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Gateshead revisited:

Perceptual simulators and fields of meaning in the analysis of metaphors

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In addition to articles in recent issues of *Metaphor and Symbol*, recent publications on cognitive theories of metaphor include *Context and Connection in Metaphor Theory*, Palgrave-MacMillan, 2006.

Author's Note:

This essay is an extension of ideas originally developed in my recent book, *Context and Connection in Metaphor*. The application of these ideas to Tony Blair's speech, and much of the analysis of that speech, were influenced by discussions at the Metaphor Analysis Workshop held at the University of Leeds and the University of York as part of a project funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council's National Centre for Research Methods, 5-9 May and 11-12 July 2006, and especially by post-session discussions with Paul Chilton (who graciously provided a copy of the text of the Blair Speech for use by workshop participants) and Juup Stelma. I am also indebted to all the other participants at the metaphor analysis workshops, in particular Lynne Cameron, Alice Deignan, Vyv Evans, Graham Low, and Elena Semino, as well as to an anonymous reviewer for this journal.

Gateshead revisited:**Perceptual simulators and fields of meaning in the analysis of metaphors****Abstract**

In an extension and partial reformulation of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), Ritchie (2003; 2004; 2006) proposed that the linguistic expressions cited as evidence of complex *conceptual metaphors* can be parsimoniously interpreted in terms of *perceptual simulators* (Barsalou, 1999), often within extended *fields of meaning*, which may be but are not necessarily anchored in underlying conceptual metaphors. Cameron (2003; 2007) added substance and precision to the focal concept of *communicative context*, and showed how metaphors can be analyzed both as part of an overall pattern of figurative language in a communicative event. In this essay a series of metaphors in Tony Blair's speech to the 2005 Gateshead conference of the Labour Party is analyzed to illustrate how perceptual simulators and fields of meaning can be used to identify nuances of thought and feeling potentially activated by metaphors in a particular communicative context and how the patterns of perceptual simulators and fields of meaning can contribute to our understanding of a particular communicative event.

Gateshead revisited:**Perceptual simulators and fields of meaning in the analysis of metaphors****Introduction.**

In recent years, the cognitive processes by which metaphors are used and understood have received considerable attention, at least in part as a result of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) initial statement of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), and the basic insights of CMT have since been elaborated in several directions. The fundamental premises of CMT have been supported by extensive empirical research (for detailed reviews see Gibbs, 1994; 2006), but some of the extensions of these ideas (for example, Fauconnier & Turner, 2002; Grady, 1997; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) have been challenged on both conceptual and empirical grounds (e.g., Vervaeke & Kennedy, 1996; Ritchie, 2003; 2006).

Partially in response to a critique of Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Vervaeke and Kennedy (1996), Ritchie (2003; 2006) proposed that the linguistic expressions cited as evidence of complex *conceptual metaphors* can be parsimoniously interpreted in terms of *fields of meaning*, which may be but are not necessarily anchored in underlying conceptual metaphors. Incorporating Barsalou's (1999) theory of perceptual simulators into the *fields of meaning* model, Ritchie (2004; 2006) proposed that metaphor vehicles activate a range of perceptual simulators, often within an extended field of meaning. According to this view, metaphors are always used and understood within a particular communicative context: the context-irrelevant simulators (including those associated with the "literal meaning") are suppressed and the context-relevant simulators are increased in activation, to be attached to the topic as the "meaning" of the metaphor.

Cameron (2003; 2007) begins, not with the metaphor itself but with the dialectical and dialogical nature of talk, and analyzes the patterns of metaphor use and re-use in relationship to specific “moments of talk” within a dynamically developing conversation, the social relationship that shapes and is shaped by the conversation, and the cultural context of conversation and relationship. The dynamic development of the cognitive and relational context is often revealed in the repetition, adoption, and transformation of metaphors. The suggestion that metaphors should be analyzed both as part of an overall pattern of figurative language in a communicative event and in relation to specific “moments of talk” gives both substance and precision to the concept of *context* (e.g., Sperber & Wilson, 1986), and Cameron’s emphasis on the overall pattern of metaphor use within a particular conversational and relational context provides an important corrective to the tendency within metaphor theory to consider, at most, only the limited context of immediately surrounding phrases.

The analysis presented in this essay focuses on the perceptual simulators potentially activated by metaphors, the underlying fields of meaning, and in some cases the underlying conceptual metaphors. The text to be analyzed is the opening half of a speech given by Prime Minister Tony Blair to the 2005 spring conference of the Labour party. As will be seen, the text itself, as a discursive event, undergoes development that is advanced by the use and transformation of metaphors, consistent with Cameron’s approach, and there is evidence of an intended development of the underlying relational context as well, but that is of secondary importance to the current argument, and will not be discussed in detail. The primary intention here is to illustrate how an approach based on perceptual simulators and fields of meaning can be applied to a particular example of language use in a particular context.

Theoretical and Conceptual Background

I will begin with a brief overview of relevant theoretical perspectives, before turning to background of the speech, and the analysis itself.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that correlations between embodied experiences provide the basis for conceptual metaphors in the form of neural connections, and these in turn provide the basis for almost all abstract conceptual thought. Commonplace expressions such as “a *warm* relationship,” “a *close* friend,” or “a *big* problem” all originate in and provide evidence of correlations between physical sensations (physical warmth and proximity, perceived size) and more abstract concepts (love, friendship, problem-solving). Thus, metaphor is primarily conceptual, and linguistic metaphors are but expressions or manifestations of underlying conceptual metaphors. According to CMT, conceptual metaphors are expressed in, and underlie, coherent *systems* of linguistic metaphors. To use one of Lakoff and Johnson’s primary examples, expressions such as “*win*” or “*lose* a debate,” “*attack*” or “*defend* a position,” “use a *strategy* in an argument,” and “*undermine* an opponent’s argument” all manifest a single underlying conceptual metaphor, *ARGUMENT IS WAR*, which is experienced as a *gestalt*. According to CMT, when we use or encounter these expressions, we actually experience argument *as* war. It follows that a close analysis of systems of metaphors will provide insight into individual cognitive processes (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) as well as social and cultural systems of belief (Lakoff, 1996; Kovecses, 2005).

Vervaeke and Kennedy (1996) object to Lakoff and Johnson’s broader claim that everyday expressions necessarily demonstrate the existence of an underlying conceptual metaphor that is experienced as a unified *gestalt*. For example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980)

claim that expressions such as “win” or “lose” an argument, “defend” an argument, and “develop a strategy” for an argument derive from the conceptual metaphor, “ARGUMENT IS WAR,” that structures our experience of abstract concepts and shapes our behavior.

Continuing with the *argument* example, Vervaeke and Kennedy point out that these and other metaphors for argument can all be interpreted in terms of “a process undertaken in a certain order” and that various such processes can be mapped onto each other with none having precedence over any of the others (p. 276). Since many of the expressions Lakoff and Johnson list as elements of war also pertain to competitive games, Vervaeke and Kennedy conclude that “ARGUMENT IS BRIDGE” or “ARGUMENT IS CHESS” would be equally defensible as “ARGUMENT IS WAR.” A fundamental claim of Conceptual Metaphor Theory is that conceptual metaphors are based on embodied experience – but, consistent with Vervaeke and Kennedy’s critique, few people (at least in the United States) have direct embodied experience of war (Ritchie, 2003). On the other hand, virtually everyone has direct embodied experience of other contentious activities, including games, sports, and schoolyard fights, that provide credible bases for interpreting the various argument-related expressions (Ritchie, 2003).

