# Metaphors in International Relations Theory

Michael P. Marks

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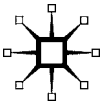



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For Brenda

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# Contents

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# Acknowledgments

Most of the inspiration for this book came from experiences in the classroom teaching students at Willamette University. Given the abstract nature of international relations in theory and practice, both my students and I have found that difficult concepts can be made intelligible through the use of metaphorical imagery. However, metaphors can serve to both clarify and confound, and thus a critical analysis of the metaphors that scholars use to frame the study of international relations can yield insights beyond that which those metaphors were originally intended to convey. Hence, my greatest intellectual debt is not to established scholars of international relations, but to the budding scholars who, in their role as undergraduates at Willamette, engaged me in a philosophical investigation of metaphors. This book would not be possible if it were not for their intellectual curiosity that made me think deeply about the phenomena examined in this book.

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# Chapter 1

# Introduction

This is a book about discourse, specifically, scholarly discourse in the study of international relations. The purpose of the book is to analyze the language of metaphor in international relations (IR) theory. In his book on the balance of power (and the metaphors, myths, and models thereof), Richard Little (2007, 30) observes that "the general importance of metaphors until very recently has simply not been taken on board in International Relations." While metaphors have been ever present in the study of international relations (as the bibliography of this book can attest), little explicit or sustained attention has been paid to their role.[1] With the advent of the "linguistic turn" in international relations theory, however, the need to tackle the language of metaphor is evident.

As will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 2, metaphors are more than mere rhetorical devices. Recent scholarship in the field of cognitive linguistics reveals that metaphors are essential to human thought and communication. Metaphors evoke images of what is known and provoke new understandings of topics under investigation. In academic inquiry the role of metaphors is multiform: they can define a problem, delineate the scope of analysis, and suggest hypotheses for testing theoretical propositions.[2] One of the ironies of international relations theory is that while the language of international relations can sound technical and arcane to the untrained ear, the words IR scholars use to describe world affairs are highly metaphorical. They speak and write of "anarchy," "systems," "structures," "balances of power," and "levels of analysis," to name just a few of the foundational metaphors of international relations theory, not to mention the more specific metaphorical terms found in areas

such as international security, international political economy, strategic interaction, and game theory. In short, throughout international relations literature, what is studied is expressed in metaphorical terms.

## Scope of the Book

This is not a book about how politicians and policymakers use metaphors for the purposes of framing issues and formulating policies in the area of international affairs. That is a subject that has been addressed capably by other scholars (see, e.g., Beer and De Landtsheer 2004).[3] While not the central focus of this book, it is worth noting that the lessons scholars derive from the way *political leaders* use metaphors to frame foreign policy issues also are useful in dissecting the metaphors scholars *themselves* use in the course of their investigations.[4] Ironically, scholars of international relations are often convinced that metaphors are safer in their hands than in the hands of politicians. As this book will show, scholars who study international relations have found metaphors to be indispensable in the construction of explanatory theories. Although scholars have been adept at investigating the discursive practices of foreign policy officials, they have been less inclined to turn the lens on themselves to interrogate the metaphors they use to analyze international affairs. In many if not most cases, the deployment of these metaphors borders on the cavalier. And, as this volume will demonstrate, metaphors that are used haphazardly in fashioning international relations theories can lead to analyses that are less than fruitful.

Yet, perhaps because scholars can be casual in their use of metaphors, they do not hesitate to criticize policymakers who deliberately use metaphors in formulating foreign policy. For example, many of the chapters in the book *Metaphorical World Politics* (Beer and De Landtsheer 2004) are quick to highlight what the authors see as the pernicious use of metaphors by politicians in devising and implementing government policy in the area of international affairs. Richard Gregg (2004, 67–68), for instance, discusses how American politicians invoked metaphors of disease (e.g., the "cancer" of communism) during the Red Scare. Likewise, Robert Ivie (2004, 78–82) refers to metaphors involving a "civilizing" motivation that American leaders utilized when trying to convince people of the need to spread democracy around the world. In both these cases, the authors cast a suspicious eye on political officials who use metaphors for the purpose of buttressing morally suspect foreign policies. Yet, a similar scrutiny is rarely applied to scholars of international relations who

use metaphors to support their favored theories to explain the world. Michael Shapiro (1989b, 13) observes that critical analysis of political discourse employs an "insurrectional textuality" to "denaturalize familiar realities," and in the same volume, James Der Derian (1989) calls for an interrogation of the "present knowledge of international relations." Given the broad range of metaphors found in international relations theory it would be a daunting if not an impossible task to compile a list and offer a detailed analysis of all of them.[5] Instead, the purpose of this book is to critically interrogate the major defining metaphors of international relations theory to expose the often unconscious deployment of a scholarly discourse that privileges certain sets of understandings over others.

In addition, it should be pointed out that this book is about metaphors in international relations theory; it does not pretend to develop a theory of metaphors or to directly engage with theoretical debates about the role of metaphors in thought and communication. Given the vast literature on metaphors, it would be beyond the scope of this book to enter into the debate over metaphor theory. As will be discussed in the next chapter, modern research on metaphors stresses the cognitive aspects of metaphoric communication, and thus that general perspective will form the basis of this book's approach to analyzing metaphors in international relations theory. However, within the general school of cognitive linguistics there are multiple approaches to analyzing the role of metaphors in how humans perceive of and communicate their experiences. Evaluation of the nuances, relative merits, and theoretical implications of these approaches will have to be left out of the ambit of this study, although, when relevant, insights from metaphor research will be brought to bear.

## Constructing Knowledge in International Relations Theory

It is increasingly apparent that what is known about international relations is not so much a universally shared agreement about objective realities but rather a reflection of dominant ways of knowing that frame issues and debates not to mention the empirical bases of international affairs. The Constructivist paradigm is probably the most prominent and most explicit school of thought in its acknowledgment that the empirical bases of world affairs can be conceptualized theoretically such that different visions of reality can be constructed. However, it is not the only approach in the study of international relations that advances claims about the discursive framing by which

the facts of international relations are conceived. As Jim George (1994) asserts, all of the major theoretical perspectives in IR advance a discursive project that sets out what is conceivable in the study of international relations.

Metaphors are just one set of discursive tools with which the factual bases of international relations can be represented in the theories that are used to conceptualize world affairs. As John Agnew (2007, 138) observes, knowledge about any subject (but for Agnew's purpose as well as ours, knowledge about international relations) can be defined as "explanatory schemes, frames of reference, crucial sets of assumptions, narrative traditions, and theories." Agnew (ibid.) further states that a "great deal of interpretive projection is the result of the imposition of intellectual/political hegemonies from some places onto others." Thus, whether they are metaphors or any of the other means for constructing knowledge available to scholars, what is known at any given time or in any given place about international relations is reflective of how knowledge about a subject is formulated.

One of the main theses of this book is that metaphors in international relations theory do far more than simply supply evocative imagery to explanatory frameworks. Instead, a major contention of this study is that the generally accepted paradigms that are used to analyze international relations are built on metaphorical imagery that provides the very theoretical propositions these paradigms use to hypothesize and make predictions about international affairs.[6] It is now generally agreed that metaphors play an integral role in human cognition. Most, if not all, human thought is metaphorical in the sense that humans use metaphors to recognize patterns and relationships among concrete and conceptual categories. Language reflects the inclination of humans to use metaphors in understanding the world, and thus both everyday language and the vocabulary of theoretical reasoning alike are built on the metaphorical images that people use to recognize similarities and differences in what they encounter in both the old and the new. Metaphors in theory of any sort can be casual, for example, the image of a metaphorical "big bang" that physicists employ to visualize the origins of the "universe" (itself a metaphor), or integral, for example, the metaphor of economic "cycles" on which entire schools of thought are devoted in the field of economics.

In international relations theory, the ontological assumptions and epistemological methods of the various paradigmatic approaches are suffused with metaphors. For example, Vincent Pouliot (2007, 362) observes that the structuro-functionalist approach to the study of international relations is distinguished by its "talk of systems,

equilibriums, and structures," each of which is a metaphorical image that constructs what is knowable using this approach. By the same token, Pouliot (362) points out that the contending Constructivist approach "has its own dialect full of social constructions, norms, and identities," which are also metaphorical in nature. Some of these metaphors are obvious, while others, due to either their repeated use or mundane quality, go largely unnoticed and undetected by scholars in the field. Metaphors in IR theory used deliberately to generate hypotheses can eventually become reified to the extent that they lose their heuristic nature, while metaphors used casually often are not investigated with regard to their validity for giving insight into the subject matter at hand.

Throughout the course of this book readers will discover that the vast majority of the terms cataloguing, defining, and naming theories, concepts, and analytical tools pertaining to the study of international relations are metaphorical in nature. The reader may then be prompted to ask, if that is the case, what is *not* a metaphor in international relations theory and, if the answer is very little to nothing, what is the point of highlighting what could then be thought of as unavoidable elements in the scholarly discipline at hand? As the next chapter will explain, it is a fact that no realm of human cognition is devoid of metaphorical imagery, including every academic discipline. It is because of this that the choice, conscious or not, of metaphors that aid in any theoretical process has consequences for what empirical topics are studied, what assumptions underlie these inquiries, and what theoretical propositions are put to the test. Since no sustained attention has been paid to this endeavor in the past, it is helpful to undertake an examination of metaphors in IR theory to see what impact they have had in the field.

To give the reader a sense of how metaphors operate in international relations theory it is useful to start with an example that demonstrates the ubiquity of metaphor in IR thought. International relations are said to be governed by certain "structures." "Structure" is a term that typically implies physical qualities. Thus, initially, "structure" was simply a way to suggest certain metaphorical physical constraints on states and other international actors. Today, however, it is used literally as a descriptor for that which defines world affairs. Continual use of a metaphorical term in any context tends to give what once was a metaphor the appearance of being literally true. Regardless of the intentions of scholars, and leaving entirely aside the question of whether or not there is an objective reality that people agree on, as long as individuals have a choice in what language to use to describe

something, the language that eventually is chosen is both inevitably metaphorical and influences the way concepts in international relations theory are framed.

## Why Metaphors Matter

Many of the metaphors that have been devised by scholars to frame the study of international relations are self-consciously seen as contrivances that help observers make inferences about how international relations works. For example, in introductory international relations classes college students are frequently taught to think of the world metaphorically as a "billiard table" with states imagined as metaphorical "balls."[7] These billiards images ostensibly introduce students to the basic elements of traditional international relations theory. States are thought of metaphorically as "hard-shelled and impenetrable territorially sovereign states" (Opello and Rosow 1999, 226), and are said to have "interests [that] are defined exogenously" in a "process [that] is characterized by intergovernmental bargaining and unlimited state interest" (Sjursen 2001, n.p.).[8] In the billiard ball model there are no "good" states or "bad" states (Mearsheimer 1994–1995, 48), and "[o]nly the hard exteriors touch, and heavier or faster moving ones push others out of the way" (Burton 1972, 28). There are other metaphorical contrivances for the milieu of international relations as well. For example, the "billiard ball" metaphor can be compared to the similar-sounding, albeit theoretically opposed, " 'egg-box' conception of international society" whereby "the sovereign states are the eggs, the box is international society and the purpose of the box is to 'separate and cushion, not to act' " (Wheeler 1996, 126).[9]

The "web" or "cobweb" model challenges the billiard ball image of states as hard-shelled actors by promoting the vision of an international society in which relations among a variety of global actors resemble the intertwined threads of a web-like matrix (Burton 1972, 35–45). Sometimes it seems as if the billiard ball image of international relations is the target for every other metaphor that challenges the theoretical implications of the billiard ball model. In their 2007 article—"Billiard Balls or Snowflakes?"—for example, Benjamin Fordham and Victor Asal (2007, 48) suggest that major powers be seen less as hard-shelled impenetrable objects and more like metaphorical "snowflakes" "with many potentially relevant internal characteristics." Other metaphors include the "burning house" vision of the international system and the "forest" image of an international system comprising homogenous states pictured metaphorically as "trees."[10]

In recent years scholars have become rather creative in contriving metaphors to capture what they see as the nature of the milieu that constitutes the world of international relations. Robert Kaplan (1994, 75), for example, suggests the metaphor of a "hologram" to describe what he sees as the multifaceted nature of international relations.

Examining the role of metaphors that frame the context of international relations is not a purely academic exercise. There are real-world implications for foreign policymaking of these metaphors as well. During her keynote address at the Citizen Diplomacy Summit in 2005, former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made the following metaphorical observation that reflected her view of foreign policy:

> As you may have seen, there are also many other surveys showing that international support for US foreign policy is at the lowest level since the Vietnam War. The main complaint is that we don't take the interests of other countries into account and that we are too quick to use military force. How do we explain these perceptions? What can we do to change them? *I thought about this and decided that it helps to compare foreign policy to a game of pool.* Everybody always talks about foreign policy as a game of chess, but that doesn't work for me because chess is a very deliberate and slow game where you take a lot of time to make decisions. *I've always thought that a pool table makes more sense because when one ball is hit it smacks into others, and each of them caroms around and hits some more, just like our policy makers that start out in one direction, but end up going in six.* Everything that happens has an effect on everything else, all of which leads us to a lot of unintended consequences. In this case it's the invasion of Iraq that has rearranged the balls on the table . . . The worst days in fact may well lie ahead—but we can help the situation overall by going back to that pool table and starting some balls moving in a different direction. (Albright 2005a, 23 emphasis added)

The Realist metaphorical imagery of these statements is unmistakable and could be recognized by any first-year student in a college introductory international relations class. Albright was speaking not as an academic but as a former senior policymaker in the U.S. foreign policy establishment. However, she was speaking not as a politician trying to frame an issue or gain popular support, but rather as a policymaker schooled in the theories of international relations.

Madeleine Albright was one of the major architects of U.S. foreign policy during the administration of President Bill Clinton. Scholars can argue about the motivations of Albright and others in the U.S. foreign policy establishment at that time, but what emerges from the

former Secretary of State's 2005 observations is that her own thinking about the world has been shaped by the theoretical conclusions that follow from the billiard ball metaphor so closely associated with Realist theory. One can presume that Secretary Albright had given a good deal of thought to the way she imagines the nature of international relations and that her pool table reference was not just an off-the-cuff remark.[11] Rather, we can reasonably infer that the actions taken by the Clinton administration were a direct reflection of the theoretical lens Madeleine Albright carried with her as Secretary of State. Armed with clues found in Albright's billiards ball comments, scholars who had puzzled over the motivations of the framers of U.S. foreign policy during the Clinton administration now have a better ability to understand the theoretical roots of this policy.

The conclusion to be drawn from this discussion is that metaphors that frame the context of international relations are not solely part of a purely theoretical endeavor. What constitutes the field of inquiry that falls under the rubric of international relations depends on what metaphorical perspectives shape the field. In light of this observation, this book adopts a critical perspective in analyzing the central metaphors in international relations. The term "critical" often is associated with approaches in international relations that reveal relationships of power among international actors that are concealed by traditional theoretical perspectives. This book takes a different posture, directing its attention not at international actors but at theories of international relations themselves. While it is true that many critical IR scholars have as their immediate target what they see as deficiencies in existing theoretical frameworks, for many of them the ultimate aim is to direct attention at how international affairs are constructed in ways that are not revealed by traditional theoretical approaches. In this book I am less critical of the subject matter of international relations inquiry than I am of the nature of international relations theory used to study it. I neither know nor suspect that there is some*thing* about international relations that is not revealed to IR scholars via traditional theoretical perspectives, including critical ones. Rather, I assume that *how* international relations is revealed reflects scholars' own conceptual impressions that they experience through metaphors and convey to others through metaphorical expression. My purpose in this book is to critically examine metaphorical expression in international relations to see what that reveals about the theoretical propositions that characterize diverse scholarly traditions.

# Chapter 2

# Thoughts on Metaphor

## What Are Metaphors?

Metaphors are among the most studied elements of language.[1] Philosophers and linguists have been fascinated by the way metaphors reveal similarities in dissimilar realms. Aristotle defined a good metaphor as one that "implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilarities" (quoted in Harries 1978b, 73). Samuel Johnson described metaphor as a linguistic formulation that "gives you two ideas for one" (quoted in Sapir 1977, 9). Most people are familiar with metaphors in their use in fiction and poetry. However, metaphors do more than enliven literary expression. Because they highlight similarities in the dissimilar, metaphors are the key to intellectual discovery.[2]

Any number of scholars over the years have highlighted the utility of metaphors for understanding. Philip Wheelwright (1962, 170) writes that with metaphor "the fresh context may be regarded as an angle of vision, a perspective, through which reality can be held in a certain way, a unique way, not entirely commensurate with any other way." Paul Ricoeur (1977, 232) opines: "Broadly speaking, metaphorical truth concerns the application of predicates or of properties to something by a sort of transference, as for example, the application of predicates borrowed from the domain of sound to something coloured." Don Swanson (1978, 163) contends that a "metaphor is a peremptory invitation to discovery. What is discoverable are the various allusive ties, or common attributes, between the metaphor and the underlying truth to which it points." For Nelson Goodman (1978, 175), metaphor "participates fully in the progress of knowledge: in replacing some stale 'natural' kinds with novel categories, in contriving facts, in revising theory, and in bringing us new worlds." Wolf

Paprotté and René Dirven (1985, vii) write that metaphor "is recognized as one of the deepest and most persisting phenomena of theory building and thinking."

Clearly metaphors have piqued the curiosity of philosophers and scholars for centuries, and with good reason. It is now understood that basic human cognition involves conceptualizing the world metaphorically. This is reflected in linguistic communication, which translates metaphorical thinking into metaphorical expression. Thus, according to Roland Bleiker (2000, 228), "all forms of thought are metaphorical in nature. They cannot be anything else, for language itself is a series of metaphors through which we make sense of the world that surrounds us. And since we need language not only to communicate, but also to form our opinions of social phenomena, we inevitably think, live and criticize through a series of metaphors . . . " The pervasiveness of metaphors in thought and words is so commonplace that people typically do not take note of the metaphorical origins of everyday expressions. For example, any number of body parts serve as metaphors for conceptualizing other physical forms—from "head of a pin," to "street shoulder," to "heart of the city," to "foot of a bed." By drawing on what is ordinary in two familiar realms and positioning them in an unfamiliar way, new understandings are produced.[3]

## Traditional Views of Metaphors

Metaphors are among the most studied and analyzed linguistic devices in the history of human communication.[4] The *American Heritage Dictionary* (1134) defines metaphor as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison."[5] A metaphor is a form of analogy but it is a specific type of analogy. Analogy uses direct comparison to deliberately draw attention to a "similarity in some respects between things that are otherwise dissimilar" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 66). Hence, a typical analogy would be "the rope was coiled up like a snake." Ropes and snakes are dissimilar objects, but the commonality of shapes they can take can be highlighted in analogical form. The unique quality of metaphors is that they convey meaning via analogy by incorporating indirect comparison. Metaphors trigger a mental association between two things that is not immediately apparent through overt comparison by explicit analogy. For instance, using the example of a snake, one could say metaphorically that "John is a snake." The metaphor of "snake" attributes a unique

quality to the person of John to create a new understanding about John's nature. What advances the expansion of knowledge is precisely the (metaphorical) bridge metaphors make between two seemingly dissimilar realms.

Hayden White (1978, 91) opines: "metaphor does not *image* the thing it seeks to characterize, *it gives directions* for finding the set of images that are intended to be associated with that thing. It functions as a symbol, rather than as a sign" (emphasis in the original). Following White, since language is inherently symbolic, many scholars have opined that virtually all language is metaphorical in the sense that like a mathematical equation, the role of metaphors emphasizes the association between one side of the equation and the other.[6] Or, to put it another way, both mathematics and language are symbolic. Hence, the symbol "four" is a metaphor for "two plus two"; people understand that just as "two plus two" constitutes the sum of "one plus one plus one plus one," "four" substitutes for the latter in its representation of the former.[7] The claim that the names of numbers are inherently metaphorical has recently been backed up by research conducted by a team of British scholars, who have discovered that children in societies that use languages that possess no words for numbers are still able to count (Butterworth et al. 2008). The work of these researchers indicates that numeracy and literacy are distinct mental activities with the linguistic function of the brain providing metaphors to represent the way the brain understands numerical quantities. In other words, if the British researchers are right, humans do not necessarily need words in order to count, but when they *do* use words to express numbers, those words are inherently metaphorical.[8]

In the same way that the words for numbers serve as metaphorical representations of numerical quantities, other basic aspects of human existence typically are represented metaphorically, just as the core elements of existence serve as metaphors for other things. The human body and its parts, for example, provide metaphorical representations of everyday things. For example, to say that a pin has a "head" is to metaphorically represent the metaphorical "equation" one might make between the part of the body that rests on the torso and the part of the pin that sticks out at the top. Likewise, people speak of the "leg" of a table, the "foot" of a bed, the "shoulder" of a highway, or the "heart" of the matter. The person who comes up with ideas for a large organization often is referred to metaphorically as the "brains" of the operation. Human communication is so replete with these types of everyday metaphors that most people simply take it for granted that they are speaking with imagery to convey basic ideas.

That all language is metaphorical is a claim that has been widely accepted by linguists and other scholars. As Mark Turner (1987, 17) points out, even the following definition of "metaphor" is metaphorical: "A metaphor, in general, provides a way of seeing one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain." Since "cognition and vision are different, though related, domains of existence" (ibid.), to say that metaphors allow a way of "seeing" one domain in terms of another is to employ metaphorical language as part of a definition of metaphor. As previously noted, metaphors in Western languages have been an object of interest since the time of Aristotle. Yet, while Aristotle's observations on metaphor provide the foundation for most subsequent philosophy on the topic, scholars now recognize that Aristotle did not go far enough. Metaphors convey similarities by substituting one thing for another. But this substitution process does not merely express equality as the math illustration implies. Rather (and, frankly, this is true for math as well), the substitution of one concept for another by means of metaphor creates *new* understandings and advances cognitive comprehension.[9] As J. David Sapir (1977, 32) puts it: "The metaphoric process is not a simple game of substitution, but rather a creative game where the pregnant interplay of two disparate terms provides insight that, although it might at times be trivial can also be profound and revealing of important and deep cultural understandings." Similarly, Turner (1987, 19) writes: "In fact it is not from Aristotle's metaphor that interesting metaphors derive. Creative metaphors call for conceptual revision. They require us to conceive the ontology of a thing. They entail the attribution of new salient properties, and thus *create* similarity" (emphasis in the original).

Traditional views of metaphors have given way to cognitive linguistics and the notion that metaphors are a ubiquitous way in which the brain works. As the brain interprets sensory input, it catalogs it according to common patterns. Metaphors provide shortcuts for cross-referencing the items stored in the brain's cataloging system.[10] They provide a series of connections that allow the brain to understand new information in the context of previously encountered phenomena. Even before modern advances in cognitive sciences, philosophers of metaphors have intuitively grasped this concept. As I. A. Richards observed in 1936, metaphor is "fundamentally a borrowing between intercourse of *thoughts,* a transaction between contexts" (Richards 1936, 94, emphasis in the original).[11] Metaphors thus permit the brain to make sense of new concepts that share something in common with information that is already understood.[12]

## Cognitive Linguistics and Current Research on Metaphors

Current research on metaphors is dominated by the contributions of cognitive linguistics.[13] The cognitive linguist Mark Johnson (1981, 4) summarizes traditional views on metaphors in this way: "[P]hilosophers' thinking on the subject" of metaphor is that "a metaphor is an elliptical simile useful for stylistic, rhetorical, and didactic purposes, but which can be translated into a literal paraphrase without any loss of cognitive content." This traditional view of metaphors increasingly has given way to a new vision based on cognitive linguistics that sees in metaphors a more fundamental role in the processes of human thought. As George Lakoff (1993, 203) points out, whereas in the traditional view the "term 'metaphorical expression' refers to a linguistic expression (a word, phrase, or sentence) that is the surface realization of . . . a cross-domain mapping," in the contemporary theory of metaphor, metaphor "has come to mean 'a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system' " itself. That is to say, metaphor is how humans think, not only how they express themselves in language.[14]

Many of the current debates over the role of metaphors center on the contributions of the aforementioned Lakoff and Johnson. Lakoff and Johnson's thesis is that metaphors are part of an ongoing process in which humans interact with the physical environment. Lakoff and Johnson refer to their theory as an "experientialist" approach, also known as the "conceptual theory" of metaphors. Humans make sense of the world metaphorically when the patterns experienced in one domain are structured through language to provide meaning to another domain (Lakoff and Johnson 1980b, 230).[15] Lakoff and Johnson elaborate the experientialist theory of metaphors in their work on the mind – body connection in human cognition. They have coined the term the "embodied mind," which refers to human learning as a function of its biological bases, especially the neural functioning of the body and the brain:

> [The] findings of cognitive science are profoundly disquieting in two respects. First, they tell us that human reasoning is a form of animal reason, a reason inextricably tied to our bodies and the peculiarities of our brains. Second, these results tell us that our bodies, brains, and interactions with our environment provide the mostly unconscious basis for our everyday metaphysics, that is, our sense of what is real. (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 17)

In Lakoff and Johnson's thesis all thinking is experienced physically. For example, the *mental* process of categorization is in fact a *physical* activity. Lakoff and Johnson further state: "Categorization is thus not a purely intellectual matter, occurring after the fact of experience. Rather, the formation and use of categories is the stuff of experience" (ibid., 19). Since metaphors are inextricably linked to physical experiences, they resonate with and confirm those experiences and convey them to others.[16]

Lakoff and Johnson assert that the reason metaphors resonate with people and can be communicated is because they are encountered physically. Drawing on his work with Lakoff, Johnson (1987, 209) further incorporates the human body into metaphor analysis:

> *Understanding is an event*—it is not merely a body of beliefs (though it includes our beliefs). It is the means by which we have a *shared, relatively intelligible world*. The basic epistemological finding of this "experientialist" (cognitive semantics) approach is that knowledge must be understood in terms of structures of embodied understanding, as an interaction of a human organism with its environment (which includes its language, cultural traditions, values, institutions, and the history of its social community) (emphasis in the original).[17]

In many ways what Lakoff and Johnson argue about metaphors builds on previous philosophical treatises on the role of metaphors in language and knowledge but does so in a way that acknowledges advances in the study of cognitive reasoning.

