Cultural Wisdom, Communication Theory, and the Metaphor of Resonance

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Introduction

Western communication theory is based on the conduit metaphor. Information is transmitted by putting messages into forms, sending them through channels (the conduit), and decoding them for the receiver who retrieves the messages. This model underlies linguistic theory, communication theory, semiotics, and a plethora of other language related disciplines. In working with various shamans in American Indian cultures, the author has experienced another metaphor of communication, the metaphor of resonance. It is argued that one cannot teach wisdom and that one learns about life by experiencing it. Understanding others comes when an individual is able to resonate with the experiences of others because he has experienced them in his personal repertoire or historical biography. It is not surprising, therefore, that many non-Western cultures focus on non-verbal communication rather than rhetoric, wisdom rather than knowledge, apprenticeship models of learning rather than formal education, and silence rather than verbosity as means of communication. It is also argued that many traditional aspects of oriental cultures also share this metaphor of communication, i.e., Zen Buddhism. The implications of this metaphor of resonance for communication theory and cross-cultural communication are discussed. They each contribute to understanding, but in dissimilar ways and for different reasons. The conduit metaphor articulates the complexity of human thought and promotes the sharing of knowledge. The resonance metaphor, on the other hand, synthesizes experiences and enables people to identify with the wisdom of others, and to share emotions with them along with other profound human experiences.

The Rhetorical Foundations of Western Thinking

Western thinking is rhetorical (Foucault, 1966). It is based on the belief human communication consists largely of established forms, patterns, and structures. One should ask if this has always been the case? Have Western cultures always relied on language and representation as a means of human communication? Anyone who has studied the foundations of Western culture knows that rhetoric was not always the dominant mode of communication among Europeans. There was a time in Western thought when one acquired knowledge of an event by participating in it (Turner, 1960). When an event of some importance occurred and when others wanted to understand the significance of this past event, it was assumed that understanding could only come about by recreating the event through action. The use of rituals enabled people to resonate with these past experiences. One finds, for example, the purging (κα θ αρσισ) of emotions through participation (δρομεν) in Greek drama (Cornford, 1937, 1957). Similarly for agriculturists, the rite of Spring was a way of understanding the arrival of the new season, an important event for those who make their living working with the soil of the earth. Likewise, the rite of passage from childhood to adulthood was celebrated through rituals which marked significant changes in the life of an the individual who was officially welcomed into a society through such a ceremony. Rituals are things that people do. They are not meanings buried in words. They are meanings buried in actions. The chants that accompany rituals are not words. They are sources of harmony. They function as resonance markers and are similar to vibrating tuning forks that beg others to join them in resonance. As a culture changes, the meanings of these ancient rituals begin to lose their relevance and new rituals take their place. Unfortunately, modern cultures have lost contact with this ancient way of knowing and understanding. It has replaced them with the metaphor of language, a system of signs. Experiences are now presented again through signs (Langer, 1942). They are re-presented. For Suzanne Langer (1942) the signs were musical, artistic, or even logical. For Turner (1960), the signs were ritual acts. For Foucault (1969), the signs were linguistic.

Around the time of the Renaissance, a major epistemological shift in European culture took place. Michel Foucault (1969) has discussed this shift in his *Archeology of Knowledge*. He noted that people replaced their current way of understanding through symbols. They no longer attempted to copy art (Gombrich, 1963) nor did they attempt to relive experiences through ritual. When they wanted to relate the significance of a past event, they re-presented the event into a code, a system of symbols and signs. The event was presented again in a new format: words, pictures, signs, and symbols. One learned of the past by studying pictures,

reading books, and listening to stories and tales of past happenings. The reason why Foucault calls this major shift in Western thinking 'an epistemic rupture' is simply because the event itself was no longer of importance within the new cultural framework. It was replaced by the new importance attributed to representation. The retelling of a story became more important than the original story, the frozen pictorial representation of an event took on greater significance than the actual live experiences themselves. The picture become more important than the event itself. The Spanish painter, Velásquez, aptly captured this cultural shift in *Las Meninas*. This portrait, Foucault notes, shows several people in the painting looking directly at the passing voyeur. They all seem to stop their actions to look at the intended audiences of the painter, the viewer, the art critic, the collectors of art. One sees the painter in this work of art; his gaze is directed outward, looking out of the painting directly at towards the viewer. The children are also looking at the viewer. On the back wall of the scene, one finds a mirror and in that mirror one sees the real benefactors of the painting, the King and Queen. Their image is reflected in mirror, but they are not directly depicted in the painting. They are re-presented in the mirror. They are mere reflections of the actual event. Even the artist is given a more prominent position in this work of art than the King and Queen themselves. The painter, it is interesting to note, presents himself at the center of his own painting of the royal couple. He is also looking out of the painting towards the viewers of his work. The artist has recast the circumstance into his own interpretation of the event, into his own special code of colors, lines, and shapes. He has redesigned the event in accordance with his needs and concerns. The situation that brought about the event will be forgotten, but the painting will not. It is locked into the forms of the visual code, the painting itself.