Pursuing this line of reasoning further leads to the conclusion that a broad array of contentious activities, with varying degrees of violence, competitiveness, and other characteristics, may be organized, both cognitively and culturally, into a “*field of meaning*”¹, such that metaphor vehicles may be chosen from various elements within the field, according to the intensity of perception or feeling that is to be expressed (Ritchie, 2003; 2006). Thus we have “BUSINESS IS WAR” (“*invade the competitor’s territory*”) but we also have “WAR

IS BUSINESS (“an unprofitable maneuver”) and “*ARGUMENT IS BUSINESS*” (“exchange opinions,” “an unprofitable line of reasoning”).

Several other “*fields of meaning*” can be readily identified. For example, English-speakers have a large group of metaphors that express *constraint, obligation, commitment, and duty*: A theorist might be “*in love with*” or even “*married to*” an idea; one couple may be “*locked into*” attending an office party but another may be “*tied up*” by family responsibilities or “*owe it*” to their family to stay home; we hope students feel “*honor-bound*” not to plagiarize, and we often assert that “*my word is my bond*” (Ritchie, 2003; 2006). Just as the various concepts within the *contentious activity* field can be used as metaphor vehicles to express nuances of experience associated with other forms of contentious activity, so can various concepts within the *commitment* field be used as metaphor vehicles to express nuances of commitment and obligation. Moreover, expressions drawn from both the *commitment* field and the *contentious activity* field can be used to express nuances of experience from many different realms that are not necessarily related to contention or commitment (“He *attacked* the meal with gusto”).

Discourse Dynamics. Cameron (2006) provides a model of conversation as a context for metaphor use and development and developed a model of metaphor use and interpretation that incorporates linguistic, affective, and socio-cultural dimensions along with the cognitive dimensions that are central to theories like CMT. Cameron describes talk as simultaneously dynamic and dialogic. Talk is dynamic in that the ongoing stream of conversation contributes to a continuous process of change in the immediate cognitive context of the conversation, and can at the same time bring about long-term changes in attitude, belief, and social structure. Talk is dialogic in that each speaker takes other

participants into account while formulating utterances; speakers attempt to put themselves into the perspectives of others.

Cameron's approach to metaphor recognizes the possibility that "metaphor may reflect larger metaphorical structures in which larger domains are mapped onto each other" (2006, p. 6), and her method of metaphor analysis includes the identification of systematic groupings of metaphors that *may* reflect underlying conceptual metaphors. However, given her more complex and nuanced view of metaphors as simultaneously *linguistic*, *affective*, and *socio-cultural*, Cameron moves well beyond merely assembling metaphors used in a particular conversation into groups that may reflect underlying conceptual metaphors and analyzing the entailments of these conceptual metaphors (see for example Grady, 1997; Indurkha, 1999). Cameron also analyzes the relationship of each metaphor to the communicative contexts in which it appears, the actual moments of talk, and traces patterns in re-use and development of each metaphor, both by one participant over time and by other participants. It is often in the repetition, adoption, and transformation of metaphors that the dynamic development of the cognitive and relational context is the most clearly apparent (see for example Cameron, 2006).

Perceptual simulation theory. A somewhat different approach to metaphor interpretation is suggested by Barsalou's (1999) theory of perceptual simulators. Noting that the perceptual neural system aggregates (filters, combines, and summarizes) perceptual experience at ever higher levels of abstraction, up to the conscious experience of objects and action sequences as coherent entities, Barsalou argues that a *conceptual* neural system parallels and interacts with the perceptual neural system at every level, and is capable of partially simulating any aspect of perceptual experience. In addition to the experience of the

five external senses (*exteroception*), perceptions and simulations include *interoceptive* awareness of emotions, *proprioceptive* awareness of internal bodily states, and *introspective* awareness of our cognitive processes. Simulators are organized into complex conceptual schemas based on correlations in experience. For example, a certain set of simulators for shape, size, color, texture (fur), sound (e.g. purring), and behavior or action sequences are typically bound together in a *cat* schema. Language, including both words and syntax, is interconnected with the system of perceptual experience and simulators: The experience of a certain combination of shape, size, texture, and activity more or less automatically activates the word, *cat*. Conversely, when we read, hear, or merely think the word *cat*, at least a partial subset of these simulators is activated.

Recognition involves comparing raw perceptions to perceptual simulations activated by salient schemas. I see a blur of motion, an object of a certain size moving rapidly across the yard beyond my window; since I know there are several cats in the neighborhood, the relevant simulators from my *cat* schema are activated and compared with the recent actual perceptions. If the match is reasonably close, I conclude that the object I just saw was indeed a cat. But if the perceptions and the simulators do not match (the object was larger, or not the right shape), I wonder if it might have been some other kind of animal – a raccoon, perhaps – and I may activate simulators from my *raccoon* schema and compare them to the experience.

Context-Limited Simulation Theory (CLST). Perceptual simulators associated with a concept, and potentially activated by words and phrases connected with the concept, can be loosely divided into *primary* and *secondary* simulators. Thus, for most English-speakers, *cat* activates primary simulators of certain exteroceptions (size, shape, fur texture,

purring), and other features that would be considered part of the *definition* of what it means to be a *cat*. These include links to other words such as *pet*, *feline*, *predator*. That favorite example of metaphor discussions, *shark*, activates its own set of primary simulators of certain perceptions, primarily visual, and its own set of related words (*cartilaginous skeleton*, *predator*, *sharp teeth*, etc.).

Both of these concepts, *cat*, and *shark*, are frequently encountered in our culture, and each also activates a large set of secondary simulators, simulators of perceptions that are frequently associated with the animal in question, even though they are not defining. *Cat* may activate simulators of a certain kind of independent behavior, a feather drifting down from a nearly-killed bird, the comfort of a cat snuggled up on one's lap, the sight of hair on a black wool skirt, emotions associated with home and hearth. *Shark* may activate memories of scuba-diving, scenes from old B movies, emotions such as awe, terror, dread, and even respect. The primary simulators and words considered part of the "definition" of a concept such as *cat* or *shark* can be thought of as similar to the conventional notion of *denotation*. Secondary simulators and words, not part of the "definition" but often experienced in connection with the concept (emotions such as fear, dread, and awe), are similar to the conventional notion of *connotation*. These secondary simulators and words may be connected with a range of evocative concepts *independently* of the hierarchy of conceptual categories. Thus, the interoceptive simulators of *fear*, *dread* and *awe* associated with *shark* may also be associated, along with those associated with *avalanche*, *tsunami*, and perhaps even *oral examination*, in a "*field of meaning*" that can be activated by very different conceptual metaphors associated with entirely different conceptual categories.

When a word or phrase is encountered, many, perhaps all, of the simulators associated with it, both primary and secondary, are at least fleetingly activated (Gernsbacher *et al.*, 2001). Simulators that are not relevant in the present context, that cannot be readily connected with ideas already activated in working memory, are suppressed, usually before reaching conscious awareness, and those that are relevant in the present context become more highly activated (Gernsbacher *et al.*, 2001; Kintsch, 1998). The connections between current contents of working memory and the context-relevant simulators activated by a phrase become the *meaning* of the phrase in the present context. If the word or phrase is metaphorical, the primary or definitional perceptual simulators are suppressed and the secondary simulators that are relevant in the current context, the nuances of experience associated with the concept, remain activated and are connected with the topic of the metaphor. This will happen at least to some extent whether or not the underlying metaphor is actively processed. Thus, a phrase such as “*attack* her argument” may activate interoceptive perceptual simulators associated with emotional nuances such as hostility and anger, even if it does not activate any of the other simulators associated with *WAR* or any other *CONTENTIOUS ENCOUNTER* schema.