Although Lakoff and Johnson bring a modern sensibility and scientific tools to the study of metaphors, their conclusions echo earlier observations.[18] Notably, they update the theory of metaphor as promulgated by Friedrich Nietzsche.[19] Although Nietzsche approached metaphors from a different philosophical tradition, his thesis anticipates the theories of metaphors of contemporary scholars. In Nietzsche's view, metaphors create for humans their knowledge of the world around them.[20] Additionally, Nietzsche sees metaphors as transformative, since they alter humans' conception of themselves and their surroundings on a continual basis. Like Lakoff and Johnson, Nietzsche sees man as a creature that thinks metaphorically by nature.[21] Even more significant for current scholarship on the subject, Nietzsche identifies the source of metaphorical thinking in the cognitive and neurological functions of the body and the mind.[22] Thus, Nietzsche "radicalizes the notion of metaphor to encompass nearly all human culture and cognition" (Murphy 2001, 22). As is

true for contemporary theorists of metaphor, Nietzsche maintains that all human knowledge is a reflection of metaphorical thought: "For Nietzsche to claim that there is 'no real knowing apart from metaphor' is ultimately to claim that all truth is a human creation" (Cantor 1982, 78). In many ways, then, traditional views on metaphor, stretching from Aristotle through Nietzsche to cognitive linguists such as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, are of one piece; they reflect what at first was an intuition, later a philosophical perspective, and most recently a cognitive science, all of which acknowledge metaphors as essential to human thought. The current science of metaphors, though based on contemporary views of humans' relationship to their own thoughts, continues a long tradition of understanding metaphor as an essential feature of understanding itself.

## Metaphors, Literal Expression, and "Reality"

What is the relationship between metaphors and "reality?" Is there some objective, discernible reality that is obscured or distorted by metaphors, or as one scholar who read a preliminary draft of a portion of this book asks, is it "metaphors all the way down?" (a question that itself is a metaphor given the figurative sense of what is meant by "down"). To put it another way, is there some way of conveying ideas substantively that does not make use of metaphors, and if not, does that imply that all reality is metaphorical? The answer given by George Lakoff and other cognitive linguists to the question of metaphors' relationship to "reality" acknowledges a "reality existing independent of human beings" but also accepts "constraints on our conceptual systems due to the nature of that reality" (Lakoff 1987, 266). In Lakoff and Johnson's "experiential realism" or "experientialism," humans' grasp of reality is tied to what Lakoff (ibid., 267) calls "conceptual bodily experiences." Metaphors are integral to this process:

> The social reality defined by a culture affects its conception of physical reality. What is real for an individual as a member of a culture is a product both of his social reality and the way in which that shapes his experience of the physical world. Since much of our social reality is understood in metaphorical terms, and since our conception of the physical world is partly metaphorical, metaphor plays a very significant role in determining what is real for us. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980b, 146)

What Lakoff and Johnson are concerned with is the way that humans *understand* the world. For metaphysicists hoping to answer the

question about whether there is an "objective" reality, Lakoff and Johnson reject the view of an "objective" reality, arguing instead that in terms of human cognition, reality is conceptualized as metaphors.[23] That is, they argue that all human *thought* is metaphorical regardless of whether there is a physical reality that can be "objectively" perceived or not. Lakoff and Johnson's view on this has been accepted by other scholars of cognitive linguistics. Eve Sweetser (1990, 1–2), for example, writes: "the observed regularities are natural and readily motivated within a cognitively based theory which takes not the objective 'real world,' but human perception and understanding of the world to be the basis for the structure of human language." Similar sentiments are expressed by Karsten Harries (1978a, 173), who opines that "reality and language are so intimately joined that the rift that separates the two . . . is covered up," and David Cooper (1986, 211), who observes that "the truth of metaphor, far from deriving in all cases from literal truth, will help determine what the literal truth is."[24] For scholars of metaphor, then, the matter of metaphor's relationship to "reality" is a false question. Furthermore, for scholars of international relations, it is worth keeping in mind, as Jim George (1994, 11) argues, that "reality is never a complete, entirely coherent 'thing,' accessible to universalized, essentialist, or totalized understandings of it." Thus, for the study of both metaphors and international relations alike, the effort to arrive at an understanding of "reality" is a metaphysical project not relevant to the task at hand.

The question, then, is not if the empirical subject matter of international relations is one of "reality" *versus* metaphors—a false choice that was posed by some readers of an early draft of this project (but which some readers may still want resolved). The more important issue is determining the extent to which communicative discourses among scholars of international relations employ varying degrees of literal versus metaphorical language as a means of conveying human understanding about the world. All language is metaphorical and literal at the same time, but to varying degrees of both. By "literal" I mean as the dictionary defines it—"being in accordance with, conforming to, or upholding the exact or primary meaning of a word or words" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1050). That is to say, literal communication uses words that convey precisely that which is intended in the words themselves. This can be contrasted with metaphorical communication, which may convey primary meaning but also evokes the secondary meaning of the source domain of the metaphorical construction.[25]

Literal and metaphorical are not, however, absolute categories. They exist along a spectrum such that while all language may be metaphorical, in certain respects and in certain contexts it may possess more literal than metaphorical qualities.[26] Thus, for example, David Rumelhart (1979, 88–89) shows that the statement "John is a cold person" could be taken literally to mean that John's temperature is cold to the touch or metaphorically in the sense that John is a remote and aloof person. Lakoff and Turner (1989, 57) observe: "To the extent that a concept is understood and structured on its own terms—without making use of structure imported from a completely different conceptual domain—we may say that it is not metaphorical. The word 'extent' was chosen with care. A given concept may be metaphorically understood and structured in some respects but not in others."[27] That is to say, Lakoff and Turner (134) reject the thesis that "*every* aspect of *every* concept is *completely* understood via metaphor" (emphasis added) since certain concepts can be expressed in literal terms. Instead, they observe that there are "some concepts that are not completely understood via metaphor to serve as source domains"; one can use literal terms to describe them inasmuch as they can be "understood on their own terms" (ibid., 135).

In sum, the metaphysical question of "reality" versus that which is imagined is not the point of investigating metaphors in endeavors such as international relations theory. Literal and metaphorical expression *both* convey "reality." When people speak of having their "heart broken" it is irrelevant whether or not this is "really" happening since only the person making the statement can judge his or her own feelings. Physiologically speaking, one's heart is not literally broken, a fact that is patently obvious to anyone who has even the most rudimentary understanding of human physiology. Yet, to the person whose heart "really" is broken, the metaphor of a broken heart is useful, even essential, since, as Black (1979, 41) writes, metaphors "generate insight about 'how things are' in reality" and, in this case, the metaphor of a broken heart gives insight into a person's experience of what *really* happened to him or her. The expression is a *metaphor* meant to convey the physical experience of romantic rejection. According to cognitive linguists, all physical experiences (like the physical experience of romantic rejection) are metaphorically expressed in thought.[28] To use a different romance-related metaphor, Lakoff (1993, 208) points out that "what constitutes the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor is not any particular word or expression. It is the ontological mapping across conceptual domains, from the source

domain of journeys to the target domain of love. The metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason" (small capital letters in the original). Language flows from thought, and therefore it is only the degree to which one is describing a primary or secondary meaning that communication is based on metaphorical representations as opposed to literal expression.

## Metaphors and "Problems"

Regardless of the philosophical tradition used to arrive at a conclusion about metaphors, virtually all scholars agree that metaphors make the world intelligible to people by providing a mental referent by which information is categorized by the brain and understood. Leaving aside the question of whether there is an objective "reality" that is either elucidated or obscured by metaphors, humans communicate what they perceive as reality through metaphorical representation. However, when we speak of the way humans agree about the nature of the world via metaphorical communication, we should understand that this agreement often includes that which humans find problematic about the world. Since metaphors are not literal representations of prior observations, they inherently alter humans' impressions of their physical and social surroundings. As Max Black (1962, 44–45) points out: "metaphor *selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes* features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject" (emphasis added).

The fact that metaphors select, emphasize, suppress, or organize thoughts means that in communicating a concept from one person to another metaphorical language reflects the experiences of the communicator in ways that indicate that which the speaker finds relevant. For example, in order to convey that something is difficult, people might use a metaphor and say it is a "thorny" issue. Obviously, thorns are something that people like to avoid because to get pricked by a thorn is painful. Thus, to say something is "thorny" is to say that it causes pain when it is confronted. Yet, what exactly constitutes pain is not necessarily something on which people are in agreement. For example, when it comes to deciding whether a 16-year-old child should have a car many parents would say that it is an *easy* decision—16-year-olds should not have their own car because teenagers are irresponsible. There are some parents, however, who might agonize, *painfully,* over whether to allow their 16-year-old children to have a car. On the one hand, if children have their own cars they can drive themselves to

their part-time job, thus relieving their parents of that chore. On the other hand, allowing a 16-year-old to have a car adds to the household expense and also creates temptations for the teen to use the automobile for something other than driving to work. For these parents, the decision about buying their teen a car is a "thorny" one. If enough parents discuss the question of allowing their children to have a car as a "thorny" problem, even those parents who initially were resolute that their children should not have their own car might recognize that this is not such an easy question to resolve. The "thorny" metaphor can be so evocative in framing a "problem" of teens, cars, and responsibility that generations of parents have been forced to confront it.

This is not to say that metaphors alone can create problems where there were none before. Rather, the point is that metaphors frame problems and make them relevant. This has been observed in matters pertaining to society as well as in academic inquiry itself. For example, Alessandro Lanteri and Altuğ Yalçintaş (2006, 14) argue that the language of economics includes numerous metaphors that institutionalize what is expected in economic behavior but also exclude possibilities from the study of economics: "The economic vocabulary, that is the set of metaphors and figures of speech about the economy and society, does the same as institutions. Institutions enable *and* constrain individual action in many ways. They create meaning *and* meaningless. They draw the borderline between what's in and what's out. They attribute relevance to one discussion and not another" (emphasis in the original). Scholars who use metaphors in economics or in any academic discipline for that matter are not being "deceptive" or concealing "reality" with a cloak of linguistic circumlocutions. Rather, as linguists have established, it is now understood that language and linguistic devices, such as metaphors, give meaning and context to what is known.

Metaphors also can create impressions about what is *not* a "problem" in need of a solution. Many of the metaphors that are found in academic inquiry are euphemisms that by either accident or design minimize the importance or significance of a concept or issue. For example, Carol Cohn observes that many of the metaphors used to describe warfare, and in particular, nuclear warfare and deterrence, are euphemisms that mask the bland realities of war with weapons of mass destruction. Euphemistic metaphors such as "counterforce exchanges," "minimum deterrent posture," and "countervalue attacks" (Cohn 1987, 690–691) can make nuclear strategy seem less like a problem than a mundane aspect of foreign policy practice.

Although much of the language Cohn describes is the purview of policymakers and practitioners in the defense community, the metaphors used within this community are taken up by scholars who study deterrence and war. This can have the effect of framing security studies in such a way that what might be seen as the "problems" of mass death induced by nuclear war are minimized in terms of their theoretical significance.

Policymakers also use metaphors in framing policy solutions to political problems.[29] Like the "problems" themselves, the metaphors that suggest "solutions" to policy problems often can be cast in a simplified light designed to garner the greatest amount of support.[30] Donald Schön (1979, 255) sums up this phenomenon: "Problem settings are mediated, I believe, by the 'stories' people tell about troublesome situations—stories in which they describe what is wrong and what needs fixing. When we examine the problem-setting stories told by the analysts and practitioners of social policy, it becomes apparent that the framing of problems often depends upon metaphors underlying the stories which generate problem setting and set the directions of problem solving." Metaphors provide a strategy for policymakers to make certain problems seem relevant and to suggest ways through which they can be solved. Schön (264) continues: "Each story constructs its view of social reality through a complementary process of *naming* and *framing*. Things are selected for attention and named in such a way as to fit the frame constructed for the situation" (emphasis in the original). Schön's "generative theory" of metaphor is supported with examples of social and public policy by other authors in the same volume (see Reddy 1979, Sternberg, Tourangeau, and Nigro 1979). Whether it is the politics of urban renewal or different metaphorical frames for casting the "problem" posed by Soviet missiles in Cuba, metaphors in public policy can direct the attention of policymakers and the public alike to issues that, now framed as such, must be "solved."

## Metaphors in Academic Inquiry

Because metaphors generate new ways of thinking about things, their use in academic inquiry is pervasive. Metaphors help frame research in fields ranging from physics to economics to civil engineering, for example, in the study of traffic patterns.[31] As Richard Brown (1976, 172) puts it simply: "by transferring the ideas and associations of one system or level of discourse to another, metaphor allows each system to be perceived anew from the viewpoint of the other."[32] Thus,

even political philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes (1962, 34), who deemed metaphors one of the "abuses of language," have resorted to them as theorizing required.[33] What reality signifies or means is subject to debate and, in that sense, scholars can use metaphors to try and make one interpretation of reality appear to be the only legitimate way of understanding objective truths (which was perhaps one of Hobbes' fears).

Hobbes notwithstanding (or perhaps because Hobbes freely makes use of metaphors despite his condemnation of them), metaphors figure prominently in academic inquiry. One of the most influential treatments on the utility of metaphors in academic inquiry is Max Black's 1962 volume, *Models and Metaphors,* wherein he lays out a view of science in which metaphors, as linguistic models, are indispensable in translating observations into theoretical models. Black writes that the process of uncovering new knowledge involves more than the traditional view of metaphors, or what he calls the "substitution view," offers. In the substitution view "the focus of a metaphor, the word or expression having a distinctively metaphorical use within a literal frame, is used to communicate a meaning that might have been expressed literally" (Black 1962, 32).

Contrasted with the "substitution view" is what Black calls the "comparison view." This view of metaphors comes into play, for example, in the elaboration of scientific models "when there can be no question as yet of the precision of scientific statement. Metaphorical statement is not a substitute for a formal comparison or any other kind of literal statement, but has its own distinctive capacities and achievements" (ibid., 37). While the comparison view of metaphors admits a more useful role for metaphors in gaining insight, more useful still is what Black calls the "interaction view." In the interaction view metaphors not only allude to new knowledge but provide a basis for conceptualizing it such that "the principal subject is 'seen through' the metaphorical expression—or, if we prefer, that the principal subject is 'projected upon' the field of the subsidiary subject" (ibid., 41). Metaphors in the interaction view are, in short, heuristic devices that are used in creating models to study unknown terrains using what can be learned from thinking about them in novel ways. As David Cooper (1986, 145) summarizes: "for Black, in short, metaphor is an essential tool at the embryonic stage of theory, and is therefore sustained by whatever sustains theorizing about the world and ourselves."[34]

Black's observations about metaphors in science have been echoed in subsequent works on the subject. For example, Richard Boyd (1979, 358) writes: "the use of metaphor is one of the many devices

available to the scientific community to accomplish the task of *accommodation of language to the causal structure of the world*" (emphasis in the original).[35] More to the point, Boyd (364) argues that "theory-constitutive" metaphors routinely suggest what empirical research makes sense in light of the similarities evident in the metaphor and its target domain: "Precisely because theory-constitutive metaphors are invitations to future research, and because that research is aimed at uncovering the theoretically important similarities between the primary and secondary subjects of the metaphors, the explication of these similarities and analogies is the routine business of scientific researchers, rather than of some specialized body of commentators."

A generation after Max Black first alerted scholars to the role that metaphors can play as models in creating models to guide research, Theodore Brown took an even closer look into the ways that metaphors frame scientific inquiry. Brown's thesis is summed up as follows:

> Scientists understand nature largely in terms of metaphorical concepts, based on embodied understandings of how nature works. These embodied understandings derive from very basic and pervasive interactions with the physical world. They are tacit and largely common to all humans. The scientist also understands complex systems in nature in terms of conceptual frameworks derived from experiential gestalts, ways of organizing experience into a structured form . . . The models and theories that scientists use to explain their observations are metaphorical constructs. (Brown 2003, 11–12)

Brown is unambiguous in his assertion that metaphors are essential to scientific inquiry from beginning to end. For Brown (15), metaphor "lies at the very heart of what we think of as creative science: the interactive coupling between model, theory, and observation that characterizes the formulation and testing of hypotheses and theories. None of [what scientists do] occur without the use of metaphor." Building on Lakoff and Johnson's experientialist theory of metaphors, Brown maintains that conceptual metaphors, in particular, are integral to humans' understanding of causation. Brown (51–52) argues that just as all humans rely on conceptual metaphors to make sense of the world, scientists also undertake their investigations influenced by the metaphors embodied in their own experiences: "Scientists apply the same tools of embodied reasoning in carving out their scientific work that they use in other dimensions of their lives . . . Independently of the issues of experimental control, accuracy, and precision, scientists' understanding of scientific results, expressed

in hypotheses, models, and theories, are thoroughly embedded in unconscious cognitive processes and conceptual metaphor."

For Brown, then, visualizations, models, hypotheses, and theories are all metaphorical and metaphors are present in every step of the scientific process.[36] Among those scientific concepts or principles Brown identifies as metaphorical in their conceptualization are atoms, molecules, protein folding, and cells.[37] One need look no further than the "hardest" of all "hard" sciences—physics—to find examples of metaphors that contribute to the theoretical process. David Brookes (2003) details a series of physical properties that are routinely represented metaphorically in the study of physics, including heat "flows," electron "orbitals," and energy "wells." Brookes explains that once physicists have encoded abstract concepts with metaphorical language, they can use the metaphorical codes as the building blocks for hypothetico-deductive reasoning (Brookes 2003, n.p.).[38]

In recent years, scholars in the social sciences have followed the lead of scholars in the philosophy of science in thinking about how metaphors aid in elaborating theories and models. Among social scientists, scholars of international relations have become more explicit in their attention to metaphors in the course of academic inquiry. Richard Little (2007, 23) observes that "metaphors have the ability to transform the meaning of an established concept and . . . also play an essential role in comprehending aspects of the world that are new or that we do not understand."[39] Little points out that within academic inquiry there is a debate between positivists and postpositivists regarding the role of metaphors in the formulation of theory. For positivists, metaphors are closely linked to models. "This literature focuses on the positive role that metaphors can play in the scientific process. Black (1979, 31), for example, comes to the conclusion that 'Every metaphor is the tip of a submerged model.' The task of the theorist then becomes to expose and test this model" (Little 2007, 55).[40] Little (57) cites Martin Landau (1972), who asserts that since metaphors and analogies are *always* evident in political science models, "all significant metaphors must be made fully explicit and their implications spelled out and subjected to close empirical investigation."

It should be noted that metaphors also direct academic research in ways that depend on what metaphor is chosen to elucidate any given topic. Old metaphors, under certain conditions, can limit thinking, while new ones open up novel ways of seeing the world.[41] Michael McCoy (2000, 42) observes that "metaphors highlight certain features and suppress others . . . By highlighting and masking experiences, metaphors give concepts new meanings." Lakoff and Johnson (1980b,

145) expand on this: "New metaphors have the power to create a new reality. If a new metaphor enters the conceptual system that we base our actions on, it will alter that conceptual system and the perceptions and actions that the system gives rise to. Much cultural change arises from the introduction of new metaphorical concepts and the loss of old ones." Nicholas Onuf (1989, 156) puts a finer point on this: "Metaphors are representational, yet they misrepresent. They always want us to construe something in doubt as partaking of the reality of something that we are confident about." Thus, when Black maintains that metaphors are indispensable to the formulation of theories, the theories that result reflect precisely those metaphors while excluding possibilities that might arise had a different set of metaphors been chosen.

For these reasons and others, Richard Little suggests that a more promising approach to metaphors may lie in postpositivist strategies of inquiry. In the postpositivist perspective, "metaphors are not just a route to the formation of new models, they are also an integral element of the world under investigation" (Little 2007, 65). More to the point, once a metaphor becomes integral to how the world is investigated, it can assume the role of myth, that is, an "erroneous view" that nonetheless "is systematically and widely adhered to" (ibid., 69). Little (72) investigates this process with specific reference to the metaphor of the balance of power, which, he asserts, has assumed the status of myth with implications for how the concept is then understood: "Metaphors are acknowledged to be very significant myth-making tools because they can help render complex situations intelligible." The irony, according to Little, is that the balance of power myth spawns "counter-myths" in the form or rival theories that themselves are grounded in metaphorical images offering distinct visions of how the world works. Myths and counter-myths, both grounded in metaphors, help define the contours of academic communities, and in many ways academic disciplines are discernible by the metaphors that unite, and divide, disciplinary communities.[42]

The ubiquity of metaphors notwithstanding, in contemporary political science theory in general, and in international relations theory in particular, explicit attention to the epistemological functions of metaphors has been sporadic. In a 1979 article in the *American Political Science Review,* Eugene Miller analyzed the use of metaphors in political science theory. Miller identified three approaches adopted by scholars to use metaphors in political science analysis. First, in what Miller (1979, 158–160) calls the "verificationist view," metaphors are useful only to the extent that they are verified by empirical facts.

Metaphors are not entirely useless in this view, but their use is limited only to that which refers to empirical observation. Second, Miller (160–162) describes the "constitutivist view," in which metaphors are constitutive of what people know about the world. In this view, understanding politics is inextricably tied up with metaphors, and indeed is impossible without them. Miller (162–165) refers to a third approach to the use of metaphors in politics as the "manifestationist view." This is a middle-ground approach, which affords metaphors an important role in rendering politics intelligible but insists that the steps by which metaphors do this be spelled out, not merely accepted as a natural outgrowth of language, as is the case with the constitutivist view.[43] The main difference between the constitutivist and manifestationist views, according to Miller (167), is that the latter allows for testing of a metaphor's accuracy in representing the political world: "We test a political metaphor by determining if the political thing is like the nonpolitical thing in the way that the metaphor intends. Since metaphors always involve an element of falsehood, a political metaphor cannot be falsified by extending it beyond the intended likeness." Miller's manifestationist approach is probably the most common in international relations theory, comprising a whole host of metaphors that are used for heuristic purposes, but, unlike the verificationist approach, do not require formal empirical testing. Among the more obvious metaphors that have been applied within the manifestationist approach are the "balance of power," images of the international system as an economic "market," and international "regimes."

The problem with Miller's insights is that his article appears to have been lost to the ages, and today few scholars are self-conscious about their use of metaphors in international relations theory. With regard to the three methodological perspectives that Miller outlined in his 1979 article, many scholars go back and forth among these approaches frequently without much awareness that they are doing so. Thus, the verificationist, constitutivist, and manifestationist approaches, while existent in international relations theory, are not part of the methodological considerations of most international relations scholars. This is perhaps not surprising. As Raymond Gibbs (1999, 36) writes: "My belief is that no single theory of metaphor presently available will account for all of the different kinds of metaphor, nor perhaps will any one theory be able to do so in the future." Therefore, while Miller's typology is a useful starting point, it is necessary to probe more deeply into the countless ways that metaphors are used in international relations theory since scholars themselves do not appear to make conscious decisions about how metaphors affect their work.

## Metaphors and Narrative in International Relations Theory

While metaphors are ubiquitous in international relations theory, conscious attention to them is scant, Miller's 1979 work that creates an explicit typology of metaphor in political science notwithstanding. The question arises, why is self-awareness of metaphor's role so frequently lacking when metaphor is so common in IR scholarship? One of the conclusions of this book is that metaphors are not appreciated for their heuristic function in a way that is common in the physical and natural sciences as discussed earlier. Instead, metaphors represent part of the narratives that typify theoretical approaches to international relations.[44] Quite simply, as a social science, international relations depends on narrative to provide a framework for analysis in which theory generation and hypothesis testing take place. Narrative structure, in which metaphors play a major role, provides the direction that IR research takes.

In his seminal work, Donald Polkinghorne (1988, 13) defines narrative as "the fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite." Like metaphors, which are a component of narrative, narrative is a cognitive function in human thought: "It is the scheme that displays purpose and direction in human affairs and makes individual lives comprehensible as wholes" (ibid., 18).[45] In Polkinghorne's formulation, "narrative" is synonymous with "story," but this is not to say that narratives in scholarly inquiry are fictions. Rather, narrative can serve an explanatory function. As Polkinghorne (21) writes: "The narrative explanation . . . answers [a categorical question] by configuring a set of events into a storylike causal nexus . . . It accepts complex sets of events, including reflective decisions, and explains an event by tracing its intrinsic relations to other events and locating it in its historical context. Thus, narratives *exhibit* an explanation instead of demonstrating it" (emphasis in the original). Furthermore, as Mark Johnson (1993, 158) adds, "metaphors carry explicit narrative structure within them, insofar as they are spelled out narratively." More to the point, "cognitive models, metaphors, frames, and narratives [provide] the overarching ordering that transforms mere sequences of atomic events into significant human actions and projects that have meaning and moral import" (ibid., 165). In the social sciences, including international relations, the standard for Johnson's criterion is met. Metaphors in IR tell a narrative story and present an explanatory framework for analysis.[46]

Does this, then, mean that metaphorical narratives in international relations undermine the social science basis of IR, particularly as highlighted in recent works emphasizing scientific realism? Polkinghorne would say yes, inasmuch as narrative explanation and logico-mathematical reasoning employ distinct forms of explanatory logic. In the latter, the "power of explanation by laws comes from its capacity to abstract events from particular contexts and discover relationships that hold among all the instances belonging to a category, irrespective of the spatial and temporal context . . . But explanation by means of narrative is contextually related and is therefore different in form from formal scientific explanation" (Polkinghorne 1988, 21). However, if one looks carefully at this passage, there is room for reconciling the logico-mathematical and narrative forms of explanation. Polkinghorne (ibid.) observes that in scientific reasoning, relationships can be discerned among "all instances belonging to a *category*" (emphasis added). I would argue that identification of a category—including in the physical and natural sciences—is contingent on the metaphors that define that category, and those metaphors represent a narrative explanation involving delineation of the context under investigation. In this sense, narrative is prior to scientific explanation with metaphor integral to the narrative process. Social science can proceed once the metaphorical narrative identifying a category is spelled out.[47]

In the course of this book, explicit attention will be given to how metaphors figure in the narratives that constitute the categories of international relations. While most IR scholars have employed metaphors to one extent or another, in many cases they have done so without either much thought, attention to the distinctions highlighted by Miller, or attention to the implications of the metaphors that inform their inquiry. These past lapses cannot be rectified, but a review of how metaphors figure in IR theory is nonetheless necessary. As will be seen, virtually all of the foundational concepts in international relations theory are based on metaphorical images. The implications of this are profound, yet to date not fully examined. The purpose of the rest of the book is to identify the key roles metaphors play in international relations theory to highlight their pervasive influence on the field.