Foucault goes on to mention that this was the time of the rise of the novel in Spain. It was the time when the reality of daily experiences were also represented into novels as literary narrations. The printed word become one of the new codes of representation about the experiences of life. For many readers the representations of these events took on greater significance than the actual experiences of daily life. The symbol became more important than the reality, the event itself. Just as Velásquez was aware of this cultural shift and depicted the irony of symbolic realism in his painting, so too did Miguel de Cervantes share his understanding of these shifting world views in his satire of the picaresque novel. In the novel, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, the errant knight, Don Quijote, believes that what he reads in his novels are truly real. He accepts these representations of reality as real. A more recent statement by Foucault (1982) about the belief in symbols can be found in one of his books, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*. The title of the book announces (This is not a pipe). However, what one finds is a large picture of a pipe on the front cover of the book. Many of those who encounter this image is tempted to argue

against the title of the book by rejoining that it surely is a pipe. Foucault notes that they are unaware of what a strong role symbolism plays in their lives. It is not a pipe, but merely a picture of a pipe.

More recently, other modern scholars have addressed the nature of symbolism and the language metaphor (also known as the conduit metaphor). Susanne Langer (1942) was concerned with music symbolism and eventually shifted her work to the study of artistic representation (Langer 1967, 1972, 1982). This American philosopher is well aware of the limits of language as a system of representation. Her attack on the limits of the language metaphor, it should be noted, can also be found in her works on symbolic language (Langer, 1953), a work that one assumes to be in advocacy of the significance of logic as a code of reason. The German philosopher, Jörgen Habermas (1963, 1981) is also concerned with the limits of language as a system for representing reality. He believes that communication should be situated in the *Sprechakt* (the speech act). In speaking, one has contextualized a situation, and this context is social, historical, and personal. A speech act involves doing things with others. He does not want to separate the richness of the human experience of intercommunication by limiting it to contemporary models of semiotic thinking, viz., incorporating and constraining the richness of meaning into a poverty of forms.

The Limitations of the Language Metaphor

Michael Halliday (1976, 1978, 1985) has argued that language is a system for making meanings. It is a semantic system. He finds that linguists have become so enamored of the code that they forgot that language is a social phenomenon.; it involves people, places, times, events, and social meanings. Perhaps a more insightful and more comprehensive view of the limitations of the linguistic code comes from the sociologists, Berger and Luckmann (1967). In their book on The *Social Construction of Reality*, the authors argue that language is the medium for social interaction. It is through language that one shares his view of social reality with others. Language is a social expression of human interactions and written communication provides a record of those public events. They differ from most linguists in their depiction of how language operates within a social milieu. Language is not a mere system of signs in which meanings are related to linguistic forms, it is a social complex process that involves three simultaneous processes: thoughts are externalized into language; language codifies these expressions of self; and language influences social thought.

The call the first **process externalization** because one has to take inner ideas, meaning, thoughts, feeling, intuitions, and other forms of the personal self and put them into a linguistic code. The process of encoding is important because the

expressions of self are limited by the semiotic codes of society. There is a propensity to codify one's own rich experiences into the language of the society or culture in which one lives. This means that many aspects of one's own personal feelings, ideas, thought, experiences, tastes, smells, memories, fears, doubts, and concerns are ineffable. They cannot be put into words. Advertisers and poets are known for their attempts to modify language. A poet will use the linguistic devices of metaphor and metonymy in the language as tools for expressing the uniqueness of his own world of values, feelings, thoughts, and so on. When the Fitzgerald created *Tender is the Night* as the title for one of his books, he employed syntagmatic and paradigmatic rules in the language as his own linguistic tools.

Literal:	The night is dark.
Paradigmatic:	The night is tender.
Syntagmatic:	Tender is the night.

Advertisers also use special forms of language to capture unique thoughts. Pepsi Cola wanted to created a feeling of a new generation that was part of the present. They coined the expression, 'the now generation.' The form 'now' is not an adjective; it is a temporal adverb. Hence, they were forced to breach grammatical rules in order to express their own ideas.