Context-Limited Simulation Theory emphasizes the nuances of perceptual simulators, especially the emotional, introspective, and interoceptive (visceral) simulators that may potentially be activated by highly expressive language such as metaphor, narrative, or playful language. A metaphor may activate an entire conceptual schema as a unified *gestalt*, as posited by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), or it may activate only a small subset of simulators associated with the underlying conceptual schema. Since the simulators activated by a particularly expressive metaphor may remain activated for some

time, if subsequent metaphors activate similar or compatible simulators the cumulative effect may be distinct from, as well as more enduring than, what could be accomplished by any one metaphor on its own. Conversely, and consistent with Cameron's (2007) approach, the simulators activated by a previously used metaphor may be expanded and connected with entirely different topics through the artful repetition and transformation of a metaphor. Thus, through a sequence of metaphors, a speaker or an interacting dyad or group may build, alter, and sustain a backdrop of emotional, perceptual, and conceptual ideas that become part of the participants' overall experience of the communicative event, separate from but interacting with the overt "informational" content of the words and phrases themselves. As Cameron (2007) shows, this "background" can have profound effects on the development of the conversation *and* of the relationships within which the conversation takes place.

The "entailments" of conceptual metaphors, discussed in Conceptual Metaphor Theory, refer approximately to the perceptual simulators that are activated when words, phrases, or other stimuli associated with the "*vehicle*" are encountered. Thus, a *field of meaning* can be thought of as linking together an array of concepts, which may belong to entirely different conceptual categories (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) or systems of metaphor (Cameron, 2003), by the particular perceptual simulators they evoke to varying degrees of intensity. To continue with the *WAR* example discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Vervaeke and Kennedy (1996) and Ritchie (2003), interoceptive (emotional and visceral) simulators of physical violence and anger are strongly activated by phrases closely associated with war, such as "*demolish*" and "*attack*" but only weakly activated by phrases more closely associated with games, such as "*score one*" and "*strategy*." Conversely, introspective simulators of rules and orderliness are weakly (if at all) activated by "*demolish*" and "*attack*"

but more strongly activated by “*score one*” and “*strategy*.” Consistent with Vervaeke and Kennedy’s argument, the rhetor will choose the phrases that activate the simulators that most closely match the experience to be expressed. The relationship between verbal metaphors and experience is two-way; experience activates schemas that activate words, including metaphors; words, including metaphors, activate schemas that activate simulators that enter into experience.

This account is consistent with Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) discussion of fundamental embodied metaphors (*MORE IS UP; AFFECTION IS WARMTH*) – the conceptual metaphors they posit, in effect, anchor certain positions in one or more extended fields of meaning. But the assertion that we somehow experience argument *as* war can itself probably best be viewed as figurative – it is more accurate to say that we experience simulations of some perceptions (emotional, introspective, and visceral) associated with an argument by activating a few of the contextually-relevant perceptual simulators associated with and activated by allusion to war and warlike behavior – or perhaps to other contentious activities such as bridge or chess (Vervaeke & Kennedy, 1996).

This account is also consistent, up to a point, with Gibbs’s (2006) claim that metaphors activate a simulation of the complete action or perception identified by the metaphor vehicle. Where the CLST approach differs from Gibbs’s approach is that Gibbs emphasizes metaphor-induced simulations of the perception or action as a unified *gestalt*, but CLST emphasizes the potential of metaphors to activate simulations of context-relevant perceptions independently of the less relevant elements of the underlying conceptual category. This emphasis on partial, context-relevant simulation is more consistent with

Barsalou's (1999) theory but, as Gibbs points out, metaphor is a complex cognitive and linguistic phenomenon, unlikely to be explained by any one theory.

Methodological Issues: Researching Perceptual Simulators.

The proposed view that metaphors accomplish their effects by activating secondary (non-defining) perceptual simulators, nuances of perception and feeling associated with an object, concept, or experience, poses a challenge for research: How does one *objectively* determine the subtle shadings of another person's cognitive response to either a direct experience or a linguistically described experience? How can the researcher objectively identify activated perceptual simulators, organize them into fields of meaning, and show how these are activated by or instantiated in figurative and otherwise expressive language?

Metaphors are often used because conventional language does not fully express the nuances of meaning and feeling in a particular experience or idea. If a speaker is unable to find direct linguistic labels to express the nuances of experience, and relies on figurative language to activate simulators that more or less accurately match these nuances of experience, then it is hard to see how the analyst would be able to find linguistic labels for these same simulators. Accordingly, it may often be the case that the best the analyst can do is to point to the apparent accumulation of simulators, and to show how a sequence of figurative expressions *seems to or has the potential to* invoke a consistent underlying field.

A degree of validation can be accomplished by looking for convergent evidence elsewhere in a text, in other interpretive accounts of the same text, and, if available, accounts of other readers or hearers' responses. In some cases it may be possible to validate an interpretation by interviewing participants, although this is too cumbersome and expensive a procedure to be used in every case, and it leads to well-known methodological problems of

its own, such as biased recall and demand effects. But primarily, the “nuances” problem crops up again – if neither the speaker nor the analyst can put a label on a subtle visceral simulator activated by, say, “*buried alive*” or, from Blair’s (2005) speech, “*throwing crockery*,” how is a listener to do any better during a subsequent interview?

The approach I have taken in this essay is to accept the limitations of intuitive interpretation and consistently label the results in terms such as “potential simulators.” This approach is theoretically consistent in any event, since there is no reason to expect that all hearers or readers will process a figurative expression sufficiently to experience more than a few (or indeed, any at all) of the potential simulators, and there is good reason to expect that many hearers or readers may interpret even common expressions in quite idiosyncratic ways, experience few of the “usual” simulators but experience several unique simulators. Keysar and Bly (1999) found just that: When asked to interpret familiar metaphorical expressions, subjects arrived at several distinct interpretations implying very different underlying conceptual metaphors; when asked to interpret unfamiliar metaphorical expressions, subjects still gave interpretations, and the range of underlying conceptual metaphors was even greater. My own less formal investigations lead to the same conclusion. For example, the common expression, “*toe the line*,” is often spelled, interpreted, and explained as “*tow the line*” (Ritchie, 2006); one student in a recent seminar was surprised to learn that the expression is not ordinarily spelled “*told the line*.” Interestingly, in this case the totally different underlying “conceptual metaphors” seem to activate fairly similar introspective simulators – all informants recognize the expression as metaphorical, and all informants interpret the expression in terms of conformity to a leader or group. But that is not always the case (Ritchie, 2006).

The problem of identifying metaphors, which receives considerable attention from many researchers (e.g., Cameron, 2003; 2006; 2007), is not as important in simulators-based research. The emphasis is on the simulators that are potentially activated by a word or phrase in a particular context, and not on whether hearers understand or speakers / writers intend a phrase as metaphorical. For example, even if, as Vervaeke and Kennedy (1996) contend, *attack* is ordinarily understood not as a metaphor but as a lexicalized synonym for *attempt to refute*, it seems likely that it will activate visceral and emotional simulators associated with violence and hostility (Ritchie, 2003). Whether or not it is explicitly identified as metaphorical, a particularly evocative expression may have the potential to activate several perceptual simulators at once, some rather weakly. These potential simulators will interact with the pre-existing cognitive contexts of various individuals in various ways, with effects that can be estimated from subsequent interactions and reactions. The purpose of identifying potential perceptual simulators associated with a phrase is to provide a basis for understanding these overall contextual (e.g., dialogical and relational) effects.

The approach used for this project. The primary purpose of this study is to establish a “proof of concept,” to illustrate how the fields of meaning and simulators approach proposed in Ritchie (2003; 2004; 2006) can extend and supplement conventional analytic approaches. The text was chosen because it is readily accessible (and in the public domain), the speaker is well known and the context widely understood. Because there is no intention to make a political or historical argument, validation of the simulators and fields of meaning identified in the analysis is less important than providing a theoretical and conceptual explanation. The general analysis follows Cameron’s (2007) approach inasmuch as a “top-down” identification of the purposes of the speech was combined with a “bottom-

up” identification of figurative expressions that appear to be of interest, either in themselves or in relation to the overall purpose and tone of the speech. Through this process of initial discovery, patterns of metaphor re-use and adaptation became apparent; these patterns led to the identification of still other instances of figurative language relevant to an overall pattern that was easily related to the purposes of the speech.

