cannot be treated in isolation from other persuasive rhetorical features in the discourse context. The value of the cognitive semantic approach is that it permits comparisons to be made of how metaphor is used differently by political leaders and to identify metaphors that are common to them all. In order to understand questions such as *why* one conceptual metaphor is preferred to another we need necessarily also to consider rhetorical issues such as the leader's intentions within specific speech-making contexts: metaphors are not a requirement of the semantic system but are matters of speaker choice. Cognitive semantics and Critical Metaphor Analysis are important linguistic contributions towards a theory of rhetoric for political communication.

## 1.8 Summary

In this chapter I have argued that metaphor is vital to the language of leadership because it mediates between the conscious and rational basis of ideology and its unconscious mythical elements. Metaphor draws on the unconscious emotional associations of words, the values of which are rooted in cultural knowledge. For this reason it potentially has a highly persuasive force because of its activation of both conscious and unconscious resources to influence our intellectual and emotional response, both directly – through describing and analysing political issues – and indirectly by influencing how we feel about things. It therefore plays a crucial social role in forming and communicating ideology that I have argued is vital to political leadership because it creates discourses of legitimisation and delegitimisation.

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

The aim of this work is to raise critical awareness of the language that is used by political leaders to convince others of their thoughts, beliefs and values through a discourse of legitimisation in which political myths are created. I propose that a better understanding of the conceptual basis for metaphor – and how this relates with other aspects of rhetoric and persuasion – will provide a clearer understanding of the nature of these thoughts, beliefs and values and the myths through which they are communicated. Critical awareness of how discourse is

used to persuade and to create legitimacy is an important area of knowledge for those who wish to engage within a democracy. The social role of the leader may become a less threatening one – although no less powerful or influential – once the language of leadership is better understood.

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