Literal:	The time is now
Paradigmatic:	The generation is now
Syntagmatic:	The now generation

Once a linguistic form is made public, it takes on a life of its own. It is reified or institutionalized. It undergoes the **process of objectification**. The dictionary and the grammar of a language can be characterized as 'books of the dead' because they objectify language. They divorce the language from the speech events themselves. The contexts of language have been abstracted and idealized. Just as a physicists abstracts and idealizes the material world into mathematical forms (Bochmer, 1981; Dijkersterhuis, 1986), so do linguists abstract and idealize the social interaction of life into linguistic forms and patterns.

When Benjamin Whorf and Edward Sapir argued that language influence thought, they had the **process of internalization** in mind (Brown, 1967; Carroll, 1956; Penn, 1972; and Rossi-Landi, 1973). George Herbert Mead (1934) held a

similar view when he distinguished between the English pronouns 'I' and 'me.' The Pronoun 'I' has to do with the <u>Personal Self</u> whereas 'me' represents the <u>Social Self</u>. Much of the controversy over the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis was unfounded. Linguists who were trained in the social sciences wanted language to be defined in terms of linguistic objectification. They overlooked the process of linguistic externalization characteristic of the language used by poets and other artists in the humanities. Berger and Luckmann (1967) argue that thought influences language [externalization], language influences itself [objectification], and language influences thought [internalization]. All three processes occur simultaneously in language.

Ideas, Meanings, Thoughts,.
Feelings, Moods, Fears,   EXTERNALIZATION
Hopes, etc.
The Personal Self

                                     OBJECTIFICATION

                                     Language as an institution.
                                     Language as lexical and
                                     grammatical meaning
                                     and grammatical form.

Social ideas, culture,
roles, behaviors,
social expectations, etc.   INTERNALIZATION
The Social Self

The Significance of Metaphor

     A metaphor is a way of seeing something from a certain perspective. When such metaphors are used to illustrate a new perspective they are called **illustrative**

metaphors. An example of an illustrative metaphor can be found in the claim that the structure of the atom mirrors the solar system. In this illustration, the nucleus is depicted as the sun and the electrons which orbit the nucleus are equated with the planets circling the sun. What is interesting about this example is that it demonstrates how metaphors play a major role in scientific thinking. These metaphors are comparable to what Thomas Kuhn (1970) would call 'the paradigm of scientific revolution.' When they have been in use for a while they change from illustrating a new perspective to depicting an old one. These are called **iconic metaphors** because they provide the illustration with rich details. In Kuhn's model of scientific revolutions, these metaphors are similar to the paradigm of normal science. The most interesting kind of metaphor is the root or the **cardinal metaphor**. These represent metaphors that have become an intrinsic part of a culture. They represent the tacit knowledge upon which a society is constructed. Western culture has an interesting profile of cardinal metaphors, viz., society seen as an organism (the growth metaphor), society seen as a machine (the machine metaphor), society seen as a social drama (the dramaturgical metaphor), society viewed as a game (the game metaphor), and social conduct seen as language behavior (the language or conduit metaphor). Cultures may differ in how these cardinal metaphors or social metaphors (St. Clair, 1997) are highlighted. For example, the metaphor of the journey plays an important role in American Indian and in Asian cultures. However, it is not a mainstream or cardinal metaphor in Europe.

These social or cardinal metaphors change with time. In Medieval Europe, for example, the metaphor of movement played a major role in defining nature. The following examples from Old English words demonstrate this:

> **vogel** - something that moves in the air (birds)
> **wyrm** - something that moves in the earth (worms)
> **fisc** -   something that moves in water (fish)
> **tier** -   something that moves on land
> (animals, English deer, German Tier)

If things move in space, one could readily argue that the metaphor of movement belongs to a superincumbent metaphor, the metaphor of space. This suggestion is not without merit as the whole discipline of mechanical physics that emerged from the science of that time was based on the concept of space (Gregory, 1988, Jones,

1982). Length, time, and matter, the basic trinity in the mechanical sciences, are all defined by space. For example, length is the distance between two points in space; time is linear movement in space; and, matter is mass in space. One could add further that velocity is movement through space. Roger Jones (1982) argues that the metaphor of space gave meaning to the experiences of place and distance. It became the theoretical foundation for modern physics (Capra, 1977).