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# Chapter 3

# The Metaphorical Context of International Relations

As discussed in the previous chapter, cognitive linguists have established that metaphors are integral to human thought and communication. Virtually all cognition involves conceptual mappings, and most linguistic expression to one extent or another employs metaphorical expression. This is no less true in the study of international relations than it is in any other area of linguistic communication. Some of these metaphorical expressions are used deliberately for the purpose of theory generation or to elucidate the contextual parameters of international relations. Others are used unselfconsciously much as they are in what Jack Donnelly (2009, 49) calls "ordinary-language" communication. Whatever the purpose, metaphors in international relations theory have an appreciable impact on how international relations is studied and analyzed. They provide a materiality to what are often abstract ideas; they are part of what Jim George (1994, x) identifies as a larger discursive project in the study of international relations that has established "the boundaries of legitimate and relevant theory and research" in the field of IR.

In the metaphorical narrative that scholars of international relations construct, it is not surprising that among the first considerations is the setting, context, milieu, or "location" in which international relations takes place. What is meant by this is not the *physical* setting of international relations that can be readily identified empirically in terms of geographic location. However, since even geography cannot adequately capture certain aspects of international relations, for example, the abstract institutional "places" in which diplomacy or international

cooperation occurs, scholars rely on metaphorical abstractions to conceptualize the context of international affairs. To tell this narrative, IR scholars have privileged aspects of international relations by enshrining them in defining metaphorical frames. Metaphorically speaking, the narrative starts with an emptiness called "anarchy" that provides a building space for "systems" and "structures" occupied by "states" seen as "individuals." States also house "domestic" politics, while anarchy permits the creation of "societies" and "communities." This metaphorical architecture of international relations constitutes the contextual narrative of the field.

## Anarchy

Richard Ashley (1988) famously asserted that anarchy represents the central *problematique* of international relations, the core puzzle around which much, if not all, of the logic of IR theory revolves.[1] The irony is that what is taken as a given is an elaborate metaphorical construction. At its core, anarchy—as it is most commonly viewed in international relations theory—is a reified version of Hobbes' conceptualization of primitive man living in a metaphorical "state of nature." In his well-known allusion to pre-social humans, Hobbes hypothesized an existence that was marked by competition and prone to hostility and violence.[2] Since Hobbes was opposed to using metaphor, he sought to avoid it by resorting to reification. He exchanged the metaphorical "state of nature" for the "fact" of "anarchy," further reifying the metaphor of the Leviathan, taking the state as a corporeal body to be literally true (Chilton 1996, 16–19, 82ff.). The Hobbesian hold on thinking about anarchy is hard for scholars to shake. For example, Neorealists have tried to formulate a theory of international relations that does not depend on a Hobbesian conception of a state of nature. Neorealism's structural thesis attributes states' actions to the shape of the international system, not to human nature. In *Theory of International Politics,* for instance, Kenneth Waltz (1979) goes to pains to assert that assumptions of human nature are not at the core of his Neorealist deductions. However, as a number of scholars have pointed out (see, e.g., Brooks 1997), Waltz inadvertently brings the metaphor of human nature into his structural theory of international politics by attributing to states the same primal inclinations that Hobbes ascribes to humans in the state of nature.[3] Once set in motion, Hobbes' state of nature cum anarchy metaphor has shaped how international relations is viewed, including, for example, Hedley Bull's ironically titled book, *The Anarchical Society* (1977).

Even scholars who posit the possibility of overcoming anarchy are constrained by their acceptance of the "anarchy" problem. This is true, for example, of Andrew Mason (2000, 202–208), who theorizes about the possibility of a global community, but who nonetheless concedes that this community emerges within the "international system as a *state of nature*" (emphasis added).[4]

Aside from the state of nature image of anarchy, other treatments of anarchy rely no less on metaphorical imagery. Among the many metaphors of anarchy is the conceptualization of anarchy as a "void," that is, something to be filled up. Among scholars who adopt this view is Alexander Wendt, who argues metaphorically that anarchy "*as such* is an empty vessel and has no intrinsic logic; anarchies only acquire logics as a function of the structure of what we put inside them" (Wendt 1999, 249, emphasis in the original). It is this "empty vessel" metaphor of anarchy that famously leads Wendt (1992, 391) to his thesis that "anarchy is what states make of it."

One could argue that the "state of nature" and "void" images of anarchy represent very different metaphorical concepts, thus opening up a debate over how to imagine anarchy as the basic context in which international relations exists. The fact remains, however, that whether imagined as state of nature or void, anarchy is taken as a presumed fact of international relations that provides the logic for virtually all subsequent theorizing in the field. Any academic discipline must have an ontological logic, usually based on a set of empirical observations. In international relations, by contrast, the ontological basis for establishing the field's central *problematique* is a metaphor, interpreted by authors in a variety of ways. The absence of a world government is an empirical fact; representing the terms of international governance as an anarchic "state of nature" or even a "void" is a contestable metaphorical expression of a theoretical abstraction expressed as a fact.

The irony is that while anarchy has been a, if not the, central metaphor in modern international relations theory, the meaning of the term has changed over the historical course of the discipline. The dictionary gives several definitions for "anarchy"—ranging from "absence of any form of political authority" to "political disorder and confusion" to "absence of any cohesive principle, such as a common standard or purpose" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 66). These are three quite distinct definitions, all of which find expression at one time or another as a way for conceptualizing international relations. In the early years of the modern discipline of international relations, which Brian Schmidt roughly identifies as the 1850s to around 1900, the

main theoretical focus was on defining a field of international relations in the context of the state. Having its origins in *Staatswissenschaft* (the science of the state), international relations grew out of academic efforts to situate international law, nationalism, and imperialism in the context of state politics (Schmidt 1998, chapter 2). As Schmidt (76) observes: "The ontology of international relations, the character of international law, the possibility of a world state, the extent to which there was international organization and cooperation were all determined with respect to the theory of the state."

As the field progressed into the early twentieth century, among the consequences of the centrality of the state in early international relations theory was the debate over international law relative to conditions of presumed anarchy. Among the participants in this debate were proponents of juristic theory, who argued that "states occupied a position similar to that of individuals living in a state of nature" (ibid., 79). These scholars were thus pessimistic about the prospects for international law inasmuch as individuals in a state of nature live in a world of metaphorical anarchy. Opposed to the members of the juristic theory camp were international lawyers and proponents of international law. "It was no so much that international lawyers dismissed the claim that the international realm was characterized by the existence of anarchy as that they rejected many of the consequences that juristic theory attributed to politics in the absence of central authority" (ibid., 80). Still other scholars saw anarchy as something that could be reformed in the context of a "world federation or society of states" (ibid.). In this formulation states are less like individuals in a state of nature as they are members of a political community, albeit one without a formal system of governance. As a metaphor, then, anarchy had different implications for international lawyers. Rather than a state of nature, these individuals accepted anarchy as "merely" the lack of a central authority. Disagreements over the attributes and functions of the state relative to individuals and politics thus fueled differing images of the anarchy metaphor.

In addition to theoretical debates, Schmidt points out that ontological questions about the scope of international relations also contributed to different conceptions of what qualifies as anarchy in the development of international relations as a field of inquiry. Specifically, from the emergence of international relations as a field to World War I and beyond, distinctions were made between the "civilized" world and regions of the world placed under colonial rule. How anarchy was conceptualized in international relations theory within these distinctions reflected different metaphorical conceptions of anarchy.

As Schmidt (125) observes, "most political scientists believed that the colonized regions—the 'dark' places, the 'uncivilized,' the 'backward' or 'barbaric' areas of the world—did not belong to the society of states." Thus, a "different set of discursive criteria from that used to explain the interactions of 'civilized' states were formulated by political scientists to discuss the issues that pertained to these 'other' regions of the world" (ibid.). The metaphors of anarchy as they applied to the colonized world were very different from those used in the context of "civilized" states: "Rather than anarchy signifying the absence of a global authority structure, the meaning of anarchy in this context was to denote internal lawlessness and chaos resulting from the lack of a domestic sovereign" (ibid., 126). A different set of theoretical tools were thus deemed appropriate to develop explanations for international relations in the colonized world as opposed to the West, and these theoretical tools, which yielded different explanations, were premised on the different metaphorical images that were applied to the concept of "anarchy." For example, some scholars devoted their attention to the study of colonial administration and world government as a way of resolving problems of anarchy as manifest in the colonial world. Anarchy was a "common point of departure" but implied different ways of construing the concept when applied to "backward" regions of the world (ibid., 148–149).

Schmidt explains that in the interwar years conceptions of anarchy shifted as a reaction to theories of the causes and nature of World War I. In particular, the metaphor of anarchy as a "state of nature" was advanced as a basis for thinking about the nature of anarchy in world affairs. Schmidt refers to the works of James Bryce among others who had turned their attention to the politics of international relations as a reaction to the war. Schmidt (159) quotes Bryce (1922, 3), who opined that "although in civilized countries every individual man is now under law and not in a State of Nature towards his fellow men, every political community, whatever its form, be it republican or monarchical, is in a State of Nature towards every other community . . . " This view of anarchy figured into theories of World War I that were advanced by Bryce's contemporaries. Anarchy as a metaphorical state of nature accounted for the motives of states that resulted in mutual mistrust and war. Among these scholars was G. Lowes Dickinson, who, Schmidt (161–162) explains, promulgated a theory of international relations that sounds similar to what eventually developed as Neorealist theory in the latter half of the twentieth century. In the aptly titled works *The European Anarchy* (1916) and *International Anarchy* (1926), Dickinson "argued that it was

the mutual suspicions of other states' actions and intentions, which inevitably arose in international anarchy, that characterized the behavior of states from the time of Machiavelli to the outbreak of World War I" (Schmidt 161). Prefiguring the development of Neorealism, Bryce and Dickinson found a way to identify in international anarchy structural causes for conflict that at once rejected assumptions about human nature but also incorporated metaphors of men in a state of nature as way to explain war in light of assumptions about states' motivations.

Schmidt's history of the discipline of international relations ends with how the field developed up to the end of World War II. Although anarchy remained a central feature of the discipline from its origins to the end of World War II, as Schmidt observes, the meanings of anarchy varied as the field evolved. As Schmidt (231) writes, "the concept of anarchy is more a function of internal disciplinary debate than a self-referential empirical fact of the external world." Although Schmidt does not explicitly address the metaphorical qualities of anarchy, it is clear from his historical analysis that as a discursive feature of scholarly inquiry, anarchy is a linguistic reflection of scholars' interpretations of the world, that is to say, a metaphorical image. Offering a take on Wendt (1992), Schmidt (232) writes, "the disciplinary history of international relations reveals that anarchy is . . . largely what political scientists made of it." As discussed in Chapter 2, metaphors are reflective of human experiences as expressed in thought and conveyed in language. Scholars who seek to explain international relations also have personal experiences with it. While "anarchy" represents a common point of reference for scholars, how they think about what is deemed "anarchy" represents varied experiences that are registered cognitively as metaphors and communicated as such. Hence, the persistence of the term "anarchy" in international relations is not in itself theoretically significant. Rather, how anarchy has been understood metaphorically and how the metaphorical narrative of anarchy has varied within the field is what ultimately is instructive to students of international relations theory.

## System and Structure

### System

In addition to the image of anarchy as characteristic of international relations, scholars also refer frequently to a metaphorical international "system." "System" is a term for which there is no universal agreement

on its definition in international relations theory. To give just two examples of well-known scholars who use the term "system" prominently but with different meanings: for Hedley Bull (1977, 9–10) a "*system of states* (or international system) is formed when two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another's decisions, to cause them to behave . . . as parts of a whole" (emphasis in the original), while for Kenneth Waltz (1979, 79) "a system is composed of a structure and of interacting units." Both of these definitions are manifestly distinct from Martin Wight's (1977, 22ff.) treatment of "system," which revises nineteenth-century definitions of the term that include cultural aspects of "systematic" relations.[5] Morton Kaplan identifies not one, but "six distinct international systems—or, with possibly greater accuracy, six states of equilibrium of one ultrastable international system" (Kaplan 1957, 21).[6] Lacking any clear definition or unambiguous empirical measure of what the term means, "system" in international relations theory can only be an abstraction that is used in a variety of metaphorical senses to give meaning to that abstraction.[7]

There is also a metaphorical aspect in the way scholars choose to refer to *the* international system as opposed to *an* international system.[8] It makes a difference for theorizing if that "whole" in Bull's case or that "structure and . . . interacting units" in Waltz's case constitute the entirety of what is thought of as international relations or merely part of it. If it is the latter, the question arises, is the rest composed of other systems or something else, and if something else, what makes up that? This is where the metaphorical aspect of terms such as "system" becomes important. "System," as variously defined as it is, is a term that delineates a particular aspect of international relations relative to something else. While scholars frequently refer to *the* international system, the definitions of system supplied by Bull and Waltz, and other scholars as well, allow for the existence of one or more international systems as well as other realms that are thought of as something else. In other words, the context of international relations is not something that is discernible *a priori* but must be given a name, and that name is "system."[9]

Furthermore, what is meant by scholars who define system in differing ways is by no means unambiguously clear to observers. "System" is an abstract quality that needs to be named, and in most cases, it is named metaphorically. Once that metaphorical naming takes place, the hypotheses that derive from the name that the abstract quality is given dictate what observations are made and what theoretical propositions are advanced. Hence, within Bull's definition of system

one might hypothesize that when states cease to have an impact on each other, or when that impact changes, a system can cease to exist or change in qualitative ways. In contrast, by Waltz's definition if the structure or the qualities of states within an international system change, systemic change can take place. If verified by the evidence, these hypotheses lead to very different theories of international relations as should be obvious to anyone who has read the works of Bull and Waltz and their theoretical adherents. Thus, the metaphors used by Bull, Waltz, and other scholars to define the context of international relations are inextricably linked to the theoretical propositions they derive.

One way, then, to treat "system" as a metaphor is to leave it ambiguous and imprecise. This would allow any number of hypotheses to be derived about systemic theory, depending on which metaphorical image provides assumptions about the international behavior that is to be explained.[10] One could posit a simple definition of "system," as Neil Harrison (2006, 2) does when devising a theory of complex systems: "A system is a portion of the universe within a defined boundary, outside of which lies an environment." However, as Harrison (ibid.) notes, what lies inside and outside a system is in many ways an arbitrary distinction, and thus usually "the definition of the boundary is a *convenience* used to assist human analysis" (emphasis added). Thus, one cannot help but arrive at the sense that "system" is inevitably metaphorical, allowing each scholar to determine its analytical and theoretical use. Leaving the term undefined, then, also leaves it up to each scholar to determine its meaning in generating theories of international relations. To do this, however, often requires additional metaphors that in part constitute the features a system, in particular the metaphor of "structure."

## Structure

There seems to be a consensus among scholars of international relations that metaphorical systems comprise metaphorical structures and that the nature of the former depends on the shape of the latter. Barry Buzan (1993, 331), for example, writes that "for a system to exist requires the existence of units, among which significant interaction takes place and that are arranged or *structured* according to some ordering principle" (emphasis added). However, as is true for "system" there seems to be no consensus, apart from the relative agreement that "systems" are made up of "structures," regarding how "structure" is to be defined. In fact, as Colin Wight (2006, 122)

writes, "without the ability to put structure under a metaphorical microscope and say 'look, that's what structure is', . . . it follows that a range of approaches to structure may very well be valid; indeed perhaps even necessary." Not surprisingly, then, one can find in the literature any number of definitions, and there would be little use listing them all.

Since Alexander Wendt argues that the metaphorical international "system" comprises a metaphorical "structure," his discussion of structure is as good a place to begin as any. In his 1999 *Social Theory of International Politics,* Wendt devotes two chapters to the topic. For Wendt, structure involves two metaphorical levels: micro-structure and macro-structure, "where micro-structures refer to structures of interaction and macro-structures refer to what I'll call structures of multiply realizable outcomes" (Wendt 1999, 143). While "micro-" and "macro-" are Greek prefixes indicating size (micro = small, macro = large), Wendt (147) is careful to point out that in his formulation "the terms 'micro' and 'macro' imply nothing about the size of actors or the proximity of their interaction." To put it another way, Wendt (148) uses the terms *metaphorically* to refer to types of interactions. Specifically, micro-structures refer to "relationships between a system's parts," while macro-structures refer to relationships involving the qualities of the system itself. Wendt (156) then hypothesizes that "the tighter the sub-system control, the more sensitive the macro-structure will be to changes at lower levels." Leaving aside the imprecise nature of ancillary metaphors such as "tight" and "sensitive" as well the inclusion of spatial relationships ("lower levels") in the conception of "system,"[11] Wendt's hypothesis is instructive in that it highlights the vague nature of "micro-" and "macro-" structure for advancing theoretical propositions. As Wendt (156) states, "different systemic IR theories usefully might be seen as offering different answers to the question of how multiply realizable tendencies like balancing and power politics are under anarchy." In other words, leaving metaphorical meanings of "structure" unclear highlights the broad range of outcomes that are possible in social contexts. It is not by accident that Wendt (189) points out that the "concept of structure in international politics means different things to different people."

Wendt's conceptualization of structure is formulated in large part as a reaction to the way structure is elaborated by Kenneth Waltz in *Theory of International Politics.* For Waltz (1979, 88) "structural questions are questions about the arrangement of the parts of a system." More specifically, "international structures are defined in terms of the primary political units of an era, be they city states, empires,

or nations. Structures emerge from the coexistence of states" (ibid., 91).[12] International structure comprises the character of the units constituting that structure and the distribution of capabilities among them (ibid., 93–99). In short, systems encompass structures and structures comprise differentiated units characterized in terms of their functions and the distribution of capabilities among them. As a metaphor, "structure" in Waltz's theory imagines a physical space with parts arranged in that space. Those parts interact with each other depending on their functions and their capabilities. Furthermore, as parts in the system interact with each other, they do so in ways that presumably are both constrained by the structure in which the parts are arranged and endowed with the ability to alter the arrangement of those parts if not the shape of the structure itself.

Since its inception, Waltz's conceptualization of structure has inspired both adherents and critics. Among critics, Audie Klotz and Cecelia Lynch (2006, 356) point out that "Constructivists define 'structure' as institutionalized—but not immutable—patterns of social order that reflect historical context." The three key metaphorical images in this definition are "institution," "pattern," and "order." Ironically, in some ways, this definition retains elements of Waltz's conception of structure. For example, as a metaphor "order" implies a similar image of spatial arrangement that is explicit in Waltz's formulation, an irony in the sense that much Constructivist theory is formulated as a critical response to Waltz. There are subtle differences as well, for example, Klotz and Lynch's inclusion of the metaphor of "patterns" in social order, which implies a repeating quality to what is observed in that social order, compared with Waltz, who makes no explicit allusion to repeating qualities of structure. The most notable point of departure in Klotz and Lynch's definition with Waltz's formulation is the metaphor of "institutionalization." On the one hand, the *American Heritage Dictionary* (936) gives as one definition of "institutionalize" "to make part of a structured and usually well-established system," which would appear to be quite consistent with Waltz's conception of structure as something existing and persisting within a system. However, what Constructivists such as Klotz and Lynch more likely have in mind is a reflexive formation of the verb "institute," which means "to establish, organize, and set in operation" (ibid., 936). In other words, in Klotz and Lynch's Constructivist conception of structure, agency is involved in metaphorically setting structure in motion. This is significant in the sense that Klotz and Lynch set forth their definition of structure as part of an essay designed to resolve certain aspects of the so-called

agent – structure debate, discussed separately in this book (see Chapter 4).

Obviously, Klotz and Lynch are not the only exponents of a Constructivist view of structure. Within Constructivism, and within individual Constructivists' theoretical formulations, conceptions of structure differ. For example, in his "new Constructivist theory" of international society, Christian Reus-Smit (1997) identifies as the basis for international society what he variously terms "normative structures," "generic structural elements," and "constitutional structures." While the content of structures in Reus-Smit's theory differs greatly from how structures are envisioned in distinctly rival theories such as Neorealism, the metaphorical imagery is remarkably similar to the extent that parts of his definition of structure are borrowed verbatim from Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics,* namely, constitutional structures are "structures" because they "limit and mold agents and agencies and point them in ways that tend toward a common quality of outcomes even though the efforts and aims of agents and agencies vary" (Waltz 1979, 74, quoted in Reus-Smit 1997, 566 as part of Reus-Smit's effort to define "constitutional structures"). Even for Constructivists such as Reus-Smit, then, the metaphor of "structure" as a physically constraining aspect of international relations is essential to developing a theory of IR.

We can see, then, that many of the elaborations, modifications, and critiques of Waltz's conception of structure are as metaphorical as his original formulation. A noteworthy example of this is Jack Donnelly's 2009 contribution, which seeks to address gaps in what Donnelly sees as Waltz's overly parsimonious conception of the term. According to Donnelly (2009, 49), Waltz includes in his treatment of structure a "triad of ordering principles, functional differentiation, and distribution of capabilities," yet underspecifies how these three elements are expressed. Specifically, for ordering principles Waltz sees only anarchy and hierarchy, while for functional differentiation he only differentiates the role of governments vis-à-vis international and national (domestic) politics (ibid., 51). To correct this, Donnelly suggests elaborating the definition of structure in ways that extend the metaphorical qualities of the term.

Donnelly's main metaphorical add-ons to Waltz's conception of structure are mostly spatial. Specifically, Donnelly suggests relying on "vertical" and "horizontal" differentiation of units as ways of ordering the actors that constitute the structure of the international system.[13] Donnelly also highlights "segmentation" of units to distinguish them within this structure. Donnelly's (55) first spatial metaphor, "vertical"

differentiation, "establishes positions that are super- and subordinate or coordinate. Vertical differentiation is a matter of rank," which Donnelly cites from the *Oxford English Dictionary* as defined in terms of "relative position or status." As the term "vertical" implies, differentiation of this sort is imagined metaphorically in terms of the space above or below one unit relative to one or more other units (units may also be located on the same lateral plane in a vertically ordered space). Within the vertical space imagined by Donnelly units can be arranged in certain specific ways described as "unranked orders," "singly-ranked orders," and "multiply-ranked orders" or "heterarchies" (ibid., 58–69). Each of these arrangements is represented in Donnelly's article via graphic images using arrows and shapes to represent units and their spatial relationship to each other.

As is true for other metaphorical images, what Donnelly describes as vertical differentiation can be imagined in other metaphorical ways or in terms that are more literally descriptive instead of metaphorically imagined. In other words, whereas the concept of differentiation among units in terms of capabilities is essential for specifying what is meant by diversity of relationships among international actors, the visual cues of vertical space (with the graphic arrows and multiple shapes) are optional to the theoretical formulation. For example, Donnelly (55) conceives of vertical differentiation in terms of "rank," which itself, in the political sense, is "principally a function of authority and (materials) coercive capabilities." Thus, units in the international system could be described, as Donnelly notes, qualitatively or measured quantitatively in terms of indicators of their ability to use material or ideational resources to influence the actions of others. The need to represent these relationships with the spatial metaphor verticality is purely optional, although it does contribute the ability to conceive of certain categories of inter-unit relationships, such as those Donnelly describes.

Donnelly (71) devotes considerably less space to a discussion of "horizontal differentiation," which describes differences among units primarily on the basis of their behavior or function. Added to the spatial metaphor of a "horizontal" plane, Donnelly includes the metaphor of "segmentation," suggesting the visual image of something akin to a row of beads strung together in a straight lateral line. Finally, Donnelly (73) includes "unit differentiation" in his formulation of structure, which "determines the entities that are ranked and to which functions are allocated." Horizontal and unit differentiation are given less attention in Donnelly's conception of structure inasmuch as his priority is

to provide a counterpoint to the focus on anarchy, replacing the concept of anarchy with a typology that "emphasizes the regular and central fact of ranking in international systems" (ibid., 50).

Donnelly's prioritizing of the vertical metaphor within his image of structure over the horizontal one is not without its theoretical consequences. Donnelly (80–81) hopes that his typology will permit generalization, in particular as an aid to Constructivists, many of whom have harbored suspicion of notions of international structure because of its association with "structural" Realism. Donnelly readily accepts that his model is less parsimonious than the Neorealist conception of structure, yet the primary emphasis is on vertical differentiation as a means of focusing attention on the varying distribution of capabilities among units in the international system. While horizontal differentiation prompts theorizing that sees outcomes in terms of the different functions of units, vertical differentiation prioritizes the distribution of capabilities as the primary axis of variation on which outcomes are based. This distinction between functions and capabilities may be essential to a full accounting of what constitutes "structure" in the international system; however, the spatial metaphors of "verticality" and "horizontality" have the potential to affect theorizing by requiring that one metaphorical axis take priority over the other, which would not be the case had some other metaphorical image been used to conceptualize what constitutes "structure."