The text, and its socio-political context.²

The text to be analyzed is a speech by Tony Blair (2005), Labour leader and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, to the February 2005 spring conference of the Labour Party at Gateshead³. The rhetorical situation facing Blair, going into the Gateshead conference, was complicated by several factors. First, as a leader who had been in power for two terms, Blair had inevitably disappointed some of the hopes of those who initially supported him, and had built up a stack of unfulfilled promises, mistakes, and disappointments. Second, his deep involvement in some of President Bush’s foreign policy adventures, and in particular his strong support of the Iraq war and his commitment of British troops to that unpopular war, had aroused a degree of discontent, not only among the voting public but also within the Labour party itself. There was some talk of open revolt, which could divide the party on the eve of national elections and would at the least lead to a weak campaign (Wheeler, 2005).

Thus Blair needed to address the discontent within his own party, convince the discontented party members to put aside their differences and work energetically for a victory in the national elections, and inspire all of the party faithful. At the same time, he needed to speak to the nation as a whole, addressing discontent about the Iraq war and the accumulated disappointments and shortcomings of his administration among *all* potential voters as well as within the ranks of the party. He needed to present himself as open and

listening to people's discontent and at the same time present himself as an energetic and vigorous leader, in firm control of his party as well as of the nation. Nearly half the speech is devoted to these tasks (for a succinct description of the structure of the speech, see Cameron, 2006).

It is also worth noting the significance of Gateshead as a physical locale. This region is Blair's home region, source of his primary political support. The Sage Centre itself is part of a recently redeveloped industrial slum, and thus provided an obvious example of the successes of Labour's economic policies. These *literal* facts, as will be seen, interact in complex and interesting ways with the metaphors Blair uses.

Analysis: “*Forward, not back.*”

The Labour Party theme, “*forward, not back,*” taps into a common spatial and orientational metaphor. As a political election slogan, “*forward*” potentially activates perceptual simulators such as satisfaction and happiness associated with motion toward a desired goal; conversely, “*back*” potentially activates simulators of frustration and disappointment associated with motion away from a desired goal. Following Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), these metaphor vehicles can be identified as instantiating underlying conceptual metaphors such as *THE FUTURE IS IN FRONT OF US* and *ACCOMPLISHMENT IS MOVEMENT TOWARD THE FRONT*. However, “*back*” is also commonly used in a number of other ways. Again following Conceptual Metaphor Theory, we might identify something like *HOME IS BACK* and *SAFETY IS BACK*. In any event, in the context of Blair's speech, “*back*” potentially activates a set of perceptual simulators quite different from those associated with “*progress*” or lack of it (the intention of the party slogan). It is this ambiguity that Blair seized upon in order to solve the conundrum

he faced, going into the Gateshead conference and more generally into the coming national election.

In the first page and a half of the text of Blair's speech – approximately 15% of the speech – it is possible to count at least five distinct uses of the “*X IS BACK*” metaphor, some of which seem to be mutually contradictory. “*Back*” first appears (paragraph 10), not as part of the party slogan, but in an ambiguous context that is carefully set up by an extended description of the recent improvements in Gateshead and Tyneside, physically (the conference centre itself along with the redevelopment of which it is part), economically (lower rates of unemployment and poverty) and socially (improved education accomplishments). After detailing all of these improvements and praising the people responsible – the citizens of the region in general, public officials, and conference center staff – Blair declares, “*I'm back.*” Here, “*back*” is used in a primarily geographical sense, and potentially activates a familiar “*home-coming*” narrative, along with its emotional simulators.⁴ The emotional resonances of welcome, of family and friends, of comfort are reinforced by the immediately following phrase, also very short: “*And it feels good.*” The “*homecoming*” narrative is fundamental to Euro-American and probably to all cultures: Compare for example the Bette Midler character in *The Rose* (Rydell, 1979), upon return to her home town in rural Texas, “*It's good to be back.*” This geographical and emotional metaphor is reinforced by its repetition in the next line of Blair's speech, “*back in the North East,*” and the “*family and friends*” resonance of the homecoming narrative is emphasized by thanking “*the people from Sedgefield who gave me the chance to serve in Parliament.*”

Immediately (12), this geographical use of the vehicle, “*back*” is extended to a second metaphorical sense, “*back with the Labour Party.*” This usage is problematic in an interesting

way – Blair literally *left* Sedgefield when he moved to London to take up his duties, first in Parliament, then as Prime Minister. But did he *leave* the Labour Party? Here, Blair makes an implicitly conciliatory acknowledgement of the discontent of Labour dissidents who apparently felt that Blair *had* indeed “*left the party behind,*” “*moved away*” from its founding principles. This subtly conciliatory tone is reinforced by a repetition of the same sense of the metaphor: “*Back* with a relentless focus on the job...” (13). Again, there is an opening here for a subtle implicature, that perhaps he has been “*away*” from or lost focus on the job.

As Tannen (1989) points out, this kind of repetition can help increase audience involvement. It also potentially reinforces the *positive* emotional and intellectual simulators associated with “*back,*” firmly placing Blair’s *current* position metaphorically *here*, with the local citizens, members of the party, and the duties of his job. “*Back*” itself is used in a layered sense. The first use is geographic (“*back* in Gateshead and Tyneside.) The second use is a metonymic extension of that geographic metaphor to embrace the social dimension of homecoming, of coming “*back*” to the North East, to the people who elected him. There follows a metaphoric extension of the original geographic use, “*back* with the Labour Party,” and finally, a further extension as a metaphor of the direction of attention “*back...* on the job.” All of this contrasts with the *negative* implications of “*back*” in the party slogan (“*FAILURE IS BACK*”), and at the same time sets up his next “*journey*” metaphor.

Blair immediately introduces a second ambiguous metaphor, closely related to the first: “In this second term, in particular after September 11th, events have sometimes *taken me far from home.*” (13) “Events have *taken me*” potentially activates simulators associated with a lack of volition that will be echoed in later sections. The implication of geographical movement in “*far from home*” is *literally* true, inasmuch as Blair has traveled to Washington

and to other world capitals on various missions related to the War on Terror generally and to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars specifically. But, at least in the views of Labour Party dissidents, it is also *metaphorically* true, inasmuch as his focus has been distracted from traditional Labour concerns of economics and social justice by his apparent preoccupation with the war. Again, he acknowledges this metaphorical reading, and the implied criticism, in the wholly metaphorical line that follows: “But no matter *how far*, I have never forgotten the *top line* of my *job spec*...” (14). “*Job spec*” here is also clearly figurative, metonymic if not metaphorical, and introduces an “*employee*” metaphor that serves to underscore the third sense of the metaphor, in effect that he is “*back on the job*.” It is also likely that the use of the colloquial, almost playful term “*job spec*” contributes to audience involvement (Tannen, 1989) by activating simulators of emotional and social experiences associated with the colloquial tone of casual workplace conversations among intimates.

In these four statements, we have three different uses of the metaphor vehicle, “*X IS BACK*” – all of them distinctly *positive* in tone (in contrast to the *negative* implications of “*back*” in the Labour election slogan). Taken together, these three uses implicitly acknowledge that Blair has been “*away*,” not only from Gateshead, Tyneside, and Sedgefield, but also from the central concerns of the Labour Party with the “*job*” of “*delivering* better lives for Britain’s hard-working families” (“*LEADERSHIP IS DELIVERING GOODS*”) And by the use of the “*job*” metaphor, followed by “The British people... are the *boss*,” Blair symbolically submits to and reaffirms his role as “*servant* of the people,” echoing the “*surrender of will*” implications of “*events have carried me*...”