Another cardinal metaphor that was characteristic of the Middle Ages was the Great Chain of Being (Lovejoy, 1936). It was believed that all living things could be arranged into a great chain of beings beginning with God and ending with creatures. Since this was the time of the Holy Roman Empire, the Pope was closest in the link to God and below him were other members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The father away that one moved from the Pope, the lower one existed on the great chain of being. This religious caste system endured until the time of the Great Plague. At this time the Roman class system of *clericus* (churchmen), *milites* (soldiers) and *labores* (workers) had already dominated European society. What the metaphor of the great chain of being did was to further articulate the gradation of human beings who occupied this medieval caste system. The Great Plague eventually disrupted the ancient belief in the great chain of being. The citizenry of the times witnessed the destruction that the plague brought to human life. They also witnessed how the plague challenged their beliefs that the clerical class and the aristocratic classes were closer to God. They soon found that the clergy and royalty were not exempt from the ravages of this disease. The plague brought about an epistemic rupture in European thinking. As a consequence of the great loss of life in Medieval society, soldiers were allowed to become part of the clergy and peasants were allowed to become soldiers. The changes in society forced people to replace the metaphor of the great chain of being by another social metaphor, individualism (Lasch, 1979; 1984).

Metaphors are used along with other figures of speech as literary devices.[1] However, the significance of metaphor goes well beyond literary usage. Metaphors are used to create analogies. They allow one to step above and beyond the confines of rhetoric and enter the epistemological framework of dialectics. It is through metaphor that theoretical advances are made in nearly all fields of knowledge.

Rhetoric	**Dialectics**
Sustains the old paradigms	Dialectics is the search for new paradigms
Invention in Rhetoric is the search for ways of presenting ideas in the	Dialectics is involved with the search for new forms and new meanings

old paradigm (code switching)   (Creativity of form or content)

Rhetoric is a closed system   Dialectics is an open system

Rhetoric is explication   Dialectics is Innovation

Since all knowledge is perspectival and anything that is known is always construed from a particular point of view, metaphor provides a new perspective on old knowledge. It provides a new frame of vision. Hence, metaphors provide the key to model building. Theories are, in essence, metaphors because they present perspectival knowledge. It can be argued that all knowledge is perspectival (Brown, 1978: 77).

A metaphor is a form of analogy. Most analogies have to do with proportionality: a father is to a son as a mother is to a daughter. The mathematical equivalent of this analogy can be stated in the form: A is to B as C is to D. Analogies occur when systems are compared to one another. For example, one can make an analogy between the atom and the solar system. In this case, the atom is one system and it is compared to another, the solar system. Metaphor differs by being a different form of Analogy. It consists of a topic, a vehicle, and a ground (Richards, 1926). In the metaphor 'John is a tiger,' 'John' is the topic as it represents the source of the metaphor. 'Tiger' is the vehicle because it is the thing commented upon and is the target of the metaphor. Finally, the ground is the semantic basis for comparison and in this case it would have to be a cluster of attributive adjectives characteristically associated with the vehicle, the tiger. Consequently, 'John is a tiger' implies that

THE ANATOMY OF METAPHOR

Topic   =   Vehicle
Ground   Ground

METAPHORS SHARE A COMMON GROUND

    John is strong [as a tiger is strong]
    John is virile [as a tiger is virile]
    John is an animal [as a tiger is an animal]
    John is male [as a tiger is a male]

Obviously at some point the metaphorical analogy seems to fail. There are only so

many viable analogies that one can make between John and the tiger. Some analogies may be forced; the tiger has a tail, the tiger has bevy of lions, etc. At some point, however, the metaphor ends because the analogies cannot be sustained. When this happens, one encounters metaphorical failure. A similar process can be found in scientific paradigms. Illustrative metaphors herald the occasion of a scientific revolution. Next, the metaphor is explored and it becomes iconic. It becomes a part of normal science. Further investigation, however, causes the paradigm to undergo metaphorical failure. This is known as the period of crisis within science (Kuhn, 1970). The different kinds of metaphors can now be further assessed. Some of them belong to the domain of rhetoric and others belong to dialectics.