There is a larger issue here. The need to characterize international actors vertically and horizontally positioned relative to one another is a consequence of imagining structure metaphorically as, or in, a physical space. The "vertical" and "horizontal" metaphors also reinforce theorizing about relationships of authority among international actors, specifically the concept of hierarchy, which is said to be differentiated from anarchy by means of the metaphorical positioning (primarily) of states. For example, Wendt (1999, 13) argues that "in the contemporary international system political authority is *organized* formally in a bifurcated fashion: vertically within states ('hierarchy'), horizontally between ('anarchy')" (emphasis added). Wendt's observation is echoed and amplified by David Lake (2009, 9), who, in his attempt at a definitive theory of hierarchy in international relations, defines "hierarchy" with metaphors of vertically spatial relationships in mind: "Hierarchy is defined by the extent of the authority exercised by the ruler *over* the ruled" (emphasis added). As Lake notes, this definition of hierarchy, which relies on a metaphorical vertical situation of actors, one over another, is supported by previous conceptions of

the term.[14] Nicholas Onuf and Frank Klink (1989, 160), for example, define hierarchy in Weberian terms in which bureaucratic offices "form the typical pattern of super- and subordination, but always in ranks such that each office is both subordinate to the one(s) *above* it and superordinate to the ones *below*" (emphasis added). Similarly, Ian Clark (1989, 2) defines hierarchy as "a political arrangement characterized by *stratification* in which, like the angels, there are orders of power and glory and society is classified in successfully subordinate grades" (emphasis added). Drawing on these previous characterizations, Lake metaphorically depicts hierarchy in spatial terms. This spatial imagery is reinforced by the cover of Lake's book, which shows a picture of a loose pyramid of small stones with one large stone (representing political authority situated "over" the smaller stones) resting on top of the pile.

When it comes to concepts such as hierarchy, then, international relations theory often is less about (e.g., geographic) spatial relationships among states and other international actors and more about *metaphorically imagined* spatial relationships on a conceptual plane. There is a certain logic to this approach. Obviously, the *territory* occupied by *some* international actors (e.g., states) is physical in nature, but for other international actors (e.g., nongovernmental organizations, liberation movements, multinational corporations) physicality is not a primary or even necessary condition for playing a role in international affairs. And yet, the spatial metaphors of structure typically presented by scholars prioritize physicality as a theoretical category that then dictates the emphasis received in empirical research. This does not mean that actors that do not occupy a clearly defined physical space are not considered relevant in the study of international relations, but it is perhaps worth noting that for many years only those actors that occupied physical space—states—received the overwhelming amount of attention by IR scholars.[15] Hence, as a substitute for theory that begins with empirical observations, metaphors of physical spatiality often prioritize state actors since these are the actors most closely associated with the occupation of physical space.

At this point it could be argued that the review of structure offered earlier in this chapter is incredibly limited and ignores entire swaths of philosophical and theoretical approaches. My response is twofold. First, the purpose of this discussion has not been to review structural theory in all its manifestations as that would be far beyond the scope of this project. Second, to the extent that these types of review have been conducted, I would argue that, for all the variations in structural theory, they point out a factor that unites these approaches. Specifically,

running throughout structural theory is a view of structure that treats it *metaphorically* as set of physical properties involving spatial organization and arrangement. To illustrate this I turn to Colin Wight, who, unlike me, has conducted an exhaustive review of structure in its various theoretical traditions. Upon completing his review, and while acknowledging fundamental ontological differences among the competing schools of structural thought, Wight nonetheless concludes that there are elements of all these schools that allow them to be commonly viewed, if not necessarily theoretically reconciled. Wight's (2006, 175) solution is "to see structure in relational terms" such that "these relations might be understood as relations *linking* together, not social positions and roles, but the various *planes* of social activity" (emphasis added). Wight (ibid.) continues, "structure, then, *binds* the various *planes* of the social world together" (emphasis added). My purpose in italicizing certain words in these two quoted passages is to underscore the metaphorical qualities of structure that Wight suggests may apply to the various competing perspectives on the topic. Structure in social relations (including international relations) is seen metaphorically as most people think of it as applied to its physical manifestations in such things as buildings, bridges, machines, furniture, and the like. Wight's own vocabulary of "links" and "planes" suggests structures some readers may remember creating with childhood pastimes such as Erector sets and Tinker Toys. It is a view of the unobservable with the aid of a metaphor associated with physical construction.

What structure is not, then, is a description of the geographic arrangement of actors and units in what is referred to as international relations. It is a metaphor for what Wight (122) identifies as "something that can never be brought into the realm of the observable." Wight (218) later makes a distinction between "structure" and "structuratum," in which the former is defined as "the relations between the parts, or components, of a structuratum," and the latter is defined as "the parts (elements, components, relata) whose relations constitute the structure in the first sense of the word . . . Thus states, for example, can be considered as structurata that are structured in various ways . . . Structure, then, refers to the relations between the constituent elements that make up a structuratum."[16] Metaphorically, this is a meaningless distinction inasmuch as both "structure" and "structuratum" rely on an application of linguistic representations of the conceptual mappings that come with experiences with spatial organization and arrangement.[17] What is known metaphorically as "structure" is an abstraction as are the relations within structured

entities.[18] Both structures and relations within structured entities represent an idea of the context in which actors and units interact and the nature of their interactions. It can be conceived, but only with the aid of metaphorical images. As it presently stands, those metaphorical images are ones of physical organization and arrangement, as different and varied as the many schools of thought with which "structure" is conceived may be.

## Metaphors that Delineate the Meaning and Scope of the State

Integral to the context of international relations are metaphors that delineate the meaning and scope of the state. The term "state" has at least two metaphorical meanings that have an impact on how international relations is studied. The word "state" comes to the English language from the Latin word *status,* which itself comes from the Indo-European root *sta-,* meaning "to stand" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1756, 3236). The English word "state" has a variety of meanings. However, as applied to the abstraction referred to as "the state," it is a metaphorical construction that, as stated (no pun intended), has two meanings. First, "the state" metaphorically is a transient condition, as in something can be described in terms of its current "state" of being. Second, "the state" metaphorically can be identified as a function of its legitimate "state" of being, that is to say its "status."[19] The analytical implications of these metaphors for international relations theory are at once subtle and profound.

First, as one body of recent scholarship asserts, the state is in fact a transient condition of political authority as it is expressed in world affairs. There were political entities that engaged in international relations before the state came into existence and presumably there will be those that follow. The state, then, is only a temporary "state." Second, and in a related sense, the state's legitimacy is derived in part, both practically and in the eyes of scholars of international relations, because of its "status" or state of being expressed as such. Although it sounds absurd to suggest it, the implications for both international actors and scholars of international relations of calling "states" something else, say, "corporations," are potentially far-reaching in terms of action and theoretical prediction. It is not so far-fetched to think that states could be called something such as "corporations" given the prevalence of the metaphor of corporeal bodies in the study of politics.[20] It is fair to surmise that theories of international relations that were predicated on the metaphor of legitimate international actors as "corporate"

bodies of politics may very well yield very different theoretical predictions than theories based on the metaphor of international actors as "states."

Although recent theories of international relations include non-state actors in the range of relevant units in the study of international relations, in traditional schools of thought the sole or primary territorial actors enjoying sovereignty are states. Etymologically speaking, the word "territory" is itself a metaphor, deriving as it does from the Latin *terra* meaning earth (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1854). More interestingly, there is also evidence that suggests that the Latin *terra* is itself derived metaphorically from the earlier Latin *terrēre,* meaning "to frighten" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). This leads to the notion that what is meant by "territory" is in fact metaphorically a site from which people are frightened off. As William Connolly (1995, xxii) points out, "territory" and "terrorize" thus share the same root metaphor and therefore, in a linguistic and indeed also historical sense, the modern notion of a territory is a "land occupied and bounded by violence."[21] Borders, too, can be conceptualized metaphorically, for example, in the way John Williams (2003, 39) describes them as "fences between neighbours."[22]

The image of states as distinctly bounded entities has been aided by the common practice of depicting states metaphorically as "containers" sealed off, as they are, from the purportedly anarchic nature of international relations and sealing in what is supposed to be the ordered life under the authority of the state. The metaphorical image of the state as a container extends back to the Hobbesian tradition in the study of international relations, in which domestic political order is enclosed within metaphorical, and in some cases literal, walls.[23] Paul Chilton (1996, 87) describes the container metaphor as follows:

> The CONTAINER schema metaphorizes a number of organizing concepts in Hobbes's text. Men are hypothesized as being "in a state of nature," "entering into society" and "entering into a contract." The complementary concept is "containing," or "keeping in." Hobbes repeatedly mentions the necessity of a sovereign power to "keep in awe" its subjects, who are, after all, men whose fundamental nature is movement out of their own space into that of others. Men need to be "contained." (Small capital letters in the original)

As for what the state "contains," a variety of functions have been posited. For example, Peter Taylor (1994) has suggested that the state often serves as a "power container," a "wealth container," a "cultural container," and a "social container." Perhaps most importantly,

the container metaphor has provided a basis for conceptualizing the sovereignty of the state, since countries, like individuals, are imagined as entities that retain physical integrity distinct from other states.[24] What is "contained" within these states, then, also becomes of interest metaphorically, that is, the metaphorical realm of "domestic" politics.

The metaphorical qualities of the term "domestic politics" are fairly obvious. The English word "domestic" derives from the Latin *domesticus,* which has its origin in the Latin root *domus,* meaning "house." Thus, to make something domestic (or to domesticate, in the sense of taming an animal) is to bring it into the house. To refer to the "domestic" politics of a country is to rely on a metaphor for family and household affairs.[25] What is typically referred to as "domestic politics" also is known, especially in European political and academic parlance, as "home affairs," which is an even more explicit metaphor in which the politics of a country is envisioned as what transpires within each country's "home."

The notion that "domestic" politics should constitute a country's "home" or "household" affairs is an illustration of the metaphorical ways in which scholars and policymakers alike have relied in part on language to establish a separation between the ostensible safety of politics in that realm governed by the state and the presumed danger of the allegedly ungovernable realm that constitutes international relations. As explained elsewhere in this book (see Chapter 4), the separation of different areas of political activities into so-called metaphorical levels of analysis is a powerful way of delineating what qualifies as one type of politics protected from another. Specifically, domestic politics is envisioned as a realm of relative safety and calm as contrasted with the "anarchy" of international relations. There are any number of ways of conveying this concept. Spatially divided "levels of analysis" is one. The "container" metaphor of the state is another, as are other linguistic means for establishing an "inside" and an "outside" of the state (Walker 1993).

Metaphorical "levels of analysis" and the container metaphor for the state as well as other tropes for distinguishing an "inside" and an "outside" of the state are pervasive as well as foundational elements in the contemporary study of international relations. When scholars speak of the origin of interests they refer to the "domestic politics" of countries. There are, of course, any number of ways of making the point that the interests of states are derived not from systemic factors or external attributes but from the preferences articulated by actors within the state as well as the principles, ideologies, and rules that

give shape and substance to governance in that area which is maintained by the state. One could refer to "internal" politics, "state" politics," or "national" politics. These are all metaphors themselves, so whichever phrase is chosen will have an influence on theory just as all metaphors do. What the implications are for theory is this: as is true for the metaphorical "levels of analysis," the "container" image of the state, and Walker's conception of "inside" and "outside," the "domestic politics" metaphor cordons off a zone of safety that can be contrasted with the dangers of a seemingly "anarchic" international system. The metaphorical "domestic" nature of state politics is especially noteworthy since people tend to associate domesticity with the calm, tamed tranquility as well as sanctity of the home. "Domestic" politics thus reinforces the notion that politics and interests within the state enjoy a kind of legitimacy that comes from association with the safety of one's home.

## The State as Individual

The metaphor of the state as individual is a common one in international relations theory.[26] For some scholars it has, in fact, taken on literal meaning. However, as it is used in international relations theory it is also a reified metaphor, that is, one that attributes real qualities based on metaphorical imagery to something over which scholars disagree with regard to its empirical veracity. Colin Wight, for one, is disturbed that scholars apparently are undecided about whether the state is an actor or is composed of them. He highlights this when he quotes a passage from a prominent scholar of international relations, who, in the course of a single sentence, sees states as the relevant actors in world affairs at one time and the leaders of those states at another. Wight (2006, 178) comments wryly that "it is a curious form of science that admits to such theoretical slippage." I would argue it is not so curious at all when scholars of international relations disagree about whether the state as an actor is a metaphor or not. The question, then, is how does one make a distinction between the state seen metaphorically as an actor, an individual, or a person and the state seen as a literal fact?[27]

Alexander Wendt provides one answer in his essay "The State as Person in International Theory."[28] Wendt (2004, 291) maintains that "state persons are real in at least one important sense: they are 'intentional' or purposive actors" and "since intentionality is the primary quality of persons that scholars today typically attribute to states, this argument effectively justifies current IR practice."[29] For Wendt, the

intentional actions of states represent a physicality that is consistent with the concept of a person who acts on the basis of a unity of purpose. Therefore, states do not possess an "as if" quality ("as if" they were individuals), but really are individual actors as their intentional actions demonstrate.

It is still possible to object, however, that the intentional actions of states follow only after internal deliberations occur within the state and despite the fact that there may be internal dissent within the state about any given action. In these circumstances metaphorical references to the state as an individual can obscure what may very well be important factual considerations in explaining why the state acted as it did. It is here that careful choices in terminology can tell the whole story using both metaphorical and literal terms. Let us take, for example, the negative vote by the French electorate on the proposed European Union (EU) constitution in 2005. On the one hand, as it mattered for the ratification of the constitution, it would be fair to say that the "no" vote effectively scuttled the document. In this sense, as implied for the progress of European integration, France the "individual state" ruined chances for adoption of the constitution. Thus, for those who theorize about the construction of a European union, what matters is that a single state, *acting individually,* can alter the course of European integration.[30] France as an individual effectively rejected the proposed EU constitution and, using Wendt's logic, there is no theoretical danger in saying as much.

On the other hand, clearly there was dissent within France on the matter of the EU constitution. Most policymakers endorsed ratification and "the government" (literally an actor in Wendt's formulation) campaigned for a "yes" vote among the French people. In this sense, to tell the entire story, one would have to be careful to explain that the rejection by France-the-individual-actor was the product of a vote by the people of France, each of whom cast an individual vote. Literally speaking, the *voters* of France rejected the constitution. Yet, the voters of France constitute a *metaphorical* unity that, once its intentions are given a *physical manifestation,* that is, the rejection of the constitution, takes on a *literal* quality as a single French "no" vote.

Wendt's thesis, however, appears to be a minority view. For cognitive linguist George Lakoff (1993, 243) it is fairly obvious that "A STATE IS A PERSON is one of the major metaphors underlying foreign policy concepts. Thus, there are 'friendly' states, 'hostile' states, and so forth. Health for a state is economic health and strength is military strength" (small capital letters in the original). Lakoff's view

is shared by most scholars of international relations. According to Peter Lomas (2005, 351), one of the problems with Wendt's assertion that the state is literally an individual is that he conflates "two ontological ways of thinking. There is a conceptual difference between anthropomorphism (the identification of a non-human entity as a human one) and personification (the identification of a human entity as an individual)." Lomas attributes this error to Wendt's theoretical need to discount the multiplicity of contending interests within the state in the foreign policy realm. What Lomas might add is that the metaphor of the state as an individual invites this conflation since, once imagined metaphorically as an individual, it is easy to attribute to the state the qualities associated with individual humans. Furthermore, the conflation of the state with individuals denies the independent role of the state. As Colin Wight (2004, 280) argues in a response to Wendt, "To assign personhood to the state is to neglect, not only the role of human agency, but also to occlude the power inscribed in the state as a structure." In response, Wendt (2005, 357) maintains that scholars and journalists, among other people (including Lomas himself, Wendt speculates), routinely speak and write of states as individuals, pointing to references in widely read publications such as *The New York Times*. However, just because people routinely rely on reified metaphors in their everyday discourse it does not eliminate the fact that they are metaphors. Metaphors of convenience are metaphors nonetheless. People know that when they stop someone from doing something they are not literally "cutting him off at the pass" (since very rarely do people actually use mountain passes anymore just to get something done), but they use the expression anyway, intuitively understanding it is a metaphor. The editors of *The New York Times* and Peter Lomas know that states are not individuals, but for the purposes of convenience the metaphor is useful since it would be much easier to simply write "France" instead of "French foreign policymakers." Wendt's answer to this is that since multiple perspectives of corporate entities such as states often produce actions reflective of collective intentionality, treating the state (or other corporate entities such as graduate school admissions committees) as an individual allows for predictions about state behavior without denying the existence of dissent within the state (Wendt 2005, 358).[31] However, the question is not whether the state *really* is an individual but whether the language used to describe the state is located at one end or the other of the literal - metaphorical spectrum. Literal language helps discern the extent of dissent that may nonetheless result in singular state action. Thus,

for example, an article in *The New York Times* (to take a publication mentioned by Wendt) might use literal language to say something along the lines of "yesterday the French *president* authorized a veto of a pending United Nations Security Council resolution," which hints at the source of a potentially controversial decision, whereas the more metaphorical "yesterday *France* vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution" imputes to the French state a unanimity of cognition that may or may not be supported by the facts.

As I have argued previously in this book (see Chapter 2), the question is not "reality" versus things made up, but literal or metaphorical ways of conveying complex concepts and principles. In offering a critique of Wendt, Iver Neumann concludes that Wendt most certainly is dealing in the realm of metaphor. Specifically, Neumann (2004, 260–264) casts Wendt as a Durkheimian, relying on metaphors of reification, organicism, normality, and evolutionism to impute qualities to the state. For Neumann, these metaphors have appreciable implications for theory, for example, privileging entities over relations. Thus, Wendt wittingly or unwittingly makes theoretical distinctions by privileging one set of metaphors over another. Neumann (266) suggests that Wendt's analysis might be more useful if he emphasized metaphors of language over organic metaphors.

Mika Luoma-aho raises the stakes even higher, arguing that the attribution of personhood to the state elevates the study of international relations to the status of religion. As Luoma-aho (2009, 296) observes, the embodiment of political authority in corporeal entities is rooted in antiquity: "We know that bodily figurations have been employed in political discourse since the Ancients, though they are likely to have a much richer history than we can tell." Although the body as a representation of political authority is pervasive in Western thought, Luoma-aho traces its progress from Christian theology through twentieth-century theories of the state. She sees modern IR theory in all its guises premised on the image of the state metaphorically conceived of in bodily terms: "IR is a disciplinary tradition that conserves the life and the body of the state—as long as it does not come up with something else to conserve and justify, that is. If we give up the embodied and personified state, no longer take it as a given, we flush out everything or nearly everything we (thought we) knew about international relations. The stakes are high" (ibid., 301). Among the high stakes of metaphorically personifying the state is the reliance on further metaphors to conceptualize the social context in which the metaphorical state resides. If the state is conceived of metaphorically

as an individual, then it must be embedded in some metaphorical societal realm. The next section examines the implications of this move.

## International Society and International Community

Not to be confused with cooperation or harmony, the "society" metaphor conveys the assumption that relations among international actors can be thought of in a similar fashion as one would theorize using the tools of sociology about other identifiable groups of individuals. International "community," on the other hand, implies a sense of common purpose and not simply any society that can be distinguished from others. It is worthwhile to discuss each of these concepts in turn.

### International Society

Most treatments of international society involve a metaphorical transference from societies as understood as comprising individual human beings to relations among a variety of international actors that may or may not be limited to states. A "society" typically is understood as "a group of human beings broadly distinguished from other groups by mutual interests, participation in characteristic relationships, shared institutions, and a common culture" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1711). The English word has its roots in the Latin *socius* or "companion," which itself derives from the Indo-European *sek,* meaning "to follow" (ibid., 1711, 2123).[32] In the most narrow sense, then, "international society" is metaphorical. It is the application of observations about relations among individuals who share common interests to groups of states and other actors, the relations among which call to mind that which sociologists have observed among discrete individuals. Evan Luard (1990, 1) acknowledges this when he writes: "If we define society in a sufficiently narrow way—to mean a compact, closely integrated community, comparable to the primitive societies mainly studied by social anthropologists, or even the social structure of a village or small town in industrial countries today—then international society could not qualify." This is not to say that one cannot theorize about international relations as a form of society, as Luard himself and other scholars of international relations do; it is only to observe that as a conceptual element in international relations theory "international society" has metaphorical roots.[33]

In the lexicon of international relations theory, the metaphor of international "society" is counterposed to other metaphorical conceptions of how world relations are to be conceived. One notable distinction that is made is between international "society" and international "system," a distinction made by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (1984, 1) who define international society as "a group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established a dialogue and consent to common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations and recognise their common interest in maintaining these arrangements." This is a distinction supported by Barry Buzan (1993, 331) who adds that Bull and Watson's definition "avoids the confusion that exists between system (as interacting parts) and society (as self-conscious and in part self-regulating," such that "system is logically the more basic, and prior, idea: an international system can exist without a society, but the converse is not true."[34] Leaving aside for the moment the qualities of the international system and international society (topics discussed at considerable length within the literature on these concepts and for the most part beyond the scope of this discussion), from a linguistic point of view the distinction between "system" and "society" reflect distinct metaphorical images in which a "system" is viewed as a context and a "society" as the content of that contextual surrounding.[35]

That "society" is meant to be taken metaphorically and not literally is indicated in part by the fact that there is disagreement about how societies are formed. Buzan (1993, 333) identifies two views, the "gemeinschaft understanding [which] sees society as organic and traditional, involving bonds of common sentiment, experience, and identity," and the "gesellschaft understanding [which] sees society as being contractual and constructed rather than sentimental and traditional." Both formulations take as the base concept a society of individuals which is then used as a basis for conceptualizing international relations. "International society" is not readily identifiable in an unambiguous way, but is conceptualized with the aid of sociological theories of society about which there is theoretical disagreement.

Additionally, *international* society is recognizable as a metaphor in the sense that it is contrasted with *world* society. Recalling the formulation of "world society" proffered by John Burton (1972),[36] Barry Buzan (1993, 336–337) makes the distinction as such: " 'International society' . . . is about the nature of relations among states (or whatever political units compose the international system), and 'world

society,' which takes individuals, nonstate organizations and ultimately the global population as a whole as the focus of global societal identities and arrangements." In other words, for Buzan "world society," comprised as it is of individuals, could be construed literally as a society in the same way, for example, one could refer literally to a professional society made up of individual practitioners of that profession, while "international society" is a metaphor, that is to say, a visualization of societies of individuals applied as an organizing principle to relations among corporate entities such as states and other political units. This is a very different definition of "world society" than the one offered by Albert and Brock metaphorically as a "multilayered network." These authors "see the network as a metaphor for the reciprocal interpenetration of territorially and functionally defined spaces, and for a mixing of interstate and transstate patterns of interaction" (Albert and Brock 1996, 94). Hence, while Buzan's definition implies that world society may be a literal expression of global relationships among individuals, for Albert and Brock world society "cannot be defined as a clear reference point from today's perspective" in part because it is a hypothetical state of being, and in part because it is a metaphorical and not a literal conceptualization of evolving patterns of relationships among a variety of actors.[37]

Disagreements aside, as a metaphor "society" has been key concept in theorizing about the nature of international relations. In *The Anarchical Society* Hedley Bull (1977, 13) defines international society as follows: "A *society of states* (or international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive of themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions" (emphasis in the original).[38] If "society" is understood literally to mean a group of individual human beings, then applied to international relations the term is used metaphorically to impute to states the same goals of individual humans and to infuse in states the *assumption* that their aims are the same as mankind to which states are put into service. Among those aims are the creation of a metaphorical international "community."

## International Community

As distinguished from societies, communities in international relations are understood to comprise actors with a common purpose. David Ellis (2009, 5) makes clear the distinction between an international society and an international community:

> The existence of an international society based on common interests and values is something quite different than a community of morals, ethics, and common identities indicative of an international community. The distinction is important because a *societal* impact on states is different than a *communal* impact on states. In addition, an international society is an ontological precursor for the eventual development of an international community. (Emphasis added)

For Ellis, an international society makes no implication about a common purpose whereas an international community does. Furthermore, Ellis (9–10) makes a distinction between *an* international community and *the* international community. The former represents merely a group of states whereas the latter represents a "unitary actor": "In its most simplistic form, *the* international community represents the collective moral and ethical opinions of states" (Ellis 10, emphasis added). Ellis' definition of international community is similar to others found in the literature, for example, the definition offered by Albert and Brock (1996, 94) who view international community "as a community based on law and solidarity, the functionality of which depends upon the strength of its members' sense of belonging together."

Ironically, the dictionary definition of "community" associates the term no more with a common interest or purpose than the word "society."[39] Clearly, the term international "community" is metaphorical as illustrated in several ways. First, as Ellis concedes, the term can be used generically in the form of *an* international community which is merely any group of actors with a common purpose or specifically as *the* international community as a clearly defined set of actors with some degree of recognition that they speak with a single authoritative voice (Ellis 2009, 9–10). Second, "an," or "the," international community could comprise any type of actors or it could be limited exclusively to states. As Ellis (5) points out, a "central debate within [the English School] has been whether states or individuals should be the primary referent to international society," including international communities. Third, with regard to *the* international community, there is no agreement among scholars as to who or what constitutes it (ibid., 9–13).[40]

Whereas the debate over what constitutes an or the international community is ongoing it is clear that the term "community" used in the debate is metaphorical, that is, designed to bring meaning and understanding from one domain and apply it to another so as to provide analytical insight. However, inasmuch as the source domain—communities of individual humans—is itself multifaceted containing

multiple meanings, the target domain—international relations—is similarly imbued with multiple senses of what the term means and what theoretical propositions it therefore suggests. An international community can have a common purpose or simply be synonymous with an international society which is understood only as a group of actors with a shared culture (which could be conflictual in nature). It can include various kinds of actors or it can be comprised solely of states. *The* international community may exist but who or what comprises it is unclear. Since the same statements could be made of communities made up of individual humans, it is not surprising that, as a metaphor, the term "community" adds little clarity and much room for interpretation in the study of international relations.