With this “*employee / boss*” metaphor, Blair wraps up his nod to the party dissidents – and does so without yielding an inch to them. He has tacitly admitted that he has “*been*

away” from the party as well as from the homespun values exemplified by his description of his “tour of the country,” but he affirms that his “boss” is, *not* the Labour party or its dissident members, but “the British people” (14).

Immediately following this passage, Blair uses one more *positive* sense of the “*I’m back*” metaphor to accomplish the transition from the past (the party’s past accomplishments as exemplified in local redevelopments, his own preoccupation with terrorism and Iraq) to the immediate future: “It is good to be *back in a fight* with the Tories” (15). In this same passage, he also introduces “future of our country,” but does not yet return to the “*back / forward*” metaphor of the party slogan. There is more work to be accomplished with “*back*” first.

The Tories have a strategy, Blair goes on to inform us, to win power, not by entering at “*the front door*” but “*by the back (door)*” (19). This is Blair’s fifth use of the metaphor vehicle, “*back*,” and potentially activates schemas associated with violation of household entry customs and even outright burglary (if “*INVITED IS FRONT DOOR*,” then “*UNINVITED IS BACK DOOR*”). The sixth and seventh uses come soon after. First, “Where we have *lost* support, we *go out* and try to *win it back*” (21). Then, in an interesting variation on the “*homecoming*” narrative, Blair ties the spatial metaphor to a pastoral metaphor with strong Biblical resonances: “Where we have *lost* old friends, we try to persuade them to *come back to the fold*.” This complex metaphor moves from “*FRIENDS ARE POSSESSIONS*” to “*FOLLOWERS ARE SHEEP*” (with hints of danger to the “*lost sheep*”⁵) and “*LEADER IS SHEPHERD*,” with all its religious undertones (22). Here, there is a resonance with Blair’s own “*return home*” to Sedgefield and the Labour Party. And

again, the repetition of *back* is matched by repetition of the “*loss*” metaphor, first applied to support, then to old friends.

The “*front door*” vs. “*back door*” metaphor ties in with the “*homecoming*” metaphors in a complex and interesting way. “*Back door*” carries a sense of intimacy and hominess that resonates with the intimacy and hominess from “*homecoming*.” But the “*back door*,” as a place of uninvited entry (by the Tory party) also carries a sense of invasion and threat, of forced entry, which resonates with the negative sense of “*back*” in the Labour party slogan. Thus, this one phrase ties together two discrete fields of meaning, the comfortable and domestic meanings associated with “*homecoming*” and domesticity, which will in the next section of the speech be picked up again in a “*domestic quarrel*” metaphor, and the simulators of invasion and threat associated with “*entry by the back door*,” and by the “*not back to the Tories*” phrase in the party slogan. The dual quality of the “*back door*” metaphor appears to provide a transition from the positive to the negative sense of “*back*,” potentially tying together all of these repetitions in an intricate, interlocking pattern of emotional themes. This sequence nicely illustrates the distinction as well as the interconnections between conceptual or systematic metaphors and fields of meaning (see Figure 1).

- Figure 1 about here -

Only now, approximately ten minutes into the speech, and following a quite contradictory series of uses of the “*X IS BACK*” metaphor, does Blair introduce the party’s election slogan, with its negative use of “*back*”: “do we go *forward* with Labour, or *back* to the Tories?” (26). Once the party slogan has been introduced, “*back*” appears in a somewhat positive sense only once, in reference to a woman “*back in my own constituency*.” However, the *domestic* entailments of the positive “*back home*” trope appear in a very

interesting transformation of the “*job / employer*” relationship metaphor – located at an entirely different position on a field of meaning associated with relationships.

After introducing the “*forward not back*” slogan, Blair returns to the self-reflective mood of the first part of the speech: “And, as ever, a lot of it is *about me*” (30), followed by “I think a lot *about my relationship* with the country,” introducing a more intimate, interpersonal vision of leadership as “*RELATIONSHIP*” (31). After he reflects for a few minutes about the early years of his Prime Ministership, Blair develops the interpersonal relationship metaphor into a thoroughly domestic metaphor: “all of a sudden there you are, the British people, thinking: you’re not listening and I think: you’re not hearing me. And before you know it you *raise your voice*. And *I raise mine*. Some of you *throw a bit of crockery*.” (From “*boss*,” “the people” are transformed to “*angry wife*”; Blair himself is transformed from “*employee*” to “*exasperated husband*”; from “*LEADER IS SERVANT*” to “*LEADER IS SPOUSE*”). “And now you, the British people, have to *sit down* and decide whether you want *the relationship to continue*” (35-36). Even more than the “*back*” and “*return*” metaphors illustrated in Figure 1, the series of distinct *leadership* metaphors activates a set of simulators that link together in complex fields of meaning (see Figure 2). We have various simulators of penitence, exasperation, and patience – and above all, these very different metaphors of leadership are tied together by a common evocation of simulators associated with dedication and service to a higher cause – and implicitly connected by the brief allusion to the “*good shepherd*” metaphor to a vision of redemptive leadership.

- Figure 2 about here -

This little narrative is interesting for the sly use of playful humor, through which Blair minimizes genuine political differences by expressing them in terms of a marital spat. It

is also interesting for the way it picks up the religious “return of the prodigal son” narrative of the first passage, transforms it into a “*lost sheep*” metaphor (grounded in a different religious narrative), then rephrases it to a “hi, honey, I’m home” narrative, culminating in “If you want to *go off with* Mr. Kennedy, that’s your choice too...” (36). Blair moves from metaphorical themes rooted in a gospel tradition to metaphorical themes more closely associated with country-western, blues, and soap opera traditions. Like the multiple repeat of “*back*” in a positive sense, this use of the “*TRAVEL*” metaphor seems to *contradict* the party slogan, “*Going back not moving forward.*” There is also an interesting implication of the way the domestic / marital conflict narrative is presented – it is up to the “*wife,*” the British people, and not to the “*husband,*” Tony Blair, to decide whether the relationship is to continue. In spite of the playful tone of the passage, the message to party dissidents is clear: Do not expect a change in Blair’s behavior – or his policies.

The metaphorical use of the “*throwing crockery*” narrative activates simulators of aggression and threat to domestic peace from the same general field of meanings as “*entry by the back door,*” thus sustaining and building an underlying emotional tone that contrasts with the field of meanings activated by the slogan “*forward with Labour*” and by the earlier “*homecoming*” narrative. However, this underlying tone of threat and discontent is diminished both by the phrase “*a bit of crockery*” and by the implied characterization of political differences in terms of a domestic spat. (See Figures 1 and 2 for partial illustration of the inter-relationships among conceptual metaphors and fields of meaning.)

There is a good deal more in this speech that is of interest to metaphor theory, but what is of central importance for the current purpose is the way subtle nuances, secondary emotional, narrative, and even visceral simulators potentially activated by the series of

slightly different uses of “*back*” as a metaphor, are used to merge a kind of political *apologia* with reflections on the current state of both the party and the nation, and a call (successful, to judge by the election results) for party unity and a vigorous campaign. The domestic metaphor leads into some ruminations about “communication,” all of which continue the metaphorical tone of the “marital spat” narrative and the “*RELATIONSHIP*” metaphor. Finally, toward the end of the speech, Blair lists his campaign agenda in a series of campaign themes, abandoning the positive associations activated by the “I’m *back*” metaphor in order to drive home the negative associations potentially activated by the “*forward not back*” metaphor of the party slogan.