Types of Metaphors

Metaphor	The search for new analogs, new paradigm shifts
Illustrative Metaphors	This metaphor is used when new ideas need to be explored within the context of a scientific paradigm
Iconic Metaphors	This metaphor that has been explored in great detail
Metaphorical Failure	The period of crisis within a scientific paradigm
Cardinal Metaphors	These are part of the tacit knowledge of a cultural system
Social Metaphors	These are similar to cardinal metaphors but they need not be within a system of tacit knowledge.
Dead Metaphors	These metaphors have lost their original meanings

A Vocabulary of Motives

When political scientists wanted to capture the meanings of written materials, they resorted to a process known as content analysis. They counted the number of times a word appeared in an article and those lexical items with the highest numerical score were considered to be intrinsic to the content of the article. Unfortunately, there are many limits to this methodology. For example, it overlooks the significant role that metaphors play in the symbolic organization within a report, a chronicle of events, a summation, an expository essay, or other forms of written expression. C. Wright Mills (1959) has provided a new approach to content analysis. He noted that words belong to family of ideas. They have semantic domains. The thesaurus is organized around this principle. Words in the thesaurus are used a lexical indicators which form a semantic domain when they are grouped together. These related words are called a vocabulary of motives. What is important about metaphors is that they are markers of semantic domains. Metaphors come with a number of related words, a vocabulary of motives.

Metaphor:
Love is war

Vocabulary of Motives:
to fight, to fend off, to win, lose, to besiege, to overpower, an ally, an enemy, a foe, a victor, fighters, winners, losers, battles, wars, strategies, a truce, the spoils of war Ö

Examples:
She fought hard for him, he won out, she was besieged by him,
he conquered her, she was relentless, she made an ally of his father, etc.

Metaphors have much to do with meaning. They are the basis of scientific theories. They provide the frameworks for cultural values. Western cultures are embedded in the metaphors of form. The lexicon is saturated with examples of the dominance of this metaphor:

Latin Root: **Form**
Form, formal, cuneiform (wedge form), formula (little form), conform, inform (to put an idea into a form), deform, perform, uniform (same form), unformed (having no form), etc.

Greek Root: **Morph**
Morph, morpheme (abstract forms), allomorph (other form), morphology (study of forms), transform (change forms), polymorphic (having many forms),   metamorphic (going beyond current form, changing forms), amorphous (having no form), etc.

It is now time to consider an alternative metaphor of communication, viz., the metaphor of resonance.

The Metaphor of Resonance

As noted earlier, the conduit metaphor (Reddy, 1973) underlies much of language communication. Understanding takes place within this framework when a

speaker presents a message in coded form (language) to a hearer who breaks the code (takes the meaning out of its packaged form) and understands the original intent of the speaker. As noted early, this idea of packing information has its limitations (Cassirer, 1923). It may work well for most forms of cognitive information sharing, but it is totally inadequate in dealing with the realm of emotions. It can handle the transfer of knowledge, but it cannot convey wisdom or the depths of the human emotional experience. Hence, forms have their limitations. Many scholars were aware of these stipulations. For example, Suzanne Langer (1967; 1972) was very much aware of the limits of the language metaphor in dealing with the expression of meaning within the forms of music and art. She noted how even musical systems need to be reformulated as they fail to capture the essence of her experiences in musicology. Perhaps this begs the question, but one can readily argue that music is not a part of semiotics. It cannot be explained in terms of the metaphor of language. It belongs to the realm of the metaphor of resonance. Similarly, Existentialists were also aware of the limits of trying to convey the deeper meanings of human essence through narrow codes of linguistic form (Barrett, 1986). They continually reminded other philosophers that human beings cannot be solely defined by the attributed imposed upon them by society (Heidegger, 1959, 1962; Sartre, 1959, 1969). One is much more that the social label of student, doctor, teacher, mother, etc. One is a being, an essence. Evidently, the conduit metaphor cannot stand alone as a model for human communication. It must be supplemented by other modes of communication.

One of the most interesting candidates for dealing with the expression of emotions, the sharing feelings, the numinosity of spiritual experiences, the impact of visual forms, the profoundness of music, and other experiences of knowledge can be found in the resonance metaphor. The tuning fork provides the model for this metaphor. When a tuning fork is struck, it emits vibrations. Other tuning forks which share the same frequency pick up the vibrations and begin to resonate. What this model claims is that people also resonate to one another. One who has fallen in love and who has had the experience of falling out of love will immediately recognize the deep emotions that can be found in simple songs that are heard every day over the radio. They will also know immediately what another person who is having that experience is feeling. They can resonate with their emotions. Anyone who has been a caretaker to someone who is terminally ill from cancer will immediately know the pains of another person who is undergoing the experience. No words need to be spoken. The understanding is immediate. It is silent. And, it is deep. There are many examples of the metaphor of resonance in everyday life. For example, anyone who has undergone a spiritual experience will know what it is all about. He cannot find the words to tell others about it. He knows that what he felt was spirituality and not religion. Religion is about knowledge and has to do with

the conduit metaphor whereas spirituality is about resonance.