One thing that seems to be in agreement is that there is no agreement on what constitutes international society or international community. As the Forum on Global Society in a 2009 issue of *International Political Sociology* demonstrates, what constitutes "international," "world," or "global" society and how it should be studied is in dispute (see especially the contributions by Albert 2009, Bartelson 2009, Hindess 2009, Kessler 2009, and Thomas 2009). Perhaps some of the confusion would go away if scholars came to this agreement: No matter what an or the international world, or global society is, scholars think about it and communicate about it metaphorically. Moreover, at a certain point, these terms become metaphors for each other, for example, as Albert and Brock (1996, 95) posit in the future "states will behave like businesses, businesses like state, communities like societies . . . , and societies like communities" (with "like" indicating a metaphorical similarity in the qualities of one domain applied to another). For all their disagreements and confusion about the nature of *international, world,* or *global* society, few scholars believe that it represents a starting point for theorizing about society as it is understood to be created among individual human beings. Rather, they are metaphorical terms that represent the setting in which metaphorical states-as-individuals meet.

## Reflections on Metaphors that Describe the Context of International Relations

Aside from the obvious empirical (largely geographic) contextual aspects of international relations, IR scholars need to conceptualize a setting, location, context, milieu, or place in which international relations occurs. This place has been constructed using a combination of images, beginning with the emptiness of anarchy that is filled

with architectural "systems" and "structures," peopled by states as "individuals" and "domestic" politics, and constituted by "societies" and "communities" of these actors. Spatial metaphors predominate, in large part because they help conceptualize the geographic space of world affairs. Temporal metaphors figure in IR theory, as the next chapter's discussion of "evolution" demonstrates. But as a starting point, it is not surprising that efforts to conceptualize global interactions rely on metaphorical images of physical space.

One of the main aspects of the "anarchy," "system," "structure," "state-as-individual," "domestic politics," "international society," and "international community" metaphors is that many if not most scholars have in fact stopped thinking of them as metaphors and take them as a literal expressions of the world of international relations. International relations is for the most part characterized by scholars as one of "anarchy" which is itself a "system" but also possesses changing "systemic" attributes understood in terms of their "structure." Among these systemic structures are a distinction between international and "domestic" politics, the former of which possesses qualities of an international "society" and/or "community." These features establish an identifiable place in which the narrative explanations of international relations can be elaborated. What needs to be filled in is the plot, which is the subject of the next chapter.

# Chapter 4

# Contributions of Metaphors to International Relations Theory

In the narrative of international relations theory, the first part involves establishing the metaphorical setting of the tale. The previous chapter elaborated those metaphors that are integral to delineating the spatial context in which international relations takes place. It also highlighted the main actors peopling the story, which in mainstream IR thought are imagined metaphorically as states-as-individuals. Metaphors also play an essential role in the development of many of the theoretical assumptions that are central to the field. That is to say, in the narrative of international relations, they establish the plot. This chapter explores the metaphorical bases of some of the most significant theoretical themes in IR. The chapter is not exhaustive in uncovering every metaphor that underpins international relations theory, but rather, focuses on the ones that have the greatest presence in the field and have had the most durable impact on how international relations has been theorized.

The main elements of the plot of IR include the way actors are situated relative to each other, which dictates relationships and the constraints placed on them. The "levels of analysis" metaphor imagines actors occupying an existential space of danger within the metaphorical setting of anarchy (explored in the previous chapter). In this dangerous metaphorical realm (level) of anarchy, actors' purposes are spelled out in a metaphorical relationship between "agent" and "structure." How the plot unfolds is then a subject of theoretical

debate, in recent years waged by means of the metaphors associated with rigid images of system and structure in the Realist tradition and more dynamic conceptions represented in the various theories of metaphorical "evolutionary" change. Finally, metaphorical evolutionary change nonetheless coexists somewhat uneasily with metaphors of how international relations is "constructed." How these debates are resolved have important bearings on the narrative course of international relations theory.

## The Levels of Analysis Metaphor

One of the main roles metaphors perform in international relations theory (or any theory, for that matter) is that they define what is worthy of study and how scholars should go about studying it. In their most basic function, metaphors define the field of inquiry. For example, the field of physics is defined by the metaphorical term "physics," which implies that what is being studied are the "physical" properties of the universe, despite the fact that, literally speaking, some of the forces that are studied in the field of physics, such as energy, do not have physical properties (they only have properties that are metaphorically "physical"). In the area of international relations the metaphor that virtually defines what constitutes the field is "levels of analysis." Specifically, the levels of analysis metaphor identifies an area of political and economic activity that resides at a distinct level of human interactions, that is, the level of international interactions, a level of activity that is apart from other levels of interactions.

In his seminal 1961 article, J. David Singer lays out the ways in which separate levels of analysis in the study of international relations can be conceptualized. Singer (1961, 77) begins by pointing out that "in any area of scholarly inquiry, there are always several ways in which the phenomena under study may be sorted and arranged for the purposes of systemic analysis. Whether in the physical or social sciences, the observer may choose to focus upon the parts or upon the whole, upon the components or upon the system." This seems to be a rather straightforward statement about delineating the scope of academic inquiry in any field since, as Singer (ibid.) observes, when talking about choices between parts and wholes one finds examples such as "the flowers or the garden, the rocks or the quarry, the trees or the forest, the houses or the neighborhood, the cars or the traffic jam, the delinquents or the gang, the legislators or the legislative, and so on." However, when it comes to labeling parts and wholes in international relations, Singer departs from the languages of "parts"

and "wholes" and instead chooses a metaphor, that is, spatially separated and vertically arranged "levels" of analysis. For Singer (78), the parts and wholes of international relations reflect a vertical separation of political activity: "We have, in our texts and elsewhere, *roamed up and down the ladder of organizational complexity* with remarkable abandon, focusing upon the total system, international organizations, regions, coalitions, extra-national associations, nations, domestic pressure groups, social classes, elites, and individuals as the needs of the moment required" (emphasis added). Singer's project is to focus scholars' minds on a clearer view of these areas of activity by metaphorically locating them on vertically arranged planes. With this system of classification Singer codified a view of international relations that cordoned off what are in effect interrelated areas of activity and treated them as analytically separated realms.

It is important to point out, as William Moul (1973), Nuri Yurdisev (1993), and Colin Wight (2006) have, that what is meant by "levels of analysis" is *how* one goes about studying a given phenomenon, not *what* is being studied. This is a distinction that Singer overlooked: "Singer confuses the level-of-analysis with the unit-of-analysis . . . The unit-of-analysis refers to the object of inquiry; the level-of-analysis to how to explain the aspect of the object under consideration" (Wight 2006, 103). From the perspective of metaphors levels-of-analysis versus units of analysis is an important distinction. In focusing on the level of analysis, spatial metaphors suggest that *how* to explain international relations is to divide it up into analytically distinct realms.[1] As Nicholas Onuf (1998b, 205) suggests, in a levels perspective, "the observer's angle of vision and focus change."[2] Specifically, in this vision and focus, the relationships among units of analysis are thus made to appear separated by artificial divides imposed by a spatially delineated set of planes. The level of analysis metaphor is indeed a metaphor in that relations among what are deemed international actors are not literally located on a physical plane that can be readily identified as such. So, to be specific, the levels of analysis is a spatial metaphor that uses the imagery of vertical spatial separation—or, to look at it another way, "framed spaces" with "horizontally oriented . . . lines parallel with top and bottom," as Onuf (ibid.) puts it—to imagine the abstract realm into which certain types of interactions can be placed for the purposes of defining the subject matter under investigation.

The level of analysis metaphor has profound implications for how the realm of international relations is studied. *How many* levels of analysis is a question prompted by the metaphor itself. Scholars have identified any number of levels of analysis from two (Singer 1961,

Wolfers 1962) to three (Waltz 1959) to four (Jervis 1976) to five (Rosenau 1966).[3] Nicholas Onuf (1998b, 196) wryly observes, "there would seem to be as many levels, or as few, as scholars consensually agree." Without the metaphor of "levels of analysis" there would be no need to debate how many separate spheres of political activity are at stake in theorizing about international relations. In fact, despite the disagreement on the exact number of levels of analysis, the main effect of the level of analysis metaphor is that it delineates distinct realms of political activity. More to the point, regardless of how many levels are imagined, the main distinction established by Singer continues to define the two main areas of political activity, specifically, the so-called systemic and subsystemic levels of theorizing.

Interestingly enough, when systemic theorists discuss what is meant by the international "system," they do not necessarily mean the totality of political activities that have an impact on international relations, but rather, only those activities that are confined to the systemic "level" of analysis. Thus, for example, when Singer (1961, 80) says that the systemic level "is the most comprehensive of the levels available, encompassing the totality of interactions which take place within the system and its environment," he concedes that "totality" is only of activity at the systemic level, not the entirety of political actions that have an impact on international relations. The tendency to equate the systematic level of analysis with the totality of international relations is abetted by secondary metaphors that leave subsystemic actors opaque: "By eschewing any empirical concern with the domestic and internal variations within the separate nations, the systemic-oriented approach tends to produce a sort of '*black box*' or '*billiard ball*' concept of national actors" (ibid., 81, emphasis added).[4]

Alexander Wendt (1999, 13–14) also adopts a systemic approach premised on recognition of the institution of sovereignty that keeps the state separate from the international system. Wendt writes of metaphorically "bracketing" the state level so as to focus on the effects of systemic-level variables. Wendt's notion of a metaphorical "bracketing" of the state level is a reformulation of Singer's "levels of analysis" problem, which relies on a mathematical metaphor in the sense that mathematicians "bracket" parts of an equation that are kept constant. It is essentially a metaphor for "I assume this part of the equation does not change." That is to say, it is a theoretical assertion that international relations is constituted by physical and ideational elements at the level of the international system. However, instead of "levels of analysis," information is metaphorically "bracketed," whereby that which is not part of the metaphorical equation is left out of the calculation of what brings about outcomes in international relations.

Of course, the whole notion of systemic and subsystemic politics being "separate" from each other is not an empirical observation but rather a metaphorical image that is made possible only by virtue of the levels of analysis metaphor, which creates the impression that there are spatially separated areas of political activity.[5] All political activity is to some extent interrelated, so the notion that there are realms or "levels" of politics is a metaphorical fiction that is embraced by most theories of international relations. To a certain extent this would seem to be a logical extension of theorizing at the systemic level in which the main systemic actors are conceived of as states. But it also means that political activity that does not take place within the specified levels is excluded from the theoretical process. Thus, for example, the actions of individuals, that is, the so-called private acts of people, are not included in state-level theorizing. The negative repercussions of this omission for the study of international relations have been documented by feminist scholars, such as Cynthia Enloe (1989), who point out that by eliminating the acts of everyday individuals in international relations, scholars fail to characterize the causes and consequences of international relations in full.

There have been some efforts to metaphorically "bridge" the divide between systemic and subsystemic politics created by the levels of analysis metaphor, most notably through the invention of so-called two-level games (discussed at greater length in Chapter 7).[6] In addition to the aforementioned metaphorical "bridges" between levels, efforts have be made to overcome the metaphorical separation of levels of analysis by, for example, talking metaphorically "about different kinds of *interpenetrated* contexts" (Patomäki 1996, 108, emphasis added).[7] The spatial separation of domestic political actors then is largely a function of the internal biases of scholars of international relations and not an objective set of observations about different types of political actors and political relations. The existence of separate levels of politics is not a "fact," but rather a perspective of culturally situated observers (McCoy 2000, 189).[8] The role of the levels of analysis metaphor is to create areas of political activity that are conceived of as spatially and analytically separated, thus making it difficult to truly imagine a process of international relations that is conceived of as a whole.

One of the effects of this metaphorical division is to establish a normative as well as a theoretical claim about the nature of international politics relative to those areas of political activity such as domestic politics that are characterized as qualitatively distinct from the ostensibly anarchic world of international relations. While the levels of analysis metaphor often implies a vertical separation of realms of activity, R. B. J. Walker (1993) has suggested that the

metaphorical language of international relations theory also connotes a metaphorical "inside - outside" division between the "international" and "domestic" domains of political activity and that this division is key in defining legitimate areas of scholarly inquiry. Walker's point is well taken. In Walker's analysis, the division between the inside of the state and the outside is just one example of how the authority of the state is asserted as unproblematic. The levels of analysis metaphor contributes to a view whereby the state appears as if it is the sole guarantor of citizens' security. As Walker (1993, 174) writes: "The outside is alien and strange, mysterious or threatening, a realm in which to be brave against adversity or patient enough to tame those whose life is not only elsewhere but also back then. Knowing the other outside, it is possible to affirm identities inside. Knowing identities inside, it is possible to imagine the absences outside."[9] As I have elaborated elsewhere (Marks 2004), situating political activity within hermetically sealed "levels" fosters a view of politics in which what is "inside," to use Walker's term, is protected from the dangers that lurk "outside" at other levels of activity.[10] Metaphorical thinking that sees the world in terms of spatially separated realms encourages a view that protects certain levels from the dangers that reside in others.

Critiques of the levels of analysis metaphor themselves often rely on metaphors as a means of reframing the theoretical context of international relations. One such metaphor comes from the field of geography (and the related interdisciplinary field of political geography), namely, the notion of "scales." Scale theory in geography has gained relevance in recent years through the works of scholars such as Neil Brenner (1998), Sally Marston (2000), Neil Smith (2003), and Andrew Jonas (2006). In its conventional use, scale in geography has three senses—cartographic scale, analysis scale, and phenomenon scale—of which non-geographers likely are only familiar with the first, which "refers to the depicted size of a feature on a map relative to its actual size in the world" (Montello 2001, 13501). Analysis scale and phenomenon scale are somewhat more esoteric: "Analysis scale includes the size of the units in which phenomena are measured and the size of the units into which measurements are aggregated for data analysis and mapping . . . Phenomenon scale refers to the size at which geographic structures exist and over which geographic processes operate in the world" (ibid., 13502, 13503). In their traditional use within geography these three aspects of scale are relatively noncontroversial and simply provide bases on which geographers can reproduce the size and scope of geographic features and processes that are then submitted to data analysis.

In recent years, however, a critical perspective has been brought to the study of geographic scale. Scales are seen less as naturally occurring geographic features and processes but more as the product of social construction. As Brenner (1998, 460) contends, "spatial scales can no longer be conceived of as pregiven or natural areas of social interaction, but are increasingly viewed as historical products—at once socially constructed and politically contested." Furthermore, scales give rise to "scalar processes," that is to say, "the processes of interaction between those physical and social organizations constitutive of both their organizational identity and the function of global politics" (Sjoberg 2008, 479). As Sjoberg (481) explains, the geographic scale approach is one that can be offered as an alternative to levels of analysis in the study of international relations in that it does not rely on metaphorical stratification of political interaction: "While IR sees stair-like, artificially distinct levels-of-analysis, geographers call on their experience with interlinked, continuous properties of human social relations to produce unbroken, intersubjective *scales* of actor relationships" (emphasis in the original). Or, to put it another way, rather than relying on a metaphorical unidimensional up - down spacing of political activity within vertically organized levels of analysis, scalar processes "are many, and combine to describe evolutionary co-constitution of physical, economic, and social worlds" (ibid., 480).

The scales metaphor is a promising alternative to the confining levels of analysis metaphor, which constrains the range of interactions that can be imagined because of the limited spatial contours of the model. Since the scales image involves only a metaphor of size as opposed to spatial relationships, it can be used to imagine a broader range of social, political, economic, and cultural interactions. One should not lose sight of the fact, however, that like most else in the study of international relations "scales" is inherently a metaphorical concept. The word "scale" itself is a metaphor derived from the Latin *scālae* or "ladder" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1609).[11] In its use in geography "scale" refers to size, whether in the cartographic, analysis, or phenomenon sense. Thus, as applied to politics and international relations "scale" is used metaphorically to impute a spatial sense to things that are not necessarily physically manifested in any way that could be measured in terms of size. Hence, although scales are perhaps or even probably a better way than levels of analysis to imagine the context in which international relations takes place, the metaphor itself has its own implications. Among these implications is that international relations encompasses more than what is typically included in traditional IR scholarship. This presents certain theoretical dangers such as a difficulty in creating empirical categories

that are analytically distinct and by which causation can be discerned. An expanding interdisciplinarity (e.g., to expand into distinct disciplinary fields such as geography) is also a potential pitfall of a scales metaphor that is over-encompassing in its scope.

Another way out of the theoretical and empirical conundrums presented by metaphorical levels of analysis is presented by historical sociology. For example, George Lawson (2006) has suggested that contemporary international relations can be analyzed via micro-, macro-, and meso-level explanations.[12] Rather than a spatial metaphor, however, the "levels" in Lawson's approach represent metaphors of *size* as implied by the Greek prefixes "micro-" (small), "macro-" (large), and "meso-" (intermediate; middle). For Lawson (398–402), micro-level foundations represent not individual actors at a lower "level" of politics, but rather, processes involving the formation of preferences and their translation into social action. Macro-level foundations are those involving transformations of global social, economic, and political processes (ibid., 403–410). Finally, meso-level foundations entail evolution of social institutions understood as "sets of common understandings, rules, and practices operating in a particular issue area" (ibid., 414). Rather than associating international relations with locations of political, economic, and social activity, Lawson's historical sociological approach relies on metaphors suggesting the size of the processes involved, that is, whether they involve discrete decisions and actions (micro-), large-scale forces (macro-), or medium-sized arrangements (meso-). The historical sociological approach suggested by Lawson emphasizes the fact that all processes involved in international relations, which are differentiated by their form and not their location, take place on a global scale. It allows for studying international relations as a conceptual whole comprising a variety of interactions and processes. The utility of such an approach obviously can be questioned, but what is clear is that switching from a spatial "levels of analysis" metaphor to a metaphor premised on size of social processes reorients the type of research that is conducted and the sorts of evidence that are relevant to testing theoretical propositions.

## The "Agent – Structure" Debate as a Metaphorical Frame

In addition to the concept of "structure" discussed in the previous chapter, another theoretical argument about the defining elements of international relations that is debated in part on the basis of its metaphorical framing is the so-called agent – structure problem. The

literature on the agent – structure problem is too vast to summarize in this space, and in many ways is not necessary to the discussion at hand. Furthermore, as Colin Wight (2006) elaborates at length, in many ways IR scholars do not agree on what constitutes the agent – structure "problem," that is, whether it is an issue of ontology, epistemology, or methodology. Rather, because the agent – structure debate has already been explored deeply on both philosophical and theoretical levels (e.g., by the very same Wight 2006, as well as others), instead of reengaging the debate on those levels, the issue at stake here is the invoking of "agent" and "structure" as *metaphors* for what is being problematized in the debate and how these metaphors frame that debate whether ontologically, epistemologically, or methodologically. In many ways what unites the competing perspectives about the relationship between agents and structure is the common usage of what are metaphorical terms.

Given the vast literature on the agent – structure debate one could begin this discussion with any number of works on the topic. A good place to start is with one of the seminal pieces by which the problem was introduced to international relations theory. Among those essays that ushered in the agent – structure debate is Alexander Wendt's appropriately titled essay, "The Agent – Structure Problem in International Relations Theory."[13] What is immediately of note is that Wendt accepts that "agent" and "structure" are not the only choices of terms that could be employed to frame the problem under investigation. According to Wendt (1987, 338–339), in other academic disciplines different sets of terminology, including " 'parts – whole,' 'actor – system,' and 'micro – macro' problems all reflect the same meta-theoretical imperative—the need to adopt, for the purpose of explaining social behavior, some conceptualization of the ontological and explanatory relationship between social actors or agents (in this case, states) and societal structures (in this case, the international system)."[14]

Three interesting points arise in Wendt's choice of the metaphors of "agent" and "structure" over the other terms ("parts – whole," "actor – system," "micro – macro") he says are available. First, as Wendt himself admits (339, fn. 6), the literature on states treats them as both agents and structures depending on the theoretical perspective employed. Second, Wendt's formulation contains a mixed metaphor in that it equates societal "structure" with the international "system." As we have seen before (see Chapter 3), much international relations theory treats "system" and "structure" as unique, albeit interacting and interrelated, analytical concepts, so merging them as Wendt

does combines two theoretical categories that can be and have been conceived of metaphorically as distinct ontological phenomena.

Third, Wendt is not entirely clear about why he chooses the metaphorical "agent – structure" terminology over the other formulations available in the theoretical literature from other academic disciplines. Wendt (338) writes: "The absence of a single, immediately compelling conception of the agent – structure relation has spawned a variety of conceptualizations of the relationship across the social sciences, each reflecting the particular philosophical and practical commitments of its parent theoretical discourse." Wendt (ibid.) then adds parenthetically, "(My own adoption of the language of 'agents' and 'structures,' therefore, is not theory-neutral)." What is curious is that Wendt does not elaborate on the theoretical choices that lead him to adopt the language of "agents" and "structures" over the other options available (i.e., the ones he lists—"parts – whole," "actor – system," "micro – macro"). If the choice of "agent – structure" is not theory-neutral, then what theory is being engaged? On this Wendt is strangely silent.

This is no small point. There is no definitive or optimal word with which to describe the actors that constitute international relations and the context in which they interact. As we have seen, metaphors are instrumental in leading scholars to the models they rely on to conceptualize abstract phenomena and the assumptions, hypotheses, and theoretical propositions they suggest about the subject matter that is the object of their study (see Brown 2003). In the study of international relations how one refers to the actors involved and the context in which they interact is therefore not an insignificant matter. Wendt, for whatever reason, has chosen "agent" and "structure" over other terms available. Furthermore, for Wendt "agent" means "state." On this Wendt is not necessarily alone. At certain junctures in the study of international relations actors have been labeled simply as "states" since it has been thought that these were the only relevant actors in world affairs. More recently, many scholars would maintain that relevant actors comprise a wide variety of state and non-state entities, including, but not limited to, governments and government agencies, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, supranational institutions, and individuals. Throughout this book I frequently refer to international "actors," which I readily admit is a metaphor, although I try to use this term in a very limited sense as entities that interact with other actors or exercise actions, without making any assumptions about what motivates those actions or arriving at any conclusions about what

those actions imply about the nature of international relations. Thus, while no less a metaphor than the "agent – structure" debate, the option of referring to the "actor – structure" debate is available to scholars.

Indeed, Walter Carlsnaes (1992, 246) treats "actor" and "agent" as synonyms in the agent – structure debate. However, I would argue that there is a subtle difference that is worth exploring. As opposed to "actor," "agent" as a metaphor implies more assumptions about the nature of those entities that are involved with their surrounding environment (the metaphorical "structure"). Chiefly, "agent" implies a purposefulness of will. When one speaks of "agency" one is referring to a self-consciousness of being and intent. Dictionary definitions of "agency" include its synonymous nature with "instrumentality" (see, e.g., *American Heritage Dictionary,* 33).[15] In fact, what makes the "agent – structure" a debate at all is that scholars have seen the necessity of making an analytical distinction between the organic nature of a surrounding structure and the purposeful acts of agents in making this structure. The debate over the relationship between agent and structure is precisely that scholars disagree over whether structure can be analytically distinguished from the agency of actors that populate that structure. It is thus fascinating that the debate is built on metaphorical imagery that, perhaps, has created a debate where there might not be one if alternative terms were used.

Moreover, there is no universal agreement among scholars that international actors even have the self-consciousness of being and action that the metaphor of "agency" implies. For example, in her feminist retelling of international relations, Cynthia Enloe (1989) has argued that many of the actors that participate in international relations often are unaware of their participation or the effects that international relations has on them. For Enloe there is no linear set of actions that has a one-way effect from "agent" to "structure" or back, but rather a whole that is constituted by actors (of which corporate actors, such as states, may be one), their actions, and the environment that is made of, influenced by, and has an impact on their being and actions.

Enloe is onto something here. One of the major problems with the "agent" half of the agent – structure debate is that it requires a philosophical reflection on agency that could be avoided if some other metaphorical term were chosen. This is not to suggest that the state as one, the dominant, or even the sole actor in international relations be ruled out, thus avoiding the prospect that international relations as a subject of inquiry disappears, for as Colin Wight (2006, 177)

observes, "without a notion of the 'state-as-agent' the distinction between political theory and international theory collapses." It also does not suggest that reflecting on the nature of agency, as Wight does, is not a worthwhile endeavor (it is). Rather, inasmuch as Wight (179) points out that there is a distinction between "persons" and "agents," to the extent that states are not persons (a position Wight readily asserts), dispensing with the metaphor of state agency permits analysis of what states *do* as opposed to what purposes they pursue.[16] Given that the purposes of agency are discerned from actions, eliminating the metaphor of state agency also avoids the dilemma of drawing inferences about intent from state behavior, a tricky business if there ever was one. The outcomes of states as *actors* are relatively easy to see; divining the intents of states as agents is a much harder thing to do. Unpacking the state to identify the individuals and corporate actors (including those that form and act on a transnational basis) permits for an identification of interests—formed wittingly or unwittingly as Enloe argues frequently is the case—better than taking the metaphor of agency, state or otherwise, as a starting point.[17]

As for "structure," the way it brings to mind a metaphorical physical edifice is especially interesting given the increasing attention to ideational elements in the constitution of international relations. "Agents," whether they are individual humans or corporate entities such as states or international organizations, interact with words and ideas differently than they do with physical structures. People may speak metaphorically about "hitting a brick wall" when communicating with a stubborn, obstinate, or uncommunicative individual, or when confronting an idea that causes them consternation, or when they have writer's block, or when they run afoul of some societal institution or convention. But these are all different things, expressed metaphorically, than *literally* hitting a brick wall. Physical structure constrains and has an impact on individuals in an appreciably different way than do the constellation of ideas and institutions that are expressed metaphorically in international relations theory as "structure."