Political grooming. Dunbar (1996) has proposed that a *primary* role of language is what he summarizes as “gossip.” This takes two forms – simple talk for the pleasure of it, which Dunbar explains as an extension and amplification of the grooming behavior observed among other primate species, and talk about other people and their relationships. “*Grooming*” talk serves primarily to establish and maintain relationships (coalitions); talk about other people and their relationships additionally serve as a way of keeping track of complex social structures. Dunbar cites evidence from his own research that about 65% of all conversations, including those in ostensibly task-oriented settings, is devoted to gossip / grooming, and only about 35% to task-oriented communication (giving information, coordinating action, etc.)

Looking at the Gateshead speech from the perspective of Dunbar’s theory, it is apparent that *grooming* was the primary function of the speech. Almost the entire first half is given over to talk that is entirely about Blair and his relationships – with the party and with the citizens as a whole. After a brief congratulatory bit about the local area, the speech

moves quickly into what appears to be a conciliatory confession – “*I’m back*” implicitly acknowledges that “*I’ve been away.*” This continues with an explicit acknowledgement that “I understand why some people feel angry - not just over Iraq but many of the difficult decisions we have made” (29), followed by “And, as ever, a lot of it is about me” (30). Then he explicitly introduces the theme of relationship: “I think a lot about my relationship with the country” (031). After a brief recounting of the relational history of his two terms in office, he converts this to an implicit, playful metaphor based on “*marital relationship.*” All of this, incidentally, is quite consistent with the observation that the “alpha male” – the victor in a fight with a lower-status male – will often groom the defeated male, thereby restoring peace and minimizing the risk that lower-status males will join in a coalition against the victor (Dunbar, 1996).

The bit about “*throwing crockery*” invokes a familiar and amusing gossip schema in a playful way that invites the audience to participate in the language play, which contributes to group solidarity (Norrick, 1993). The bit about the Tories, near the end of this introductory section, is pure gossip: “The Tories may be *a mess.* Their policy incoherent” (18). And they can’t be trusted – they want to regain power, not “by the front door but by the back” (19).

There is very little “content,” very little information of any sort in the first half of the speech: It is all about relationship, about “*grooming,*” often in a playful tone that is inclusive of all factions of the Labour Party – but excludes the Tories. The structure of the metaphors in the first half of the speech, particularly the multiple transformations of “*back*” and the interesting transformation of “*employee - boss*” to “*errant husband – angry wife*” reinforce the grooming function while providing a means of converting what starts out sounding conciliatory and apologetic to what ends up, in the context of the “*marital spat*” script, as a

kind of ultimatum: “If you decide you want Mr. Howard, that is your choice. If you want to *go off with Mr Kennedy*, that's your choice too” (36).

Implications for metaphor theory and for metaphor analysis.

The Blair speech illustrates how both the repetition and transformation of a metaphor vehicle such as “*back*,” in a way that seemingly instantiates very different conceptual metaphors, and the echoing of a common set of themes in very different vehicles (“*employee and employer*,” “*prodigal son*,” “*pastor / shepherd and flock*,” “*husband and wife*”) can accomplish a complex set of rhetorical objectives and alter the structure of a discursive situation and the relationships within which it unfolds (Cameron, 2007). It also illustrates the value of identifying the simulators that are potentially activated by a series of metaphorical expressions and assessing how they can be used to accumulate and activate a range of schemas and concepts that, again, have the potential to alter the shared cognitive environment of the participants and consequently reshape the social reality (Ritchie, 2006).

The Blair speech also illustrates the value of supplementing the more traditional metaphor approach based on conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) or systematic metaphors (Cameron, 2003; 2007) with an approach based on potentially-activated perceptual simulators and their associated fields of meaning (see Figures 1 and 2). Each of the *leadership* metaphor vehicles, “*employee and employer*,” “*prodigal son*,” “*shepherd and flock*,” “*husband and wife*,” is associated with a discrete conceptual metaphor and, if processed as a *gestalt*, would lead to simulation of a very different set of actions and perceptions (Gibbs, 2006). But they all activate similar interoceptive emotion simulators, unified within a single field of meaning. An analysis that focused only on conceptual or systematic metaphors would fail to pick up this common set of nuances, and an analysis that

considered only the potential of metaphor vehicles to activate simulation of an entire *gestalt* would fail to pick up the way these various metaphors build and reinforce a single, unified interoceptive experience that *crosses* conceptual boundaries.

Consistent with both Cameron (2007) and Ritchie (2006), the re-use and transformation of the same metaphor activates and links together a series of interoceptive simulators, nuances of perception and emotion, and connects them both with familiar narratives and with the listener's understanding of the current political situation. On the other hand, very different metaphors and narratives potentially activate a set of similar and compatible simulators that converge on a common, extended field of meaning (Ritchie, 2003; 2006). Considering only the conceptual metaphors Blair draws on, the speech seems incoherent and self-contradictory, but the perceptual simulators and the associated fields of meaning tie the speech together thematically and emotionally, and potentially create a sense of involvement for the listeners. The combination of these two effects builds an overall coherence that ties the speech together thematically, and provides a way to activate a complex series of perceptions, images, emotions, and bits of narrative in what might meaningfully be compared to a musical composition. Focusing on the perceptual simulators that are potentially activated by the tropes in a segment of discourse such as Blair's speech provides the analyst with an important tool for describing and understanding the complex pattern of emotions, ideas, and relationships the speaker hopes to weave.

It is also important to recognize the blend of playful and religious elements in Blair's speech. Play with words and meanings appears first in Blair's contrarian introduction of the "back" metaphor in several *positive* valences before mentioning the *negative* valence of its use in the party election slogan. The bit about "lost sheep" transforms the "prodigal son"

into a “*good shepherd*,” and the subsequent “*marital spat*” metaphor introduces a second and third playful theme, entertaining in its own right in the same way that a juicy bit of gossip is entertaining, that undercuts the seriousness of the internal opposition to Blair’s policies by reducing it to a bit of “*crockery-throwing*.” The humorous absurdity of this domestic metaphor reduces the scope for critical rebuttal or objection – to object would be to “take it too seriously,” hence to admit to lack of humor and playfulness (Norrick, 1993). Moreover, and importantly, by introducing these and other playful elements into his speech, Blair activates and reinforces the impression of confidence and control – only a person who is quite confident of a relationship would dare be so playful on such an occasion. All of this contributes to accomplishing the primary objective – restoring solidarity without yielding to the dissident faction on issues of policy – through what Dunbar (1996) calls *grooming*.

The perceptual simulators approach suggests that cognitive interpretation of a metaphor may often involve, not the full activation of an underlying conceptual schema associated with the vehicle as a unified *gestalt*, but merely a small subset of context-relevant simulators associated with that schema. Thus, “*come back to the fold*” need not necessarily lead the hearer to experience disillusioned party members as *STRAY SHEEP*; a mere activation of a few of the introspective and emotional simulators associated with the underlying narrative will suffice, so that the idea of re-union and the associated emotions of comfort, welcoming, and safety become linked to the topic, *party solidarity* – all within a single field of meaning.

As the foregoing analysis shows, the perceptual simulators approach provides at the very least a useful supplement to existing analytic approaches such as that suggested by Cameron (2003; 2007). Identifying potential simulators activated by figurative language

focuses analytic attention directly on the subtle nuances of meaning that often motivate metaphor use in the first place, and connects these nuances of meaning with a coherent account of how language itself is used and interpreted (Barsalou, 1999; Ritchie, 2006). Future work will apply this same approach to unscripted conversations, and explore the *playful* use of metaphors and the playful evocation of perceptual simulators more thoroughly.