The Metaphor:
Resonance

The Vocabulary of Motives:
vibrate, echo, resound, reverberate, touch, feel, sense, empathy, emote, impression, sympathy, compassion, sentiment, etc.

Examples:
He empathized with her, her thoughts reverberated through the room, he was compassionate, they were in tune with each other, let her walk in my shoes, he was touched by her concern, How do you feel?, If it feels good, do it, sit-ins, love-ins, Dasein (Existentialist term for being-there), etc.

In many cultures, words fail (Hall, 1973, 1977, 1982, 1983; Mehrabian, 1971; Poyatos, 1976). This is why great emphasis is placed on non-verbal behavior, rites, rituals, group dancing, group singing, art, music, and dance. This propensity towards the resonance metaphor does not mean that these cultures do not have semiotic systems based on representation. They do. What it does mean, however, is that the resonance metaphor is favored as a means of communication. Zen Buddhism is noted for its famous Koans: What is the sound of one hand clapping?[2] These aphorisms are meant to force the student of Buddhism to see through the illusion of forms. Words are forms. They socially construct reality. For Buddhism, words are not to be trusted. They are not reality. In the Buddhist monastery, the metaphor of resonance may hold center stage while all around it one finds the metaphor of language holding center stage in its own theater of social drama. Both metaphors co-exist, but one may dominate within the context of a social situation as evidenced in the language of the counter-culture (love-in, sit-in, vibrations, feelings, etc.)

Because Western cultures are rhetoric bound, they tend to favor only one metaphor of human communication. They are defined by print cultures. They have a propensity to know and understand through the conduit metaphor. Not all cultures share this view of understanding. They differ from many visual and oral cultures that favor nonverbal communication. In such cultures much is expressed in silence. They know that nonverbal patterns of behavior speak louder than words. In such cultures, there is a distrust of the spoken word. The adage is to watch what one does

and not to listen to what one says. Anyone who has worked with American Indian cultures understands the world of silence. For example, the expression 'touch the earth' is a metaphor of resonance. It is believed among many American cultures that one cannot know Wakan Tonka (the Indian Spirit Master) directly. Hence, one cannot pray directly to god. One must communicate through the earth. When one resonates with the earth, the message is sent to the sun or the moon. The choice depends on the culture. This message is then accepted as a resonance and relayed along a celestial path to the higher beings. When the gods returned a message, it was almost always in the form of a bird. They are the equivalents of angels (Greek: ('messengers') in Western cultures. Many also misunderstand the nature of chanting among many Amerindian groups. When a shaman prepares himself, the group chants. This is a way of creating a community vibration. The shaman (Eskimo word for Sky-Walker) also chants and when he is attuned to the higher spirits, he chants at a higher pitch. This is a signal to the group to come to a closure. Shortly after this signal, the chanting stops and the shaman is given center stage. Notice that both kinds of metaphors are used in this communicative setting. The chanting is concomitant with the resonance metaphor, but it can also function as a semiotic device, a conduit metaphor.

Obviously, literary structures are based on the conduit metaphor. Consequently, any theory of literary analysis which is based on linguistic structuralism has definite limitations. Obviously a newer model of literary theory is needed. The presentation of forms naturally demarcate the study of literature to the confines of a verbal art. Unfortunately, much of what literature attempts to convey cannot be accomplished through words. Literature is about feelings, emotions, experiences, and wisdom. Sometimes, literature is best expressed through film rather than print. The reason for this is obvious, film allows one to convey emotions. It presents a visual dance, a concatenation of vivid images, a plethora of visual metaphors. It combines this with color and sound and the multimedia impact goes well beyond the expression of the novel in words. There is, however, one area in which the metaphor of form (the language metaphor) excels and it is in the discussion of plot structure and character development.

The Limits of Structural Epistemology

If meaning and form are intrinsically related, this union creates several problems for those who wish to articulate their ideas through language. Consider, for example, the situation facing a writer. When an author has an idea, he must search for the best forms available to him within the code of language that he is using. Then he must select a form to represent that idea. Sometimes the idea will require several sentences or even a whole paragraph in order to capture adequately the meanings involved. However, there are times when such a union of form and

meaning is not feasible. The writer may have ideas for which the language lacks adequate expression. Or he may find that there are limits to nuances to what one can say or intend through language. Hence, the following are typical of problems associated with the metaphor of form:

> The writer gives someone an idea of what he means
> He tries to capture his ideas or put his concept into words.
> The experience was ineffable.
> He does not want to force ideas into the wrong words.
> He does not want to have lexical forms with no meaning (empty words)
> He wants his readers to extract the correct ideas from his words.
> He finds certain experiences ineffable and is unable to put them into words.