Defining the debate as one between agent and "structure" thus privileges the physical and material aspects of international relations, which, ironically, do not figure singularly in IR theory as they once did. Ideational elements inhere within the very minds of agents and therefore analytically cannot ever really be divorced from agency in the same way that physical structure can be, at least for analytical purposes. While some postmodern scholars may argue that even the material bases of reality are given through ideas, it is easier to

think about material structures as distinct from the products of minds than it is ideational elements. Agency from a metaphorical point of view *makes possible* the ideational environment in which individuals interact; structure from a metaphorical perspective *contains and restrains* individuals. The "agent – structure" debate, then, *is* a debate because it is metaphorically set up to be one. It juxtaposes purposeful will and physical constraints and then asks how these two forces can be resolved.

The resolution of the debate is a function of the metaphorical way the debate is presented. The metaphors of agency and structure set up the plot lines in the narratives told about international relations. The protagonists are willful actors making decisions in the context of material constraints. International relations presented in this way challenges scholars to discern the sources of actors' interests and intents and to further define the constraining environment in which events unfold. Rather than the "chicken-or-egg" problem with which the agent – structure debate commonly is associated, the relationship between actors and their surroundings is understood better as an ongoing narrative of choices and consequences that drive the story forward. What motivates and results from those choices involves change that itself involves further metaphorical imagery as the next section shows.

## Evolutionary Metaphors in International Relations Theory

The dynamics of change in international relations lend themselves to metaphorical formulations, and in recent years the favored metaphorical image with which scholars have framed change is the metaphor of biological evolution. George Modelski and Kazimierz Poznanski (1996, 316) summarize this renewed emphasis on explaining change in international relations as follows: "The shift from mechanics to biology . . . involves moving from statics to dynamics." Specifically, biological evolution involves similar processes that are hypothesized to take place in social settings in general and international relations in particular: "Biological and social systems are both subject to evolutionary processes and for that reason share certain similarities. They are complex systems that exhibit selection pressures, and cooperative and synergistic features; and in their transformations they employ information and thrive on innovation" (ibid.).

It should be clear that what Modelski and Poznanski propose is using biological evolution as a metaphor since evolution and change are not the same thing. Change is a generic concept that merely

involves any process of "altering," "modifying," or "replacing one thing for another" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 319). A person can change the hand towels in his or her guest bathroom and that does not represent a process of "evolution." By contrast, evolution is a specific process of change involving "a gradual process" or "gradual development" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 636). In biology (the realm that provides a basis for a metaphor of change in international relations), evolution is "the theory that groups of organisms change with passage of time, mainly as a result of natural selection, so that descendants differ morphologically and physiologically from their ancestors" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 636). Thus, when referring to "evolution," scholars such as Modelski and Poznanski are suggesting that change in international relations can be thought of metaphorically as a *specific type of change* involving not just the replacing of actors and relationships with other ones but a process of selection that is inherent in social relationships similar to that which occurs among biological units.[18] This metaphor has gained currency either implicitly or explicitly among a large number of scholars of international relations.

With regard to explicit manifestations of the evolution metaphor, Modelski and Poznanski's propositions are elaborated in a 1996 special issue of *International Studies Quarterly* that their essay introduced. Modelski (1996, 321) himself, for example, proposes that among the aspects of international relations that evolve are the "institutions of world politics" by which is meant "constitutive and widely accepted arrangements in respect to war and peace, nation-states, alliances, and international organization, and to global leadership and international law" as well as the "rise and decline of world powers." Unlike biological evolution, however, evolution in international relations is a conscious effort effected by "a learning process, of which the key operators are variation (innovation), cooperation, selection, and reinforcement" (ibid., 331).[19] What is interesting about this is that in biological evolution natural selection is not a product of conscious effort. Adaptations that permit a species to exist are passed down to successive generations, while maladaptive and disadvantageous mutations can lead to species extinction. The only measure of "success" in biological evolution is that advantageous changes are passed on to succeeding generations. In Modelski's metaphorical image of evolution in international relations, by contrast, variation is not "natural" but the product of "learning" involving "cooperation, selection, and reinforcement," which, if not necessarily conscious, then at the very least are deliberate.

One can note, as Andrew Farkas (1996, 343) does, that deliberation need not be rational in the sense it is understood in rational choice theory: "Evolutionary models show how a collective actor, such as a state, can appear to behave rationally, even if the individuals who comprise that actor are not rational themselves." The evolution here is still metaphorical inasmuch as biological organisms are neither assumed to be rational nor deliberate in their actions. That is to say, an organism may deliberately choose some *action,* for example, selecting food or even electing a mate for procreation, but there is no conscious decision or effort to procreate for the purposes of producing offspring with certain qualities. In other words, there is no decision among biological organisms to *evolve.* On the other hand, although rationality may not be involved, foreign policy actors can make conscious and/or deliberate decisions to bring about change (or stasis, as the case may be). Thus, as Farkas (359) writes, the "evolutionary model demonstrates how a group of nonrational actors can behave as if it were a unitary, expected-utility maximizer." Metaphorical "evolution" here is not spontaneous but the product of decisions, as individually nonrational as they may be.

The current popularity of the evolution metaphor is illustrated in the way it is found in a variety of theoretical perspectives that cross paradigmatic boundaries. For example, one notable application of evolution as an extended metaphor in international relations is Ann Florini's discussion of changes in international norms. Florini conceptualizes norms in a way similar to "genes." Changed norms are metaphorically seen as "genetic inheritance," and selection of norms as "the reproductive mechanism." Florini's model contains three elements: "First, genes and norms have similar functions as the instructional units directing the behavior of their respective organisms . . . Second, genes and norms are both transmitted from one individual to another through similar processes of *inheritance* . . . Third, norms, like genes, are 'contested'—that is, they are in competition with other norms that carry incompatible instructions" (Florini 1996, 367, emphasis in the original). Florini (370) embeds her evolutionary model of norms within a larger metaphorical image of the international system as a biological system divided into different levels of social (as opposed to biological) life: "Natural selection can be analyzed as working at the level of the gene (norm), the whole organism (state), or the entire population of organisms (system)." As with other treatments of change in international relations using an evolution metaphor, however, evolutionary IR theory focusing on norms differs from biological evolution by imputing to actors the ability to

consciously bring about change. Thus, in Florini's formulation the behavior of international actors as shaped by norms (metaphorically seen as genes) takes place not because of exogenous environmental shocks but by "nonrandom changes in the behavior of existing states—that is, by rewarding the behaviors that express certain norms and penalizing other behaviors" (ibid., 371).[20] Genetic evolution is thus not so much a model for normative change as it is a metaphor for it.

Political units, too, are said to be subject to the kinds of processes of natural selection Florini describes for norms. As Alexander Wendt (1999, 321) writes: "Natural selection is not about a war of all against all, but about differential reproductive success. This can be used to explain the evolution of a species (states vs. city-states), or of traits (identities and interests) within a species, but the mechanism is the same, the reproductive success of organisms." Wendt's formulation adds yet another level to the evolution metaphor, that of successive generations in a social and political context. In biological evolution, when members of a species reproduce they bring forth corporeally distinct entities. Hence, there is both a temporal as well as a material aspect to biological evolution. Literally speaking, states, city-states, identities, and interests do not re-"produce" themselves in the sense that they do not produce new corporate entities. Metaphorically, however, Wendt's conception of evolution conceives of a state in time T and a state in time T+1 as corporeally distinct entities. This has an influence on whatever theoretical propositions emanate from this metaphor since political entities in the future will be theorized as occupying a distinct material space and not just a new temporal space. This is not to say that Wendt or others actually believe that political entities literally reproduce themselves as physically distinct offspring, yet the metaphor creates that presumption for the purposes of theorizing about political evolution whether that is intended or not. Perhaps this is why in Wendt's formulation of anarchy qualitatively takes different forms; it is something that can change gradually, but it also can be reproduced as a separate material entity through processes of evolutionary natural selection.[21]

The evolution metaphor also has been applied to specific areas of international relations. One prominent example is international cooperation as elaborated in Robert Axelrod's celebrated *Evolution of Cooperation* (1984). Axelrod's work is noteworthy for several reasons. First, Axelrod uses "evolution" as a bidirectional metaphor, working from biological processes to social behavior and then back again. Like other scholars of international relations who borrow the

concept of evolution from biology, Axelrod postulates that human interactions can be imagined using the vocabulary of natural selection. For example, in discussing strategies of cooperation that are resistant to noncooperative behavior Axelrod (1984, 56) frames these strategies in biological terms: "The biological motivation for this approach is based on the payoffs in terms of fitness (survival and number of offspring)." Axelrod then moves in the other direction, applying "evolution" of cooperation in human settings to biological processes. In Chapter 5 of *Evolution of Cooperation* Axelrod (with William D. Hamilton) discusses how evolution among biological organisms can be imagined in terms of human cooperation. Since human cooperation itself is explored with the aid of biological evolution as a metaphor, biological evolution imagined as human cooperation thus renders human cooperation itself as a metaphor. As Axelrod discusses, "cooperation" among biological organisms does not require that such organisms possess a brain. For example, bacteria are capable of what Axelrod (18) deems "cooperation." Human change, engineered via deliberate acts of cooperation and labeled "evolution" is then used metaphorically to explain the behaviors of biological units.

A second notable aspect of Axelrod's treatment of the evolution metaphor is the mixing of metaphors that are employed to maximize the effect of the imagery involved. Some of these mixed metaphors combine biological processes with what are typically associated with human actions. For example, in his discussion of cooperation strategies that are stable, Axelrod (56) refers to noncooperative strategies that "invade" a population. Whether or not "invasive" strategies are the product of choice or randomness is not entirely clear, although these "invasive" strategies are depicted with metaphors that at once suggest human qualities ("newcomers") and random biological processes ("mutants") (ibid.). Furthermore, Axelrod's project is presented in the context of game theory with special attention to the social scenario of the metaphorical "Prisoner's Dilemma," which will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 7.

The final notable aspect of Axelrod's use of "evolution" as a metaphor is the choice of such a term when more literal expressions are available that convey the same principles. The title of Chapter 3 of *Evolution of Cooperation* employs such a literal term, namely, "The Chronology of Cooperation." As discussed previously, a literal term can be distinguished from a metaphorical one inasmuch as the former upholds the "exact or primary meaning of a word" while the latter entails "one thing conceived of as representing another" (*American*

*Heritage Dictionary,* 1050, 1134). While all language is in some form or another literal and metaphorical, words and expressions fall along a spectrum of being more or less one or the other. Compared with "evolution," "chronology" is a more literal term meaning the "sequence" or "arrangement of events in time" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 342). By "chronology" of cooperation Axelrod means the events that lead from decision to cooperation. This a straightforward description that would not likely confuse the average reader. By contrast, the "evolution" of cooperation employs a metaphor that conjures up biological processes that may or may not correspond to strategic interaction among conscious human agents (just as human cooperation as a metaphor may or may not accurately depict biological change). Hence, it is interesting from a theoretical point of view that Axelrod builds his theory on a metaphor at the same time that he uses the simple language of chronology to lay out the processes by which cooperation is produced.

## "Evolution" Versus "Construction"

An interesting aspect of the evolution metaphor in international relations theory is its coincidence with the increasing influence of the Constructivist paradigm. While both perspectives have enjoyed rising popularity in recent years, their approaches to theorizing change employ very distinct metaphorical frames. Specifically, the evolutionary metaphor involves the sort of biological imagery that has dominated modern international relations theory while the Constructivist approach, which entails metaphors of "construction," recalls the mechanistic metaphors that were the provenance of international relations theory from the advent of the Renaissance through to the beginnings of the nineteenth century (see Chapter 8). What is particularly ironic is that many Constructivists employ evolutionary metaphors leading to a depiction of international relations that relies to some extent on mixed metaphorical frames.

At first blush this might seem like a trivial matter. Mixed metaphors are common in everyday communication and few people are confused when they encounter them. When someone says "John was sinking in quicksand but then kicked the ball through the goal posts" most listeners would get the point of what was intended (someone named John experienced some difficulty but then achieved his objective) despite the mixed metaphorical images. However, as was discussed in Chapter 2 (see especially Brown 2003), metaphors in academic inquiry have a subtle yet appreciable impact on the creation

of scientific models and the formulation of theories. For example, imagining genetic structures metaphorically as strings of proteins assembled into chromosome strands allows researchers to hypothesize the course of mutations depending on where proteins are metaphorically "located" along those strands. In Constructivist approaches to change in international relations we see a combination of metaphors of "evolution" and "construction."

The name of the Constructivist paradigm itself contains a metaphor, specifically, the metaphor of "construction." For Constructivists international relations are actively "constructed" by actors in an ongoing fashion, including how the international "system" is made up of metaphorical "structures." Where Constructivism differs with other major paradigms, in particular Neorealism, is that whereas "Neorealists think [structure] is *made* only of a distribution of material capabilities . . . Constructivists think it is also *made* of social relationships" (Wendt 1995, 73, emphasis added). I have emphasized the word "made" in the quoted passage from Wendt to indicate that, for Constructivists, what matters in explaining international relations is how metaphorical structures are metaphorically "made" or, as Constructivists put it, "constructed."[22] Literally speaking, to "construct" something is to "form by assembling or combining parts; build; to create (an argument or a sentence, for example) by systematically arranging ideas or terms" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 404–405). Furthermore, the metaphorical "construction materials" Constructivists conceive of as being used by actors include nonmaterial resources such as ideas, principles, rules, meanings, norms, identities, and roles.

It did not have to be this way. If not for the awkwardness of the term, what is known today as Constructivism could bear, for some, the moniker of "Constitutivism." Nicholas Onuf (1989, 36), who in many ways is associated with some of the earliest writings on what has become known as "Constructivism," writes as follows: "In the beginning was the deed. I call this position constructivism. In simplest terms, people *and* societies construct, or constitute, each other. Inasmuch as I take the terms 'construct' and 'constitute' to be synonymous, I could just as well call the position their use reflects constitutivism but for the evident awkwardness of the term" (emphasis in the original). What started as linguistic convenience, however, both reveals and encourages a metaphorical envisioning of international relations as constructed, or *made*, of that which it constitutes. It is perhaps not an accident, then, that the title of Onuf's book from which the quote is excerpted is *World of Our **Making*** (bold text

added for emphasis). Constructivism is a paradigm that studies how international relations is metaphorically *constructed,* or *made.*[23]

In theorizing about international relations evolutionary metaphors suggest different sets of hypotheses about change than do mechanistic metaphors with an emphasis on images of "construction." Basic evolutionary theory posits that external or environmental shocks can cause genetic mutations in an organism. If these mutations provide advantages to a species they will be passed on to successive generations and become dominant genetic traits. If they are disadvantageous adaptations they will harm those members of the species that carry them and will be passed on to successive generations with such lack of frequency that they become either recessive or nonexistent. (If the mutations are neither advantageous nor disadvantageous, such as the color of the coat of some mammals, they will occur with random frequency in subsequent generations depending on mating patterns.) As we have seen, hypotheses about change in international relations that are prompted by evolutionary metaphors posit change that is brought about by environmental shifts and spread to the extent that it allows international actors to thrive relative to material and/or ideational constraints including but not limited to the actions of other actors and institutions in the realm of world affairs. This is the explicit model employed in Ann Florini's theory of international norms previously discussed.

A very different theory of international change is suggested by the metaphorical imagery of "construction" that is deployed by some of the same Constructivists who advance evolutionary models of change. Change involving a machine or other mechanical structure occurs quite differently than it does through processes of biological evolution. If we imagine a machine made up of many parts, if one were to change one or more of the parts any number of things could happen. One possibility is the machine could break or stop working. However, it could also continue to work but with different functions and/or different outputs. For example, a machine that manufactures something along an assembly line could be made to produce something different with the change of a few parts (e.g., a sheet metal machine could stamp out a car door instead of a piece of metal roofing with a change in the stamping die). Furthermore, to use the language of Constructivist scholars of international relations, a machine is "constituted" by its part and could be reconstituted by constructing those parts in different ways. Or, to use yet more Constructivist language, a house could be constructed using a variety of house "frames," and it is those frames that give shape to the house. Changing the size or

shape of the frame produces a differently shaped house. These types of change are quite distinct from evolutionary change.

The mixed evolution/construction metaphor is found in a variety of Constructivist writings. Although Constructivism's nominal foundation is the construction metaphor, the evolution metaphor has found its way into Constructivist thought highlighting the fact that, for Constructivists, much of the discourse of rival theories of international relations ignores processes of change. For example, Alexander Wendt employs metaphorical images of evolution when he writes of "natural selection" and the way in which social interaction brings about units that adapt to changing material circumstances (Wendt 1999, 318–326). In ways, Wendt's evolutionary metaphors are extensions of the core construction metaphors of the Constructivist paradigm in that, unlike the self-propelling qualities of biological evolution, the evolution that Wendt sees in international relations depends on the agency of actors, just as political agents play an active role "constructing" international relations.

When these metaphorical images of construction are applied to theories of change in international relations they produce theories of change that rest on hypotheses and propositions that are very different from the ones that follow from a metaphorical language of evolution. For example, the discourse that constitutes the socially constructed reality of international relations presents policy options to decision makers and policymakers. One could hypothesize that minor changes in that discourse perhaps do not wholly reconstitute policymakers' reality, but it can "produce" (much as a machine produces something) different policy options that are appropriate (using the language of the logic of appropriateness) under the circumstances. Similarly, one could hypothesize that large-scale changes in discourse, including the introduction of new frames of reference by which policymakers' reality is constructed, can reconstitute the realm of possibilities that policymakers refer to when considering what constitutes legitimate actors in international relations, relevant institutions, and possible means for interacting with others and with institutional environments. These changes do not "evolve" by means of adaptation but rather are produced by a changed construction of what is seen as relevant reality. Again, the irony is that these dual metaphorical languages of evolution and construction exist side-by-side in contemporary international relations theory and bring about an eclectic set of theories of change that mix together two distinct traditions of biological and mechanistic imagery that have existed with varying degrees of influence over the course of the study of international relations.

To sum up this section, evolutionary metaphors in international relations theory in many respects reflect the state of the art in the progression of IR thought. As will be discussed in Chapter 8, changing conceptions of international relations have involved metaphorical perspectives that alternate between mechanistic and biological images of the world. Much as these mechanistic and biological metaphors framed inquiry in earlier times, in contemporary international relations theory change is conceptualized using metaphors of evolutionary processes. Interestingly enough, the present focus on evolutionary change incorporates earlier mechanistic and biological metaphors in subtle yet potentially profound ways. The shift from mechanistic to biological metaphors represented a fundamental transformation in international relations theory whereby relations among international actors were theorized in organic rather than man-made terms. Mechanistic metaphors imagined a world made by conscious forces with a purposeful will. Biological metaphors, by contrast, imagined a world of organic forces. From an epistemological standpoint, the dominance of biological metaphors coincided with the rise of scientific and quasi-scientific approaches to the study of the social world. Human relations, including those reflected in international relations, are seen to be amenable to rational inquiry using the scientific method. It would appear that the current popularity of evolutionary models would represent the culmination of this trend.

However, the concomitant rise of constructionist paradigms—most notably, the Constructivist paradigm in IR—indicates an ironic resurrection of mechanistic metaphors that posit a man-made world of international relations. Understanding man-made social realities involves an interpretivist epistemology at odds with scientific positivism that for the most part has ruled the day in modern IR thought. That some Constructivists have presented themselves as scientific realists indicates the tension that comes with the mixed metaphorical juxtaposition of evolutionary metaphors within a paradigm overlaid with mechanistic metaphorical imagery. The current trend in IR theory, then, involves in part an epistemological debate in which metaphors of evolutionary change will determine the outcome.

## Theoretical Narratives

In arguing that theoretical perspectives and choices represent the narrative plot by which the story of international relations is told, it should be noted that the concept of narrative itself is metaphorical. Quite obviously, the study of international relations is an analytical

affair, not a literary one. Donald Polkinghorne (1988, 21) makes a distinction between narrative explanation and logico-mathematical reasoning, the latter of which relies on finding law-like or patterned relationships among a class of phenomena. Theories of international relations for the most part stress causal explanation, as the theories discussed in this chapter amply illustrate. But they also depend on a prior identification of what is important to be explained. "In the narrative schema for organizing information, an event is understood to have been explained when its *role and significance* in relation to a human project is identified" (Polkinghorne 21, emphasis added). Causal explanations of international relations have a significance when they account for what has been laid out in a prior narrative structure.

What metaphors do in this process is distinguish one concept of international relations from another so that the process of identifying causal explanations can be undertaken. The main paradigms in the study of international relations reflect metaphorical conceptions of the actors and environments, that is, the plot, of world affairs. This is part of what differentiates one paradigm from another. If all that were required for the social science practice of identifying variables and cause-and-effect relationships was an empirical accounting of events, there would be few if any paradigmatic debates in IR. However, as is true in the physical and natural sciences, metaphors frame and delineate competing theoretical perspectives. Physicists and chemists tell stories of what matters just as scholars of international relations do. This chapter has shown how metaphorical narratives of international relations define theoretical debates and the conclusions that are drawn from them.

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# Chapter 5

# Metaphors of Power

Previous chapters have unraveled the essential ingredients of the metaphorical narrative of international relations, including the setting for the narrative, the main actors involved, and the general plot. However, before any story can fully unfold, the author and the audience of the story alike must know what the story is "about." One could say that the story of international relations is "about" international relations, but this is an obvious circularity and is tantamount to saying that the novel *War and Peace* is about war and peace. That would be a facile observation at its most extreme, since it fails to highlight what the novel really is "about," that is, Tolstoy's examination of the existential struggles of Russian aristocratic society in the face of political upheaval. Likewise, from the perspective of IR scholars, international relations is not simply a chronicling of facts pertaining to political and economic relations among states and other actors, but it is "about" larger matters of human affairs. In particular, many scholars of international relations would say that their the chief (although not sole) concern is offering a narrative explanation "about" the nature and functions of something called "power" and, in particular, how it is metaphorically conceived.

Despite the centrality of power to the narrative of international relations, the term "power" in international relations theory is highly problematic from an analytical point of view. The word "power" is defined in the dictionary quite simply as "the ability or capacity to perform or act effectively" or "strength or force exerted or capable of being exerted" and comes from the Latin *potēre* or *potis,* meaning "to be able" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1420). This definition seems relatively straightforward and most people use the term casually

in this sense. However, things are actually more complicated than this. For example, there is not necessarily universally agreed among scholars that power need imply acting "effectively" as the dictionary definition supplies nor that power is synonymous with "strength" or what can be "exerted" in terms of "force." Rather, most scholars would agree that power is "fungible," can take many forms, and cannot be reduced to or equated with "strength" or what might be qualified or measured as "force." In addition, the ingredients and qualities of power are not known *a priori,* but rather, often are observed empirically, and theories of power frequently are derived *ex post facto*. Since power therefore is theorized only very difficultly, scholars often resort to metaphorical frameworks with which to describe power and its effects. What follows is an examination of the metaphors of power in international relations including how power is conceptualized in its various forms and functions.

## The Balance of Power Metaphor

The metaphor of *the,* or *a,* balance of power is one of the most prevalent images in all of international relations theory. While the balance of power concept is also rooted in myth and model, Richard Little (2007, 21) notes without ambiguity that "the balance of power is a metaphorical expression." Little (29) continues that because a large number of scholars have adopted "a negative or ornamental view of metaphors," he sees a need to critically examine the concept and thus devotes an entire book to exploring the balance of power as metaphorical image. The purpose of the discussion in this chapter thus is not to duplicate Little's considerable and valuable efforts. Rather, what is aimed for in this section is to elaborate some key points made by Little and others and to situate the balance of power metaphor in the larger context of conceptions of power and the use of metaphors in the study of international relations in general.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* the first appearance of the concept of the "balance of power" (defined as "such an adjustment of power among sovereign states that no single state is in a position to interfere with the independence of the rest; international equilibrium") in the English language dates to 1677, specifically in a quote from Andrew Yarranton, who in *England's Improvement by Sea and Land* referred to "the Ballance of Europe." The idea of a balance of power as articulated in other languages is much older and its conceptualization in metaphorical terms can be traced back to the Renaissance, most notably, according to Matthew

Anderson, the writings of Francesco Barbaro who first used the expression in 1439 with reference to the machinations of the Italian city states.[1]

Harald Kleinschmidt (2000, 117) elaborates this history, noting that "already late in the fifteenth century, conceptions of the balance among rulers were expressed in binary dichotomies." The political import of the balance of power metaphor is chronicled by Moorhead Wright and later Michael Sheehan, who note that in 1598 the Italian Renaissance jurist Alberto Gentili employed the metaphor of atoms and molecules in his praise of Lorenzo de Medici's manipulation of the balance of power:

> The maintenance of union among the atoms is dependent upon their equal distribution; and on the fact that one molecule is not surpassed in any respect by another . . . That it is which was the constant care of Lorenzo de Medici, that wise man, friend of peace and father of peace, namely that the balance of power should be maintained among the princes of Italy. This he believed would give peace to Italy as indeed it did so long as he lived and preserved that condition of affairs. (Alberto Gentili, *De Jure Belli Libri Tres* [1598], quoted in Wright 1975, 13; Sheehan 1996, 32)

As Sheehan (33) points out, the scientific metaphors brought to bear on the balance of power metaphor in the Renaissance nonetheless did not make clear if the balance of power was a naturally occurring phenomenon or something prescribed for and engineered by statesmen and diplomats as a way to manipulate international relations.[2]

By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the balance of power was increasingly conceptualized with metaphors of machines and other mechanical objects or astronomical features such as the orbits and movements of planets around stars. Kleinschmidt (2000, 117) writes that the scales model "was superseded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the machine model, for which an early record has been preserved in the political works of Francis Bacon (1561–1626)."[3] Bacon brought his balance of power model to bear specifically on relations between England and its rivals during the course of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), the end of which Bacon would not see in his lifetime. "Bacon's arguments overlapped neatly with the mechanistic convictions of Comenius and Descartes because his model of the balance of power was the machine, and they reflected contemporary conceptualizations of the international system" (ibid., 122). The eventual influence of this machine metaphor on theories of international relations was that relations among states was seen to

some extent as self-regulating and not subject to the whims of political rulers: "According to this concept, the system was a system of 'states' and formed the fixed outward frame for its member units. The polities forming this 'European state system' were thus tied together like parts of a machine. They represented a well-ordered, static and hierarchically arrayed assembly of units which was credited with the ability to repair itself" (ibid.).