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Figure 1: Conceptual Metaphors and Fields of Meaning

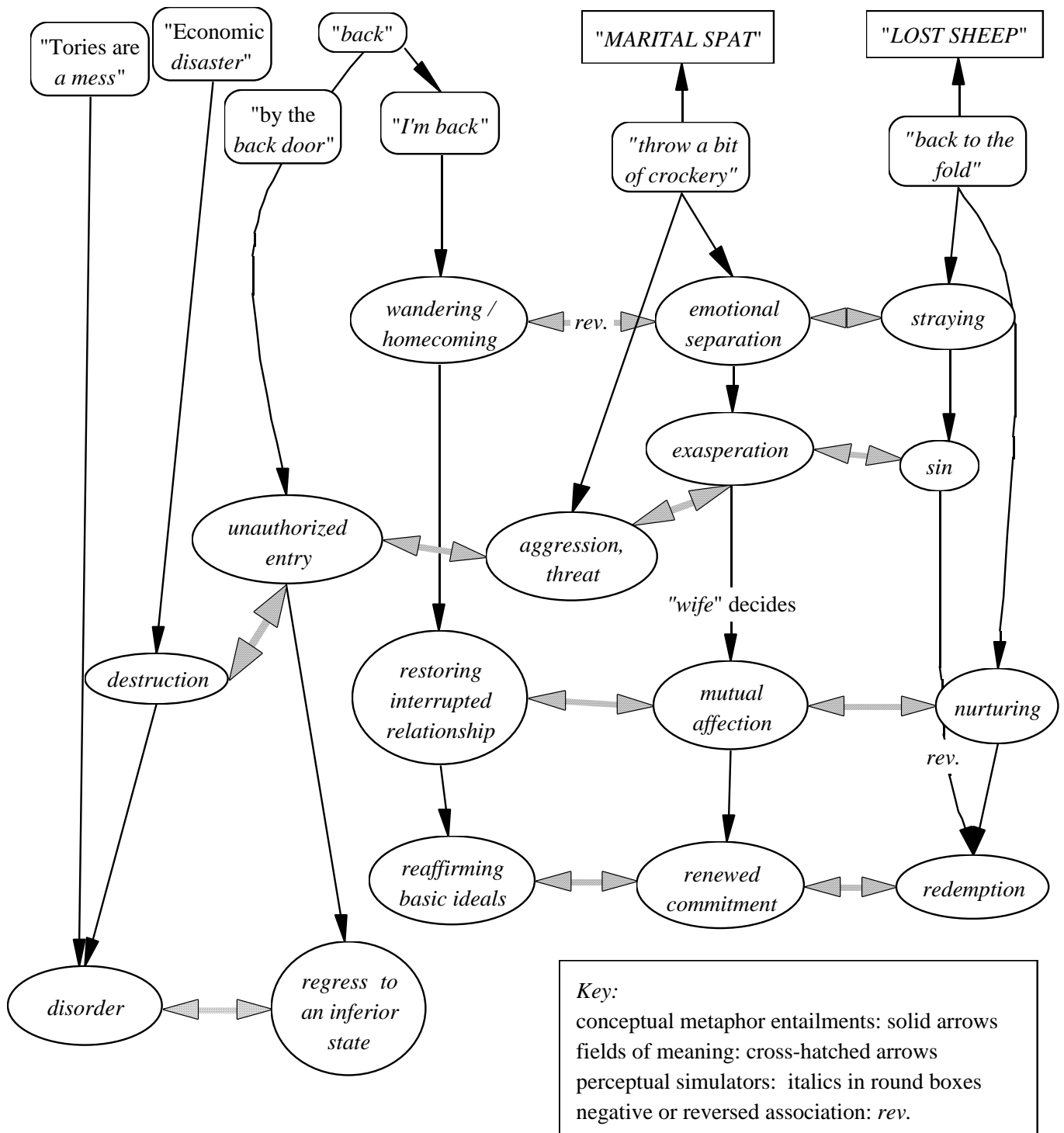
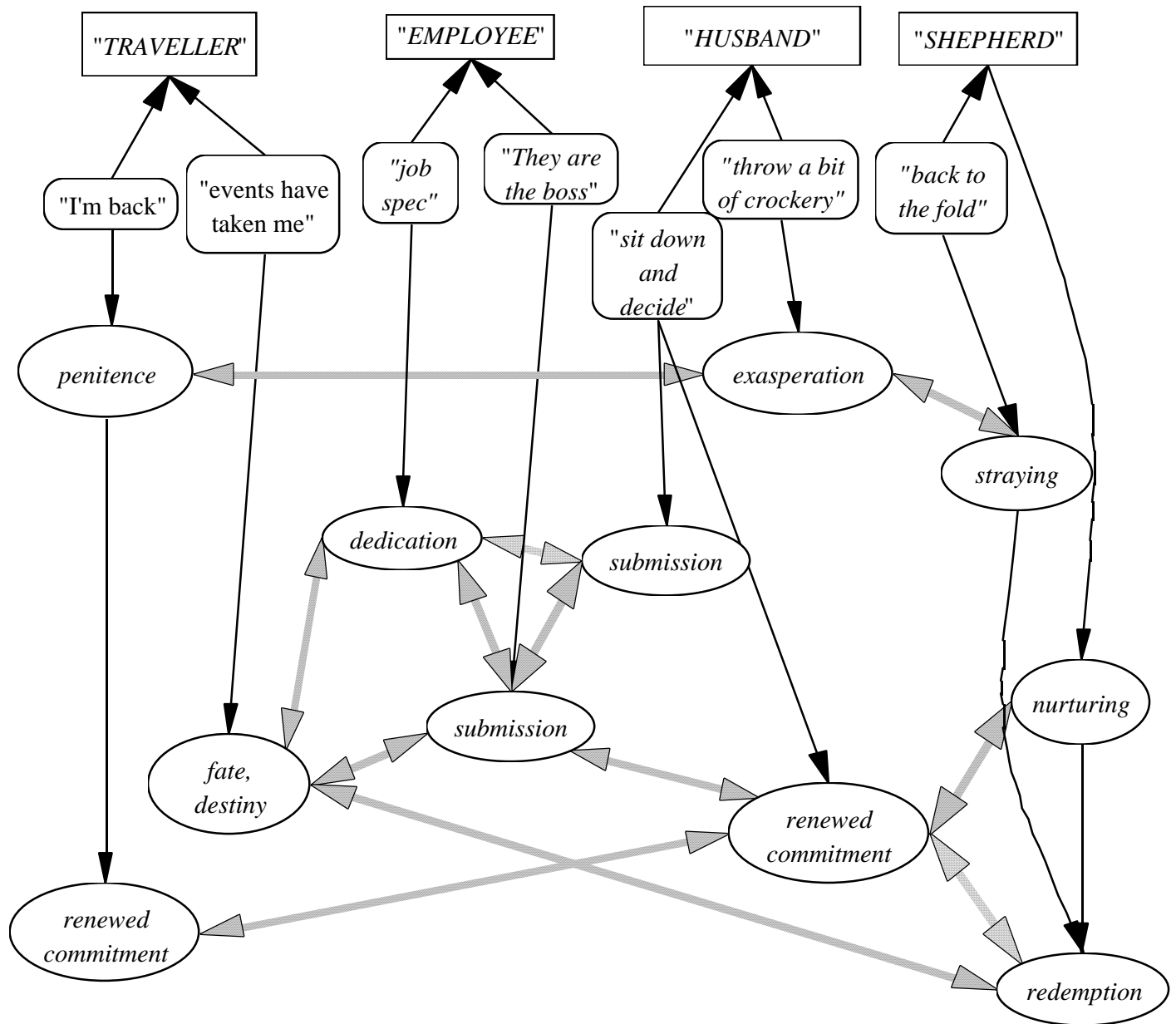


Figure 2: Leader Metaphors



Key:
 conceptual metaphor entailments: solid arrows
 fields of meaning: cross-hatched arrows
 perceptual simulators: italics in round boxes
 negative or reversed association: *rev.*

Appendix: Excerpt from Tony Blair's speech to the 2005 Conference of the Labour Party at Gateshead. The full text can be accessed from the web page of the Guardian:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>.