What these predicaments demonstrate is that a writer must create a symbolic world and share it with his readers. The only way in which he can do that is through the use of language structures or through experiences that he hopes his readers can relate to and resonate with them. What this means, in essence, is that he is limited to the structural constraints and the cultural experiences of his own language. The tradition of structuralism is concerned with form. Structuralists tend to look at forms and infer meanings from them. But, the writer must also create forms to share his symbolic worlds. He must be able to share experiences that will resonate with the real or vicarious experiences of his readers. This conflict between language and meaning is aptly captured by the Italian adage: *Traduttore é traditore* (A translator is a traitor). One who translates from one language to another cannot faithfully reproduce one meaning system into another or one structural pattern into another. He must decide what he is to clearly translate and what he is to distort. He must decide what ideas can be translated and which ones cannot. He must determine which linguistic sense of aspect and tense he wants to share with his readers and which forms should be omitted. He must resolve the problem of whether or not he should use new patterns or defamiliarization techniques to capture the new symbolic worlds that he wishes to impart to his readers. It is this awareness of structure and how the writer uses it that makes emergence of literary structuralism so interesting regarding the process of how writers structures their novels.

To capture the importance of imparting meanings through structure, this author has coined the term, **structural epistemology** (St. Clair, 1981). This focus on the assignment of forms to meaning is not new. When one attends a play, the playwright has to create the various attributes of the protagonists and share them with his audience through mood, lighting, tone of voice, choice of clothes, spoken words, mannerisms, etc. Somewhere in the middle of the play, the roles that are being played take on a profile. A similar pattern of structuring meanings into forms

(Enfoldment) occurs in the writing of a novel. The author must create characters and share them with his readers. Usually, the protagonist and the antagonist are depicted as opposites: good versus evil, male versus female, rich versus poor. Such contrasts are literary devices that enable the writer to highlight certain aspects of the characters that he is developing. When he creates a story line, it is organized around a plot. This is a sequence of events that are driven by some kind of major conflict between two parties. The conflict is not resolved until the penultimate chapter of the book. The final chapter is one of resolution. Plot theory is about what it means to be human in the social drama of life. People are driven to act because of certain fears, hopes, or patterns of behavior based on their character. The writer may decide to have a character change completely and end up with a reversal of roles between the protagonist and the antagonist. He may decide to reveal level upon level of complexity in the personage of the hero. All of these choices have to do with structural epistemology. Writers come armed with philosophical beliefs. They may not always be able to fully articulate them in the form of a treatise, but they do share these beliefs in the words and thoughts of the characters that they write about. What makes a good writer is the experience of being human, of feeling pain, of wanting, desiring, fearing, hoping, and accepting life as it is presented to him. The techniques of writing are easily learned, but the lessons of life are hard earned, painful, and profound. Great writers have much more than excellent writing skills, they have experienced the depths of life and they are able to share some of these profound experiences and their personal acquisition of wisdom with their audiences in the hope that many will find emotional, intellectual, and spiritual resonance with them.

When an individual desires to share wisdom, he encounters the limits of the conduit metaphor. When he attempts to share his emotions, he finds that his language fails to carry the nuances which are deep within his being. When he wants to share his experiences, he must narrate them at length and even then he may lose his audience. It is during these moments that the individual must seek an alternative means of communicating with others. For some, it is art. For others, it is music. However, even these may fail to communicate personal experiences. An alternative means of communication does occur; it is the metaphor of resonance.

Conclusion

There are many levels of communication among humans. Academics are grateful for those fellow scholars who have worked in the area of nonverbal communication because they have made others cognizant of how space communicates (Hall, 1973, 1982) and how nonverbal communication patterns itself

across different cultural systems (Hall, 1977, 1983). Those who work in the visual arts (Gombrich, 1963) have also enlightened others on how visual space is organized and how space has its own language among artists. Musicians have always known how temporality is organized. They consider music scores to be frozen time (Langer, 1942). Some anthropologists such as Levi-Strauss (1972, 1967, 1964-67) turned to the study of mythology for his answers into another level of communication. He argues that mythical meanings are unconscious and they surface in the form of myths. Another kind of human communication can be found in the world of the dramaturgical metaphor (Caillois, 1979; Hans, 1981; Huizinga, 1955; Lyman and Scott, 1976, 1978)). The metaphor of the stage is central to the sociological paradigm of Ervin Goffman (1959a, 1959b, 1961, 1971, 1974). This work is interesting as a model of social communication because it acknowledges the significance of nonverbal communication in a social setting. What is happening in this set of works is that Goffman has combined several other metaphors of communication. This amalgamation includes the metaphor of resonance (rituals, rites, plays) and the semiotics of nonverbal space (proxemics). It also includes the metaphor of language. It appears that the metaphor of resonance has always been implied in the literature of communication. Unfortunately, it has always been hidden or implied (Floyd, 1966; Eliade, 1959; Douglas, 1975, 1982, 1984).