That the balance of power metaphor has been expressed in naturalistic and mechanistic terms is not surprising. As Alfred Vagts observed in 1948, the "balance" metaphor is pervasive in any number of fields of inquiry. Vagts' observation is instructive and worthwhile to reproduce at length:

> As soon as a dichotomy is stated in any field of thought, political or otherwise, among the western peoples today, the harmonization formula of "balance" is promptly raised. Whenever expenditure is overshooting income, the call for balanced budgets follows. Economists speak of a balance of supply and demand, the upsetting of which, with resultant depression or inflation, is awaited with some eagerness by Soviet economists. Other sciences demand a balanced diet, where there is enough to eat and to choose from, a glandular balance, a balance of age groups in a nation, a balance in nature which seems disturbed if not enough or too many of one species of animals are killed off. According to some of its outstanding practitioners, medical science in the West was for some time misled in the diagnosis of disease by the discovery of bacteria which gave "temporary support to the fallacious causality principle" and thus "vastly retarded progress in scientific medical thinking," although it is now found that for the true diagnosis "the imbalance, the organismic disequilibrium is the real thing" to study. (Vagts 1948, 83)[4]

Vagts (84) continues that when political metaphors involving "balance" are used loosely enough (e.g., in discussions of a "balanced" defense) they can create much confusion as to what actually constitutes a "balance." As Vagts (87–88) astutely points out in a way that perhaps indicates an intuitive comprehension of metaphors later spelled out by cognitive linguists, "the language of politics is rarely as unequivocal as other terminologies, reminding us of the 'unlawlike' nature of the social sciences. Political language is formed by the confluence terms from various other fields—ethics, the arts, philosophy, religion, the sciences, techniques of various kinds . . . It was the world-openness of the Renaissance that made political metaphors so strongly mixed and so ambiguous, perhaps intentionally so." Since the idea of "balance" was already broadly accepted "in many another field of

thought and activity" it fit in easily with Renaissance views of political affairs (ibid., 89).

As far as the prescriptive implications of the balance of power metaphors, one of the ironies of its use in Renaissance times was that, unlike its association in contemporary times with theories of "power politics," it was associated more with individuals who advocated diplomacy over war. As Vagts (100–101) writes, "the aristocratic groups which accepted the balance image were essentially those preferring diplomacy to warmaking. Though not averse to wars, they were willing and able to conclude peace, to compromise and to harmonize, with the help of this very concept, the balance of power." Thus, as ambiguous as the concept may have been, its function as a metaphor was to prioritize certain options over others according to how the concept was experienced and imagined in the mind and expressed in words.

In his historical review of the balance of power concept Richard Little expands on the "scales" metaphor and its importance to the notion of the balance of power. Little traces the balance-as-scales metaphor to biblical times and the Book of Daniel. Just as scales impartially measure weights, as a metaphor they can also measure impartiality and, by extension, justice (Little 2007, 45). However, as applied to the concept of power the balance-as-scales metaphor is more ambiguous, perhaps because impartiality of power is much harder to achieve than impartiality of weights. Referring to the nineteenth-century lithographs of Honoré Daumier depicting the European balance of power, Little (45–46) writes: "Daumier's images, for example, associate the balance of power with danger and precariousness. These are unequivocally terms that critics have frequently linked to the international balance of power, but they are certainly not terms that necessarily come to mind when the term is called upon colloquially. As a consequence, they leave the meaning of the term underdetermined." Because the scales metaphor is underdetermined, Little (46–47) argues it has become a "generic image," one which "tells us less about the power possessed by the participants as agents and more about how the power possessed by the members of the system defines the structure of the social setting" (ibid., 47). Furthermore, the scales image as a generic metaphor "discourages us from thinking that power is hierarchical, monopolized or concentrated in one location. But it also indicates that power is fluid rather than fixed and that the power possessed by the actors in the system has to be constantly recalibrated" (ibid., 48). Little (49) asserts that the theoretical implications of this view are to transform international relations theory

"from an agency-based to a structural-based conception of power," a move that Little argues is rarely contested. Eventually, according to Little, the scales metaphor, which favors an adversarial image of politics, takes take on the status of myth, eclipsing other metaphorical images (e.g., metaphors of balance associated with the human body) that offer a more associational conception of political relations (ibid., 66–73).

This myth status of an adversarial image of the balance of power accounts for its influence on modern theories of international relations, in particular, Realism. With the advent of modern Realist theory, the historical origins of the balance of power metaphor find an updated narrative. The adversarial nature of politics that Renaissance rulers sought to mitigate through manipulation of alliances finds expression in mid-twentieth-century international relations theory, which seeks to *explain* the nature of alliance behavior. While Lorenzo de Medici might have been doing what came to him naturally, Realist scholars of the post – World War II era sought to use the metaphor of balancing behavior to account for actual observed changes in the alliance pattern of states. The bulk of Little's book is focused on how the balance of power is treated in the works of four contemporary authors, three of whom are Realists—Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, and John Mearsheimer (the fourth is Hedley Bull). Of these three Realists, Morgenthau's work offers the most vivid metaphorical images involving the balance of power and therefore merits particular attention. In the discussion that follows, I refrain from reproducing Little's analysis of Morgenthau and instead present my own interpretation of Morgenthau's work with an emphasis on its metaphorical aspects.

Morgenthau begins his discussion of the balance of power in *Politics Among Nations* with a tacit acknowledgment of the metaphorical nature of the concept. Observing that the term "balance" is synonymous with "equilibrium," Morgenthau (1985, 187–188) points out that the notion of balance "is commonly employed in many sciences—physics, biology, economics, sociology, and political science. It signifies stability within a system composed of a number of autonomous forces." Morgenthau illustrates this concept with metaphorical reference to the human body. He imagines the human body in state of equilibrium, or at least designed to seek equilibrium when internal or external forces disrupt the status quo: "While the human body changes in the process of growth, the equilibrium persists as long as the changes occurring in the different

organs of the body do not disturb the body's stability" (ibid., 188). Morgenthau claims that this same principle is involved in theorizing in other disciplines such as economics, and thus the body-as-equilibrium metaphor takes on a universal quality for his application of the metaphor to the balance of power concept in international relations.

While Morgenthau relies mainly on a biological metaphor to derive lessons about the international balance of power, he also employs spatial metaphors to illustrate the relationship among states in the balance of power. Through a series of illustrations, Morgenthau (194–195) depicts states in the form of two-dimensional circles, the relationships among which are denoted by a series of arrows indicating the motion and trajectory of these circles. The circles (labeled as letters of the alphabet) are of various sizes and are shaded. The different sizes of the circles indicate their relative power in relation to one another. This spatial image is similar to the oft-cited "billiard ball" metaphor that is frequently employed in discussions of balances of power. This spatial aspect of Morgenthau's metaphorical conceptualization of the balance of power is not fully reconciled with the biological human body metaphor that precedes it.

Scholars have not been shy about using mixed metaphors in their conceptualization of international relations, and Morgenthau is not an exception. To his biological and spatial metaphors of the balance of power he adds a mechanical one, the metaphor of the balance of power as a set of scales. The first sentence of Chapter 12 of *Politics Among Nations* reads: "The balancing process can be carried on either by diminishing the weight of the heavier scale or by increasing the weight of the lighter one" (ibid., 198).[5] Morgenthau (213) writes: "To use the metaphor of the balance, the system may consist of two scales, in each of which are to be found the nation or nations identified with the same policy of the status quo or of imperialism." Morgenthau then supplements this image with the concept of the "holder" of the balance of power:

> The system may, however, consist of two scales plus a third element, the "holder" of the balance or the "balancer." The balancer is not permanently identified with the policies of either nation or group of nations. Its only objective within the system is the maintenance of the balance, regardless of the concrete policies the balance will serve. In consequence, the holder of the balance will throw its weight at one time in this scale, at another time in the other scale, guided only by one consideration—the relative position of

the scales. Thus it will put its weight always in the scale that seems to be higher than the other because it is lighter. (ibid., 213–214)

Morgenthau states that the options available to the holder of the balance are clear only after the fact, that is, after the scales begin to fall out of balance. Why the scales lose balance, and why the balancer prefers stability over advantage (as is the preference of the actors causing the scales to tip) are questions left unanswered. In the scales metaphor, the weights do not place themselves in one side of the scale or the other. *Someone* made a decision to move the weights around, and *someone else* (the metaphorical holder of the balance) responds. Which is which is only clear after the fact; their motivations are irrelevant, and thus cannot be explained.

Morgenthau explicitly acknowledges the theoretical limitations of the balance of power metaphor and its *ex post facto* nature.[6] He states that a country's power is constituted by such tangible qualities as "territory, population, and armaments" (ibid., 223). But he also assigns significance to less easily quantifiable elements: "National character and, above all, national morale and the quality of government, especially in the conduct of foreign affairs, are the most important, but also the most elusive, components of national power" (ibid., 224). Thus, *ex post facto* examination of these qualities is the only option available: "Rational calculation of the relative strength of several nations which is the very lifeblood of the balance of power, becomes a series of guesses the correctness of which can be ascertained *only in retrospect*" (ibid., emphasis added). Here Morgenthau concedes to (in the section heading in which this passage appears) "the uncertainty of the balance of power" (ibid., 223), and thus the limited predictive abilities of the concept.

The balance of power metaphor is so pervasive in theories of international relations that it figures in most major theoretical paradigms. Its pervasiveness is so extensive that even theorists hostile to Realist theory tend to have accepted that a metaphorical balance of power is an essential, if not necessarily influential, feature of international relations.[7] Furthermore, the "balance" metaphor need not necessarily be limited to a balance of power. In his prognostication about international relations in a post–Cold War world, Samuel Huntington (1996) postulates a "balance of civilizations" in which cultural influence and interactions as well as traditional conceptions of power determine relations among states, while Kai He (2008, 492) introduces the metaphorical concept of "institutional balancing" that involves

states countering "pressures or threats through initiating, utilizing, and dominating multilateral institutions."[8]

## "Balancing" Versus "Bandwagoning"

In addition to other forms of balancing (e.g., balance of civilization and institutional balancing), the "balance of power" metaphor has given rise to additional metaphors that either refine or modify what is meant by a metaphorical "balance." One notable example of this is the metaphorical concept of "bandwagoning," which has been posed as the opposite of "balancing" in the realm of power. The metaphorical "balancing" versus "bandwagoning" contrast has been popularized by Stephen Walt (1987) although the pedigree of these terms is much older and can be traced back to Quincy Wright's monumental work *A Study of War* (1942).[9] In Volume II of that tome Wright introduces the metaphor of "bandwagoning" as well as several other metaphorical terms that he applies to the behavior of third states when confronted with a bipolar power rivalry. Wright's metaphorical typology of alliance behavior is summed up colorfully with a series of metaphors in a lengthy passage:

> The policies of third states confronted by violent controversy may be classified as those of isolationist neutrality, prudent preparedness, balance of power, and collective security. The isolationist neutrals scatter from the conflict like a flock of chickens attacked by a hawk. The prudent preparers appease the powerful aggressor in order to divert his attention or to profit by his conquest, like the jackal following the tiger. The balancers of power spontaneously help the weaker like a band of apes assisting one of their number in danger. The adherents to collective security collaborate in a prepared plan against aggression as in human societies enforcing law. (Wright 1942, 1258)

These four *policies*—"isolationist neutrality," "prudent preparedness," "balance of power," and "collective security"—are then associated in a footnote (n. 52) with four *sentiments* labeled respectively "neutral," "*bandwagon,*" "underdog," and "juristic." In short, the "bandwagon" sentiment for Wright translates into the policy either of "appeasement in order to divert [the aggressor's] attention" or "profit" by following the aggressor like a metaphorical "jackal following the tiger" (Wright, 1258 above). Hence, in its first appearance in the literature the "bandwagoning" metaphor is not a policy but a "sentiment" that then translates *either* into a "policy" of appeasement *or* collaboration. As a guide for theoretical analysis,

then, the bandwagoning metaphor in Wright is open-ended in its predictions.

The next reference to "bandwagoning" in the literature is a brief and passing one. In *Discord and Collaboration* Arnold Wolfers (1962, 124) writes that there "are instances . . . in which the 'automatic' reaction fails to materialize. Some weak countries seek safety by getting on the bandwagon of an ascending power, hoping somehow to escape complete subjugation once their powerful 'friend' has gained supremacy." Of Wright's two policies associated with the sentiment of bandwagoning—appeasement and profit—Wolfers' formulation of the concept is not exactly either, or perhaps it is something in between. Wolfers appears to use the term "getting on the bandwagon" as it is commonly associated with the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition, "to join in what seems likely to be a successful enterprise, to strive to join the winning side," but without necessarily making any assumptions about motivation or "sentiment" as spelled out in Wright's 1942 categorization. In any case, since Wolfer's use of the term is fleeting it is not a major component of his theoretical propositions about alliance behavior.

The "bandwagoning" metaphor makes its next appearance in Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Waltz, who erroneously credits Stephen Van Evera with coining the term (Wright beat him to the punch by 37 years), adds a new twist to the term by juxtaposing it as the opposite of "balancing." Waltz compares bandwagoning and balancing behavior internationally with political candidates in domestic partisan contests. Within political parties "bandwagoning" takes place as "losing candidates throw in their lots with the winner" (Waltz 1979, 126). In a general election, "balancing" behavior dominates since smaller parties want to keep one party from becoming too strong. Translated into international relations "bandwagoning is sensible behavior where gains are possible even for the losers and where losing does not place their security in jeopardy" while "balancing is sensible behavior where the victory of one coalition over another leaves weaker members of the winning coalition at the mercy of the stronger ones" (ibid.). Two things are worth noting here. First, Waltz reduces alliance behavior from Wright's typology of four policies—"isolationist neutrality," "prudent preparedness," "balance of power," and "collective security"—associated with four respective sentiments—"neutral," "bandwagon," "underdog," and "juristic"—to two policies, "bandwagoning" and "balancing," thus losing the nuances inherent in Wright's cataloging of state dispositions. Second, while Wright draws on metaphorical imagery of animal

behavior (e.g., chickens fleeing hawks, jackals scavenging, apes coming to each other's assistance), Waltz relies on the metaphor of the behavior of political parties and candidates to make inferences about the actions of states. In any case, Waltz's discussion of "bandwagoning" is brief and thus awaits a fuller elaboration to flesh out the intricacies of the metaphorical concept.

Inspired by Waltz, Stephen Walt devotes a large portion of his 1987 book *The Origins of Alliances* to the juxtaposition of the metaphorical behavior of "balancing" and "bandwagoning." Walt (1987, 17) begins by defining his terms: "*Balancing* is defined as allying with others against the prevailing threat; *bandwagoning* refers to alignment with the source of danger" (emphasis in the original). The first thing worth noting here is that Walt takes liberty with the metaphor of getting on the bandwagon, which, as indicated, is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as joining "in what seems likely to be a successful enterprise, to strive to join the winning side." That is to say, one might presume that by aligning with the source of danger one is either assuming or hoping that side will "likely . . . be a successful enterprise," but there is no guarantee of that, nor does the *OED* definition presume that the "winning side" is a source of danger to anyone or anything. Instead, although inspired by Waltz's use of these terms, Walt's aim is to challenge Waltz's assertion that balancing and bandwagoning occur in the context of *power,* but rather, in the face of *threat.*[10] Thus, Walt constructs a modified version of "balancing" and "bandwagoning" that, although relying on the same metaphors as Waltz, generates a different set of hypotheses regarding the patterns of alliance formation. "Balancing" and "bandwagoning" are loose enough metaphorical terms that they can suit Waltz's and Walt's purposes equally well, but leave scholars free to accept either or these two meanings for the purposes of making predictions about the alliance behavior of states. This imprecision gives other scholars an opportunity to use these terms as they see fit.

Given the historical ambiguity regarding the meanings and theoretical implications of the bandwagoning metaphor, there has been room in recent years to expand the discussion by modifying and adding to existing metaphorical conceptualizations of the term.[11] A good example of this is Randall Schweller's free ranging 1994 essay, "Bandwagoning for Profit," which adds still more layers to the bandwagon metaphor. To begin, Schweller uses metaphors to illustrate the bandwagon metaphor itself, specifically, the metaphors of machines: "The bandwagoning image of international politics pictures the global order as a complex machine of wheels within wheels. In this highly

interconnected world, small local disruptions quickly grow into large disturbances as their effects cascade and reverberate throughout the system. In contrast, the balancing image sees a world composed of many discrete, self-regulating balance-of-power systems" (Schweller 1994, 72, n. 2).

Qualitatively, Schweller (73) equates bandwagoning with the sentiment that "nothing succeeds like success." Unlike Waltz and Walt, who see balancing and bandwagoning as opposite strategies toward the same goal of security (for Waltz they are opposite strategies in the face of power, for Walt their opposition is in terms of threat), Schweller (74) sees different strategies toward that end: "In practice . . . states have very different reasons to choose balancing or bandwagoning. The aim of balancing is self-preservation and the protection of values already possessed, while the goal of bandwagoning is usually self-extension: to obtain values coveted. Simply put, balancing is driven by the desire to avoid losses; bandwagoning by the opportunity for gain." Oddly enough, Schweller (75) claims that he adopts "a different definition of bandwagoning," which he says, "accords with common usage of the term" despite lack of common usage. Schweller (81) asserts that "conventional usage" (as opposed to what he calls "common usage" on Schweller, 75) "defines a bandwagon as a candidate, side, or movement that attracts adherents or amasses power by its momentum." Yet what is meant by "momentum" and how it has an effect on actors can mean any number of things as Schweller then indicates by giving distinct examples of the bandwagon principle: "The phrase 'to climb aboard the bandwagon' implies following a current or fashionable trend *or* joining the side that appears likely to win. Bandwagoning may be freely chosen, *or* it can be the result of resignation to an inexorable force" (Schweller 81, emphasis added). That bandwagoning can mean this *or* that and can be the result of one *or* another force illustrates that, as a metaphor, the term is suggestive, not definitive in its implications.

Imprecision in the bandwagoning metaphor has not been useful in fostering scholarly activity as illustrated by a somewhat testy exchange in a forum in the December 1997 issue of the *American Political Science Review* in which several authors (including Schweller) spar over the meaning of the term "bandwagoning" as a trope for investigating international alliances (see Schweller 1997, Vasquez 1997, Waltz 1997). In all of these debates (which at times rise to the level of argument) there is little reflection on the appropriateness of bandwagoning as a metaphor in imagining alliance behavior nor is there really an critical examination of what the metaphor implies. In their debates over

bandwagoning, scholars seem to have forgotten states do not literally bandwagon—least of all in the way the term is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary;* they made the term up. It is a metaphor. Many scholars have lost sight of this, treating "bandwagoning" literally and devising metaphors for *it*. Thus, for example, in search of some way to make bandwagoning intelligible to the reader, Schweller (1994, 92–98) compares the metaphor of bandwagoning—which he treats as a literal expression of international alliances—to metaphors of "balls rolling down an incline," "positive feedback," "piling on," "infection," and "falling dominoes," which he then likens to a metaphorical "chain reaction." Furthermore, to "clarify" the situation, Schweller (100–104) adds additional metaphors of states as animals in the form of "lions," "lambs," "jackals," and "wolves" lest the reader be wanting for metaphorical images with which to conceptualize metaphorical "balancing" and "bandwagoning" behavior.

Although Schweller may be the most obvious example, scholars who utilize the "bandwagoning" metaphor have built up a literature that follows in the tradition of the "balance" metaphor against which it has been juxtaposed. Bandwagoning has become an activity that is literally what it is and can be illustrated to the reader with metaphors that might otherwise be taken as literal expressions of alliances had the equation been made the other way. Obviously scholars have proposed hypotheses and theoretical propositions to predict what the metaphor of "bandwagoning" is intended to represent. However, like the balance of power metaphor itself, bandwagoning has at once been reified and left imprecise. It is a term that means many things and is taken as a literal expression of international alliance behavior if only scholars can agree on what it is.

## Metaphors of Power "Distribution" and "Polarity"

Power is a tricky concept in international relations, as it is in politics, society, and physics. It is an abstraction that represents capabilities (or stored energy in physics), but it also includes the concrete manifestation of those capabilities. The question then arises of how best to describe where power is, in what quantities, forms, and amounts. One set of terminology for this is a metaphorical "distribution" of power. At first blush, this term may sound as close to a literal description as one can get. However, literal expressions tend to be precise. For example, the expression "a highway interchange at which two highways, one crossing over the other, have a series of entrance and exit ramps resembling the outline of a four-leaf clover and enabling vehicles to

proceed in either direction on either highway" (*American Heritage Dictionary*) is a more precise and therefore more literal way of saying something than is the metaphorical expression "cloverleaf." The more precise and literal the way of saying something the fewer ways there are of rendering and interpreting it. By contrast, metaphors tend to be evocative by way of their lack of precision. Unlike literal terms that are precise and unique, one indication that a term is metaphorical is if it has many synonyms.

There are numerous synonyms for the word "distribute" (the root for "distribution") including "allot," "dispense," "portion," "dish out," "dole out," "mete out," "parcel out," "share out," "shell out," "extend," "spread," "circulate," "diffuse," "disperse," and "disseminate." One could therefore talk of a metaphorical "allotment of power," "apportionment of power," "diffusion of power," or "dispersion of power," among other ways of rendering this concept. This is not meant to imply that "distribution of power" is a misleading way of talking about power in international relations or that other terms are better. Rather, the point is that by virtue of its simplicity and lack of precision "distribution of power" is not a literal description of how and where power resides in international relations but instead a metaphorical image, a simplifying expression of the concept. As such, like all metaphors, it suggests certain things that even closely related metaphorical terms such as "allotment of power" or "dispersion of power" might not.

Metaphorically, power is said to "distributed" among any number of "poles." Defined in the dictionary, "pole" has several related meanings, many of which involve two locations, each at the opposite ends of an axis:

> pole: 1. Either extremity of an axis through a sphere. 2. *Geography.* Either of the regions contiguous to the extremities of the earth's rotational axis. 3. *Physics.* A magnetic pole. 4. Either of the two oppositely charged terminals, as in an electric cell or battery. 5. *Astronomy.* A celestial pole. 6. *Biology.* a. Either extremity of the main axis of a nucleus, a cell, or an organism. b. Either end of the spindle formed in a cell mitosis. c. The point on a nerve cell where a process originates. 7. Either of two antithetical ideas, propensities, forces, or positions. 8. A fixed point of reference. 9. *Mathematics.* The origin in a polar coordinate system; the vertex of a polar angle. (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1400)[12]

Of these nine definitions, slightly more than half specify that poles are located at either of the two ends of an axis separating what is located at the end of those extremities. In comparison, in international relations

theory discussions of metaphorical poles almost always indicate the potential for the existence of multiple polar locations. For example, David Wilkinson (1999, 142) identifies several polar configurations "ordered as to increasing centralization": "nonpolarity, multipolarity, tripolarity, bipolarity, nonhegemonic unipolarity, hegemony, and universal state/universal empire." Wilkinson's typology, while perhaps not universally accepted, contains the polar arrangements most commonly found in theories of international relations, specifically, the three polar schemes of multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity. Thus, while oppositional polar extremity at two ends of an axis dominates the definition of "pole," in international relations theory "pole" is used more often metaphorically with reference to images borrowed from physics, biology, and mathematics.

Included in this metaphorical imagery is an unmistakable spatial component, with power situated metaphorically at poles located in time and space. Obviously, metaphorical polar "location" is not the same thing as geographic location of international political actors. For example, during the Cold War the "bipolar" distribution of power between "East" and "West" did not overlap perfectly with the geographic location of the states that were included in these blocs.[13] A simple geographic *description* of international relations would have little use for metaphorically conceived of polar locations. What the "poles" metaphor does then is serve as a way of imagining spatial relationships of power that supercede geography in conceptualizing relationships among actors. In this sense, it is an overtly theoretical concept that privileges certain causal propositions over others. Hence, the focus on the "bipolar" relationship that was said to characterize the Cold War corresponds in many ways to the dominant definition of "pole" involving oppositional locations at the extreme ends of an axis.

The ability of metaphors to suggest theoretical propositions is illustrated with the metaphor of "unipolarity," which, unlike its counterparts "multipolarity" and "bipolarity," has an alternate term in the lexicon of international relations theory that is more literal in its form. That alternate term is "hegemony." "Hegemony" is not a term that is used with great frequency by the average speaker of the English language. Although "unipolarity" isn't either, its structure—formed as it is by two root words of Latin and Greek origin—renders its meaning fairly easy to figure out to anyone with a rudimentary understanding of "uni-" and "pole" as core elements of languages with Latin and Greek roots.[14] "Hegemony," on the other hand, is a fairly specialized and arcane term, which makes it more literal than metaphorical in nature.[15] Its meaning, "the predominant influence of one state

over others" derives from the Greek *hēgeisthai*, "to lead" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 838). This meaning, which involves notions of influence and leadership, suggests certain theoretical propositions and causal mechanisms for relationships among international actors compared with "unipolar," which implies only a spatial location of power at a single node.