[The speech opens with a description of the Sage Centre and a catalogue of accomplishments in the Gateshead and Tyneside area under the Labour government.]

009. I had a tremendous time on Friday touring the country. Loved every moment of it. Enjoyed the Q&A yesterday, and anyone who texted or e-mailed a question - and there were a lot - will get a reply from me.

010. I'm back. And it feels good.

011. Back in the North East, to thank the people from Sedgefield who gave me the chance to serve in Parliament, and have given me strength and support every day that I've been there.

012. Back with the Labour Party that has given me the honour of leadership, first of the party and then, more important of course, of the country.

013. Back with a relentless focus on the job of delivering better lives for Britain's hard working families, because that is my job, and I never forget it. In this second term, in particular after September 11th, events have sometimes taken me far from home.

014. But no matter how far, I have never forgotten the top line of my job spec - to work for Britain, and the British people. They are the boss. Always have been. Always will be. And none of us, not me, not any of us, should ever forget it.

015. It is good to be back in a fight with the Tories. And make no mistake - this is a fight. A fight for the future of our country. A fight that for Britain, and the people of Britain, we have to win.

016. The polls can tell one story, but the story that counts is the one unfolding in the minds of millions of people around the country as they face up to the fundamental choice facing the country - forward or back.

017. And that story will not be told until the only poll that matters - the general election.

018. The Tories may be a mess. Their policy incoherent. Their tax and spending plan an economic disaster waiting to take our prosperity away. Their leader a representative of everything the country voted in 1997 to get rid of.

019. But they have a strategy: not power by the front door but by the back. Spread disillusion and cynicism. Tell everyone the country's hopeless, the NHS can't work, the

education system is in tatters, the investment all wasted, hope to depress our vote and get out their own through a hard right agenda. Don't underestimate it.

020. What it means to us is this: we take nothing for granted. Not one vote. Not one seat. We go out and earn every vote, every seat as we work towards earning a majority. I said no complacency in 1997. I said no complacency in 2001. I say it again now.
021. Where we have lost support, we go out and try to win it back.
022. Where we have lost old friends, we try to persuade them to come back to the fold.
023. Where we have made mistakes, we say so.
024. Where we have done well, we shout it out with pride and passion and energy.
025. Where we know we can make a difference in the future, we set out our stall for the people with confidence.
026. Because now they are thinking, reflecting - do we go forward with Labour, or back to the Tories.
027. Our task is to persuade them to go forward.
028. To vote for us not as a rejection of the others but as an endorsement of what we are trying to do for the country.
029. I understand why some people feel angry - not just over Iraq but many of the difficult decisions we have made.
030. And, as ever, a lot of it is about me.
031. I think a lot about my relationship with the country. Everyone thinks they know you. Everyone has a view. Sometimes the view is settled. You're a good thing. Sometimes it's settled the other way. You're a bad thing. And sometimes people change their mind according to their mood, according to what's happening in the country, in the world, in their own lives, in the swirl of what passes for political debate.
032. And it's not a bad idea to think of it in terms of it being like any relationship: you, the British people and me, the person you chose as your Prime Minister.
033. When I first became leader of the Labour Party, everywhere I went, I could feel the warmth growing, the expectations rising.
034. Then came the euphoria surrounding our victory. I remember saying at the time it was all a bit unreal, because people would expect miracles. We have delivered a lot, but no

miracles. Politicians don't deliver miracles. And life is not about euphoric moments. It's about steady change for the better.

035. So after the euphoria, came the steady hard slog of decision-making and delivery. And the events that tested me. And the media mood turning, and friends sometimes being lost as the big decisions mounted, and the thousand little things that irritate and grate, and then all of a sudden there you are, the British people, thinking: you're not listening and I think: you're not hearing me. And before you know it you raise your voice. I raise mine. Some of you throw a bit of crockery.

036. And now you, the British people, have to sit down and decide whether you want the relationship to continue. If you decide you want Mr Howard, that is your choice. If you want to go off with Mr Kennedy, that's your choice too. It all ends in the same place. A Tory Government not a Labour Government.

037. Going back not moving forward.

038. But for me, I believe in you, the British people as much as ever.

039. I have learnt some lessons in these past years. This job is a harsh teacher but a wise one.

040. As we sought power, reached out for new support, fought to establish ourselves on fresh political terrain, the accusation was of "all things to all people".

041. And I soon learnt that however pleasant popularity is, "all things to all people" never lasts for long.

042. Then as I struggled with the levers of power, saw with a genuine urgency the challenges a new world was thrusting on Britain, I was determined to do the right thing.

043. But for a political leader, "doing the right thing" in reality is only ever "doing what I think is the right thing".

044. And if you're not careful, "doing the right thing" becomes "I know best".

045. So, starting with the Big Conversation, I went back out, and rather than talking at, talked with people.

046. And I learnt.

047. I learnt that when I'm working hard, trying my damndest and wondering, frustrated, why people can't appreciate the delivery, it's easy to forget life is still so tough for so many people, a real life daily struggle, not for a life of luxury but just to get by.

048. And I learnt that the best policy comes not from courting popularity or mere conviction, but comes from partnership between politics and people, from the blend of listening and leading; that people don't expect miracles, but they do demand dialogue; that they aren't disinterested in politics or even disengaged but they do feel disempowered.

[At this point the speech makes a transition into a more conventional campaign speech, culminating in a list of public needs and policies to address them.]

¹ Kovecses (2005) refers to a similar concept as “*the range of the target*” and “*the scope of the source*,” and shows that the related fields of meaning have somewhat different, although overlapping, boundaries in different cultures.

² The text, Blair’s speech to the 2005 spring conference of the Labour Party, was one of many texts discussed at a lively and intellectually stimulating Metaphor Analysis Workshop held at the Universities of Leeds and York as part of a project funded by the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council’s National Centre for Research Methods in July, 2006. A text of the speech was kindly provided in advance of the workshop by Paul Chilton; I had the pleasure of conducting an initial analysis of the speech during a prolonged hiking trip through the Yorkshire Moors prior to the conference, with the objective of making a preliminary identification of potential simulators and organizing them into fields of meaning. During the discussions at the workshop, my initial analysis was deepened and enriched in several ways. Notably, my understanding of the political and cultural context of the speech was expanded (and in many instances corrected) by colleagues much closer to the intricacies of British politics, and the patterns I had identified in my initial analysis were supplemented, expanded, and refined through extended discussions with my fellow workshop participants. Some but not all of this discussion is represented on the Metaphor Analysis Project web site (Cameron, 2006). It is to be hoped that some of the other participants in the conference (including Lynne Cameron, who organized the conference, Alice Deignan, Vyv Evans, Graham Low, Elena Semino, and Juup Stelma) will publish their own keen insights about the pattern of metaphor usage in the speech. The purpose here is not to attempt to capture the richness of the discussions in York, but much more narrowly to use Blair’s speech to illustrate the application of Context-Limited Simulation Theory to a particular text that was produced in a very specific historical, cultural, and relational context.

³ The portion of the speech on which this analysis is based is included as an appendix, with paragraphs numbered consecutively from the beginning of the speech. The full text can be accessed from the web page of the Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>. References are to paragraph numbers.

⁴ Cameron (2006) also suggests a resonance with the same line in Schwarzenegger films, where it carries a blend of threat with promise.

⁵ I am grateful to Lynne Cameron for this insight.