The purpose of this essay is to highlight the significance of this metaphor and to compare it with the reigning metaphor of communication, the language metaphor. As noted earlier, each metaphor contributes to human understanding, but in dissimilar ways and for different reasons. The conduit metaphor articulates the complexity of human thought and promotes the sharing of knowledge. The resonance metaphor, on the other hand, synthesizes experiences and enables people to identify with the wisdom of others, and to share emotions with them along with other profound human experiences. The resonance metaphor is characteristically found among oral cultures or visual cultures. In such cultures, the focus is on sharing experiences, wisdom, and other kinds of human emotions. In print cultures, by way of contrast, the metaphor of language dominates. These cultures tend to excel in science, mathematics, and other aspects of technology. It has been argued that these tasks belong to the left hemisphere of the brain whereas emotions belong to the right hemisphere of the brain. It would be an oversimplification to argue that the metaphor of resonance emerges from the right hemisphere and that the metaphor of language emanates from the left hemisphere. However, the implications of this dichotomy merit further study. The following dichotomies are suggestive of the contrast between the metaphor of resonance and the metaphor of form.

The Metaphor of Resonance	**The Metaphor of Form**
Important for sharing wisdom. Wisdom cannot be taught. It must be earned by experiencing life. Once it is earned, it can be shared with others who resonate with those experiences.	Important for sharing knowledge. The focus here is on information and not on the values and the experiences of life. Knowledge has to do with observing rather than participating in life.
Important for sharing emotions. It has to do with empathy.	Important for articulating knowledge or information.
Resonance is significant in relating the richer experiences of life. It is here where people share experiences, moods, feelings, and intuitions about life.	Experiences are severely restricted by the codes of semiotic systems. The focus is on the form of the code rather than on the connotations or the value structures associated with that code.
Favors action over words (Non-verbal Communication). Watch what one says and not what one does. Actions speak louder than words.	Favors words over actions (Verbal Communication). Western culture is rhetorical. It is steeped in the traditions of verbal form.
Favors the right hemisphere of the brain.	Favors the left hemisphere of the brain
Favors silence, and nonverbal behavior	Favors overt sounds, and colors
Resonance cultures tend to be nonverbal	Rhetorical cultures are sign cultures. They are also print cultures.
Common to oral cultures	Common to print cultures
Expressions of Personal Self. Intimacy.	Expressions of Public Self. Role Behavior.
Favors apprenticeship learning	Favors formal education
Religions tend to be based on Meditation (Listening to Spirit)	Religions tend to be based on Prayer (Speaking to Spirit)

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Each of the aforementioned metaphors have their own domains of communication. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. Language fails when it comes to expressing wisdom, shared experiences, and emotions. Systems of resonance fail when it attempts to articulate the components within a system of thought. This raises several interesting and provoking questions. One of them is whether or not the study of human emotions can be fully articulated into a linguistic system, a language of emotions. It also asks whether music which is currently being expressed as a semiotic system (the language of music) can be amalgamated with music as a metaphor of resonance, the realm of feelings and emotions. Similar questions can be asked of dance which belongs to the metaphor of resonance. Can there be a viable model of dance outside of its current semiotic system where have been expressed as a cumbersome system of signs. Can one go beyond the current compromises between these disparate metaphors of communication?

Notes

1.   There are many other common figures of speech. In simile one thing is likened to another (John is like a tiger). In metonymy, the author is substituted for the book written by the author (He read Homer). In synecdoche a part is substituted for the whole (the field hands are here). In irony, a metaphor becomes its opposite (peace through military strength). Hyperbole is an overstatement (the best coffee shop in the world). Litote is an understatement (Thank you for the Nobel Prize, but I really didn't do much). Personification attributes human qualities to nature (the tree was weeping), and an oxymoron presents the conjunction of opposites qualities (sweet sour pork, a lazy scholar).

2.   The Western version of this Koan can be found in the following philosophical query: If a tree fails in the forest and there is no one around to hear it, does it make a sound?

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