Why then regarding "unipolarity" and "hegemony" the choice of one versus another? For many scholars the terms are in fact synonymous with little difference of meaning between the two.[16] For others, however, the linguistic and metaphorical meanings of the two words do offer the possibility for distinct theoretical propositions. For example, David Wilkinson (1999, 143) suggests that one can conceive of "unipolarity without hegemony," which he defines as "a configuration where the preponderant *capability* of a single state is not matched by a predominant *influence*" (emphasis added). In this formulation unipolarity connotes the metaphorical image of power possessed in a single location but makes a distinction between that and the much more abstract idea of "influence" as conveyed by the more literal meanings contained in the word "hegemony." The theoretical utility of this distinction is then to have two separate sets of propositions, one about the distribution of capabilities (metaphorically expressed such as it is) and the relative role of influence or leadership defined in whatever ways can be usefully measured. Both elements pose theoretical challenges, one associated with translating a metaphor into a theoretically useful category, the other associated with identifying a concept in a reasonably falsifiable and non-tautological way.

## "Hard" and "Soft" Power

With any discussion of power comes some explicit or implicit addressing of how power can be defined and how it operates in the realm of international relations. In recent years one of the more common assessments of power has been in terms of "hard" and "soft" power. Whatever power may be, and however it may be measured, "hard" and "soft" are metaphorical ways of articulating the qualities of power as force, which is the physical property associated with power. The *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies over twenty meanings for the word "hard" in the word's use as an adjective. The definitions for hard range from "consistency of matter," to "not easy to wear out or cause to give way," to "capable of great physical endurance and exertion," to "firm, steadfast, unyielding," and "severe, rigorous, violent" among the many meanings of the term (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

As applied to power in the realm of international security, then, the metaphorical expression "hard" is meant to convey an intangible quality that can find expression in concrete form. It also implies that force is being exerted with an intent to use the potential of harm to convince an international actor to behave in a certain way.

The word "soft" is equally as multi-meaning as "hard" in its use in the English language with over 30 definitions as an adjective listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary,* including "characterized by ease and quiet enjoyment," "causing or involving little or no discomfort, hardship, or suffering," "involving little or no exertion or effort," "not loud, harsh, or rough," and "gentle, gradual" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). As applied to power in the realm of international security, then, the metaphorical expression "soft" is meant to convey an intangible quality that can find expression in concrete form. It also implies that influence is being exerted in an indirect way with an intent to use the potency of persuasion, as opposed to the potential to do harm, to convince an international actor to behave in a certain way.

The terms "hard power" and "soft power" were coined by Joseph Nye in a 1990 article "Soft Power" in the journal *Foreign Policy*.[17] Nye (1990b, 166) defines these terms in the context of a discussion of the changing nature of power in international affairs:

> A state may achieve the outcomes it prefers in world politics because other states want to follow it or have agreed to a situation that produces such effects. In this sense, it is just as important to set the agenda and structure the situations in world politics as to get others to change in particular cases. This second aspect of power—which occurs when one country gets another country to *want* what it wants—might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of *ordering* others to do what it wants. (emphasis in the original)

Among the items of note in this passage is that both "soft" and "hard" power as metaphors can be substituted with other terms. Specifically, Nye equates "soft" power with what he calls "co-optive" power while "hard" power is made synonymous with what Nye labels "command" power. That "soft power" and "hard power" have entered the lexicon of international relations terminology as opposed to "co-optive power" and "command power" is a testament to both Nye's ability to turn a phrase that has appeal among scholars and the nature of evocative metaphors (such as "soft" and "hard"), which appeal to the imagination as opposed to somewhat more technical phraseology

such as that embodied in terms such as "co-optive" and "command" power.[18]

While "hard power" is as metaphorical as "soft power," it is the latter that has received more attention from scholars than the former (and serves as the title of Nye's 1990 *Foreign Policy* piece) and therefore there is more of interest to take from the metaphor than there is in the "hard power" trope.[19] As noted, in Nye's formulation "soft power" is equated with what he calls "co-optive power." Since the two terms are treated synonymously, presumably either term would suit Nye's purpose of analyzing changes in state influence in the post–Cold War world. "Co-optive power," however, is of more restricted use since it implies only a limited range of state influence, namely, the ability of states to co-opt other states to adopt the same or similar policy preferences (in the sense that one of the definitions of "co-opt" in the dictionary is to "win over," which is likely what Nye means). By contrast, "soft power" relies on metaphorical imagery associated with the nature of something "soft." That "soft power" is a metaphor is borne out by the fact that the term encompasses foreign policy strategies that go beyond mere "co-option." Among the "soft power resources" states have at their disposal are "cultural attraction, ideology, and international institutions" (Nye 1990b, 167). Traditional definitions of "power" largely entail those things such as "population, territory, natural resources, economic size, military forces, and political stability" that are included in Nye's definition of "hard power" (ibid., 154).

"Soft power," by contrast, is not a subset of power, but rather, a metaphor for *other things,* specifically, cultural attraction, ideology, and international institutions. Rather than expanding the definition of power in a way that would make "hard" and "soft" power comparable categories of a single concept (power), Nye uses "soft power" as a metaphor to refer to new sorts of influence that in some cases supplement and in other instances replace traditional aspects of power.[20] To further illustrate that "soft power" is a metaphorical expression denoting certain aspects of state influence typically not included in traditional definitions of power, Nye refers to metaphorical "spheres" of activity in which "soft power resources" can be used where "hard power" instruments are either inapplicable or non-fungible. Among these spheres are international trade, economics, environmental management, prosecution of transborder criminal activities, and prevention of the spread of diseases (ibid., 158–159, 164).

While there is nothing inherently wrong with modifying a concept such as power with metaphorical qualifiers such as "hard" and

"soft," Nye's discussion makes clear that what the terms "hard power" and "soft power" entail are two analytically distinct categories of foreign policy resources. As Nye admits, "hard power" and "soft power" involve different types of state action. "Hard power" entails one state "ordering" another what to do while "soft power" involves persuasion, or what Nye (166) describes occurring "when one country gets another country to *want* what it wants" (emphasis in the original). This is the distinction Nye makes between "co-opting" and "commanding" and which is a useful distinction to retain. Analytical categories, of course, can be difficult to discern. For example, scholars of terrorism have long debated whether terrorism should be considered a type of war, a variety of crime, or a separate category of its own. So a case could be made that "power" is a broad enough concept to be divided into "hard" and soft" varieties. Whether power can be seen as comprising these subtypes or if they are best kept analytically distinct as "co-option" or "command," the "hard" and "soft" labels are unmistakably metaphorical in their application in foreign policy analysis. Furthermore, once the "soft" metaphor was coined, it was not long before it was combined with another metaphor in the study of international relations, the metaphorical "balance of power," to create an entirely new category of international behavior, "soft balancing," which T. V. Paul (2004, 3) defines as involving "tacit balancing short of formal alliances," occurring "when states generally develop ententes or limited security understandings with one another to balance a potentially threatening state or a rising power."[21]

This is not to say that the metaphors of "hard" and "soft" power needlessly add metaphorical thinking to conceptualizations of power that are otherwise straightforward in their meaning. Even "strong" and "weak" to describe states are to some extent metaphorical concepts. Both "strong" and "weak" are defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as embodying physical or material qualities. "Strong" is defined primarily as "physically powerful" while "weak" is defined as applied "of a material thing: Pliant, flexible, readily bending" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). States and other international actors are only metaphorically strong or weak inasmuch as scholars typically include more than physical or material qualities when they make reference to the strength or weakness of these actors. Hence, when it comes to power, the use of metaphors to conceptualize the concept is perhaps inevitable.

What then are the implications for "hard" and "soft" powers as metaphors? Typically people associate "hard" with things that are harsh and unyielding. It is not surprising that a common aphorism

to illustrate being in a predicament is the metaphorical dilemma of being caught between a rock and a hard place. This is not a very comfortable place to be. Presumably an international actor that is on the receiving end of "hard" power is thought to be in a predicament that it would rather avoid. So the implication of using "hard" to mean military power is that there is some suffering associated with being on the receiving end of said hard power. Yet is that always the way it is? On many occasions military instruments are used to liberate individuals from oppression. For example, states can use military intervention to disrupt a civil war, remove an oppressive regime from office, or protect civilian populations in various peacekeeping operations. While small numbers of people such as dictators or warlords might resent the use of military intervention, larger groups of civilians benefit from these types of actions. To them the power that was involved in alleviating their suffering was not metaphorically "hard" but rather more benign in its metaphorical sensations.

Likewise, scholars use the metaphor of "soft" power to imply that the means involved are more gentle and yielding in their application. Scholars likely would favor the use of "soft" power instruments such as foreign aid, economic assistance, and cultural exchanges to bring about desired ends. Yet just how "soft" are these means? Foreign aid often comes with metaphorical strings attached designed to foster certain objectives possessed by those who provide such aid. Economic assistance also frequently is tied to requirements for governments and actors receiving this aid to make painful economic adjustments. Cultural influence also could be associated either with ulterior (often economic) motives or have the unintended consequence of obliterating local customs. These often unnoticed yet very real implications of "soft" power can be shielded from scholars' eyes because the metaphor of "soft" relegates them to the margins when the outcomes of the application of soft power are examined.

More to the point, as Janice Mattern has suggested, the linguistic construction of attraction in world politics, often metaphorically framed as "soft" power, represents force nonetheless. Thus, in practice, linguistic acts of coercion that are presented as soft power are merely a continuation of hard power in verbal form: "Where attraction rests upon coercion the logic of a distinction between soft and hard forms of power becomes unsustainable. Certainly the form of coercion (and 'hard' power) to which attraction (and 'soft' power) is indebted is sociolinguistic rather than physical, but it is coercive nevertheless. In this way, soft power is not so soft after all" (Mattern 2005, 587). Just as policy makers have slyly used words of attraction to mask

coercive actions, scholars of international relations have relied on a linguistic frame—the metaphor of "soft" power—to make analytical distinctions that are belied by empirical evidence.

All of this begs the question, instead of using metaphors such as "hard power" and "soft power," why not simply theorize about the use of military influence (that which is referred to as "hard power") on the one hand and the use of influence involving economic, diplomatic, and cultural means (among other things) (that which is referred to as "soft power") on the other? This would make it clear that what is meant is certain types of influence that could be specified and measured (even if only crudely) rather than influence that is merely evocative of vague tactile sensations (i.e., hard and soft). Obviously scholars who examine "hard" and "soft" power aim to do exactly that and include the metaphors of hard and soft in their theoretical arsenal in the same way as do other scholars of international relations as well as scholars in other academic disciplines. So, the suggestion here as is true for the rest of this book is simply to understand how metaphors such as hard and soft have repercussions for what hypothetical propositions are posed and what analytical conclusions are drawn.

## "Great Powers" versus "Superpowers"

Power as a metaphorical concept also leads to the invention of metaphorical actors. For decades prior to the Cold War the standard term to describe states or empires that wielded large amounts of influence was "Great Powers." According to some sources, the modern use of the term "Great Powers" finds its origin in a letter sent by the British diplomat Lord Castlereagh in 1815 commenting on the deliberations of the Congress of Vienna (Webster 1921, 308), although the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the year 1735 as the first time the term was used in print in English in *A Dissertation Upon Parties* by Henry Bolingbroke (1735, 11).[22] In his comments, Bolingbroke refers to the efforts of the "great Powers" of Europe to entangle Great Britain in endeavors potentially harmful to the latter's interests. What is interesting here is that Bolingbroke refers to "Great" Britain, a name the nature of which is not in dispute, with the "other" great powers of Europe. Obviously, "Great Britain" is a proper name while in the term "great Powers" the word "great" is used as an adjective (along with the modifier "other") as a descriptive term. The name "Great Britain" originates with attempts made to unite England and Scotland around the time of Henry VIII and Edward VI and was solidified

during the rein of James I who, in 1604, was named "King of Great Britain" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). "Great Powers," by contrast, indicates Bolingbroke's effort to identify those countries in Europe that, through the possession of a certain amount of influence, are capable of exerting force as "great Powers" in a way that poses problems for Great Britain.

The word "great" is Germanic in origin, giving rise to the Old English *grēat,* meaning "thick, coarse" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 792), which gave rise to more modern uses meaning large or big. A "Great Power" is thus a state that is thought of metaphorically as "big." As applied to Great Britain, however, the word "great" might be more aptly understood as the adjective "greater," which refers to a city or other political unit and its outlying areas (e.g., "the greater Chicago metropolitan area"). Thus, the political intent of referring to James I as the King of "Great" Britain was to imply that England ruled over Scotland and all the other territories in its dominion. Metaphorically speaking, the term "Great Power" is meant to suggest that certain countries were able to exert influence regionally and over others. Thus, perhaps what Bolingbroke intended in his use of the term was to warn that "Great" Britain already had achieved control over those areas in which it had interests and would be damaged by entangling itself with "great" powers that had regional interests that butted up against those of greater Britain. A double metaphor is thus employed with an expanded "greater" power (Great Britain) juxtaposed with "large" or "big" states in the form of the other European Great Powers.

The term "superpower," of course, is of much more recent pedigree than "Great Power." The *Oxford English Dictionary* finds the first written use of this expression in a 1930 article in *The Economist* although the phrase did not come into use to describe what eventually would be identified as the United States and the Soviet Union until William Fox used the term in the title of his 1944 book *The Super-Powers.*[23] Metaphorically, the prefix "super-" comes to the English language from the Latin *super,* meaning "over" or "above" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1801). This provides the context for Fox's definition of "super-power," which he applied to world powers that have interests in more than one theater of conflict (Fox 1944, 20). That is to say, the interests of the "super-powers" extend metaphorically "over" or "above" just one geographic region. Seen in this way, the term "superpower" as it has come to be used is fundamentally metaphorical since it takes a spatial concept and applies it to the defining characteristics of certain states. Indeed, many states have interests

that extend beyond a single theater and yet do not qualify as "superpowers." The metaphorical concept of "super" powers (with interests over or above geographic regions) is more commonly associated with the weapons characteristics of particular states, specifically, those that extend a metaphorical nuclear "umbrella."

A question that might be asked is why the metaphorical term "Great Power" was jettisoned in the nuclear age for the substitute metaphor of "superpower." Perhaps, as linguists argue, Fox's purpose in *The Super-Powers* was to employ a metaphor for the purpose of generating new meaning(s). After all, it was the Great Power system that many scholars argued either led directly to the two world wars or caused these wars on the basis of its failure. In either case, the world wars were seen as a rupture with the past and thus the term "Great Power" could not appropriately be applied to whatever form of influential states took their place. As noted, "Great Power" as a metaphor derives from the meaning of large or big. By contrast, the metaphorical significance of the term "superpower" lies in the spatial sense of presiding over or above something. "Large" or "big" states had proven ineffectual at maintaining order and stability in world affairs, so perhaps that role would now have to lie in states that could extend their influence "over" or "above" others through the use of ballistic missile delivery systems. Fox's goal in establishing a new nomenclature has worked, and today scholars associate Great Powers with one system of international relations and diplomacy while they associate superpowers with a qualitatively distinct international system.

## Critical Reexaminations of Power and What International Relations is "About"

What is meant by "power" in international relations theory has been debated by legions of scholars. Given the centrality of power in many theories of international relations, one would think that the constituent elements of power would be unambiguous, or at least unambiguously apparent to scholars who make such determinations. As most scholars of international relations know, however, scholars of IR neither agree on a universal definition of power, nor on what measurable components constitute any one instance of power. There is not sufficient space in this book to explore all of these perspectives nor is it necessary for analyzing how the term operates metaphorically in IR theory. Rather, certain critical analyses of power are notable for their reframing of power as a metaphor in theoretical discussions. One such noteworthy reformulation of power is offered by Michael Barnett and

Raymond Duvall in their 2005 article "Power in International Politics." In their essay Barnett and Duvall (2005, 39) define power as follows: "Power is the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate." What is intriguing about this definition is the use of the word "production" to define the operations of power. In many if not most treatments in international relations theory, definitions of power follow the dictionary in terms of defining power in the form of measurable attributes characterized by strength or force. For Barnett and Duvall, power is not one or more set of attributes but a process, that is, "production." This is interesting from a metaphorical point of view. "Production" is a noun relating to the act of "producing" with the verb "produce" defined as "to bring forth; yield; to create by physical or mental effort; to manufacture; to cause to occur or exist" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1445). Metaphorically speaking, for Barnett and Duvall power implies not a thing that causes something to occur but the act of causation itself.

This is a rather large departure from traditional formulations of power and one that has significant theoretical consequences. When power is wielded as a thing attention is focused on the qualities and attributes of that thing. Traditional notions of power, conceived of metaphorically as strength or force, focus the attention of scholars on what *qualifies* as strength or force. For example, traditional conceptions prompt debates over whether power should include things such as geography, economic output, size of a country's population, et cetera, and how these things should be measured. In Barnett and Duvall's formulation power is more a process than an object. Hence, examination is focused on aspects of that process. For example, Barnett and Duvall (47–49) argue that the effects of power can be to varying degrees direct or diffuse. "Direct" and "diffuse" themselves are spatial metaphors that emphasize the scope of the productive qualities of power as opposed to the metaphorical quantities of power that follow from treating power as strength or force. Traditional conceptions of power as metaphorical strength or force also imply an instrumental causality by which actors wielding power can affect the actions of actors that are the objects of that power. By contrast, Barnett and Duvall's metaphorical formulation of power as a process of production allows for both instrumental causality and constitutive causation, in which actors are produced by power as opposed to being affected by it. Finally, power as metaphorical strength or force suggests purposeful agency by those wielding power while Barnett and Duvall's treatment of power as a productive process does not imply (although

it does not necessarily exclude) agents' volition in how power carries out its effects.

While obviously not a universally agreed upon nor definitive statement on critical reexaminations of power, Barnett and Duvall's treatment of power is instructive for how power can be reconceptualized by recasting its metaphorical framing. Conceived of metaphorically as a "thing," power in traditional approaches is theorized as something that can be quantified and measured. This poses problems for how to quantify and measure what is in essence an abstract concept, which then often leads to theories of power that are *ex post facto* and nonfalsifiable in nature. Power seen metaphorically as a thing also spawns secondary metaphors to describe power, such as those that see power metaphorically as "hard" or "soft." By contrast, Barnett and Duvall's treatment of power as a process, while no less metaphorical (and therefore subject to the same analytical problems that all theories based on metaphors face), emphasizes the practice of international relations of which power is one component. Through process tracing power can then be situated within a range of actions that constitute international relations.

This opens up possibilities for theorizing international relations and, as hinted at in the introduction to this chapter, for narratives about what international relations is "about." Before the stories of international relations can be told, there must be something at stake. Traditionally, the greatest interest in international relations has been directed at "power" as the primary force that motivates states and other international actors. However, given the multiple ways in which power can be constructed, metaphors are essential to give the concept shape. The malleability of the concept of power and the multiple metaphorical ways in which it can be conceived provide an opportunity to reframe the central concerns of international relations and thus change the stakes of the game. "Power" can still serve as the defining feature of relations among international actors, but changing the metaphors by which power is imagined can alter notions of what international relations is "about."

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# Chapter 6

# Metaphors of International Security

The previous chapter highlights the central issue defining what international relations is "about." In the narrative of world affairs, the story is about "power" as it is metaphorically conceived. Once this central concern is established, metaphors continue in the narrative of how issues of "power" translate into efforts to protect, acquire, and expand power, namely, policies of international security. Here too, metaphors are integral to the story. By international "security," generally speaking, what scholars of international relations mean are the causes and nature of armed conflict as well as the promotion and maintenance of peace. In his book *Security Metaphors,* Paul Chilton observes that metaphors inevitably frame "international security" in the sense that "security" is etymologically rooted in the word "secure" or, more to the point, "to secure." In and of itself armed conflict is merely a state in which countries can find themselves. To attach the concept of being "secure" is to denote an undesirable quality to war. War may very well be undesirable under certain conditions, but it can also be desirable if it eradicates an even worse situation (e.g., injustice).

The term international "security" thus carries with it a normative judgment in the study of international affairs.[1] As Chilton (1996, 77, n. 25) notes: "the etymology of *secure* and *security* only partially accounts for the current semantics of the terms. The English words . . . derive from the Latin words *se* (without) and *cura* (care, concern or anxiety) . . . The psychological meaning 'without anxiety' is only part of the present conceptual cluster, and all meanings have a positive valuation" (italics in the original). As a political tool, then,

Chilton argues that the metaphor of international security is often given a positive value, something that states can have more or less of (with more obviously being preferable). Whether or not scholars accede to this logic is a matter of debate, but the acceptance of the term in academic discourse indicates to a certain extent that scholars share with political leaders the notion that security involves the desirable quality of being "secure."[2]

In short, the concept of international security encapsulates metaphorical images of safety, stability, and maintenance of the container-like integrity of the state. Theories of international security are premised on these metaphorical images. They take the contained state as a major assumption and hypothesize foreign policy strategies of states aimed at defending the secure state at a minimum and enhancing safety and stability through military strategies. Additional metaphors are deployed both by state leaders to advance security as well as by scholars attempting to theorize and explain state action.

## "High" and "Low" Politics

One of the most frequently invoked metaphors in the study of international security is the spatial metaphor of "high" and "low" politics, with "high" politics typically referring to matters of security and defense and "low" politics" largely applying to the remaining areas of international relations but with an emphasis on economics and trade. "High" and "low" are metaphorical ways of imagining a wide range of interactions as well as the abstract concepts of security and economics they represent. International security could be referred to in any number of metaphorical ways and international economics could be imagined with any number of metaphorical images, yet for whatever reason "high" and "low" have stuck. The question then arises, what do these spatial metaphors mean for theorizing in this realm? The most straightforward answer to this question is that by imagining international security as "high" politics and international economics as "low" politics scholars create the implicit assumption that the former is "above" the latter in terms of importance.[3] This implicit assumption of significance is elaborated and made explicit by scholars who theorize about how international actors give priority to their security before preoccupying themselves with economic matters.

The main complicating element of this formulation is the way that these metaphors construct the dubious assumption that international actors give priority to matters of international security over international economics. This assumption, like all theoretical assumptions,

then becomes the basis for proposing hypotheses, conducting experiments, and deriving theoretical propositions about international political economy. The metaphorical backseat that economics takes to security creates the sort of "problem" that must be "solved" that is found in many other areas of international relations theory when metaphors construct assumptions about something that is problematic for international actors. Scholars devote a great deal of time and energy trying to figure out how and why international actors can devote more resources to pursuits that make productive use of economic resources and do not perpetuate a situation in which military security exhausts the economic resources that actors have at their disposal. The "high" and "low" politics metaphors create the set of assumptions around which conclusions about actors' priorities are derived.

To avoid these complications one would have to imagine alternate possibilities for international security and economics that differ from the metaphors of "high" and "low" politics. In many respects this is an easier endeavor than finding alternate metaphors in many other areas of international relations theory. The reason for this is that which is represented metaphorically by "high" and "low" politics can be said quite easily and in a straightforward fashion by simply using the terms "international security" and "international economics." Many concepts that are discussed metaphorically in international relations theory are done so because to represent these concepts one must do so in rather detailed and verbose language. For example, what is meant metaphorically by the "structure" of the international system is a series of forces and influences that, if stated literally, would require several sentences or even paragraphs to outline. It is far easier to use the metaphorical term of "structure." It is simply a matter of convenience and linguistic efficiency.

"High" and "low" politics, by contrast, do not add much in the way to linguistic economy that "international security" and "international economics" already possess. In this particular instance there is not much value added to using metaphors such as "high" and "low" politics than the evocative imagery they suggest. However, in this case, that evocative imagery also suggests certain assumptions about international relations that are dubious from the start. The advantage of using the more literal and straightforward terms "international security" and "international economics" is that they succinctly capture that which is intended without adding much theoretical baggage that can lead scholars to derive theoretical propositions that may very well be misleading if not wrong.

## Of Allies and Other Related Metaphorical Terms

Among those strategies of state security are efforts to cultivate and foster alliances, satellites, proxies, and patron–client state relationships. This opens up interesting questions about the metaphorical origins, nature, and use of these terms. There are, of course, any number of ways of defining and describing relations between and among states that one or more of these states find beneficial. However, since the concept of a relationship of any kind is inherently abstract (although the benefits that accrue from that relationship may be tangible) metaphors almost inevitably are required to put those relationships in context. For example, it might be tempting to offer a simple definition of a relationship between two states in which both find benefits as a "friendly" one, yet obviously "friendly" in this context is a metaphor inasmuch as it borrows the concept of friendship from the interpersonal realm and grafts it onto the world of geopolitics. What follows below is a consideration of some terms that have been applied in the context of international security with an eye toward uncovering their metaphorical origins, nature, and significance.

The history of the word "allies" is an interesting one and gives insight into its metaphorical usage in the practice and study of international relations. The modern English verb "ally" (from which the noun is derived) is rooted in the Latin word *alligāre,* which means "to bind to" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 50). It is interesting to note that this is the same Latin root from which the word "alloy" emerged as well as "league," "rely," and "oblige."[4] The etymology of these latter words is fascinating inasmuch as an "alliance" often is understood as a "league" of states in which states "rely" on each other for mutual defense and are "obliged" to aid each other militarily in times of attack. That each of these terms is derived from the Latin word meaning "to bind to" gives insight into the metaphorical meanings of these concepts. The words "ally" and "alliance" have been around, of course, for hundreds of years in the English language to define relationships between states, so there is no suggestion being made here that these words themselves dictate how states engaged in alliances will act toward each other. Rather, what is of note is the metaphorical roots of these terms and how they focus the mind on what expectations not only states have of each other but what predictions scholars make when alliances come into play.

Alliances in modern international relations are understood to be binding institutions in which members of the alliance have an obligation to provide mutual defense for each other. For this reason,

states rely on each other in an alliance as a form of interdependence. What expectations states in an alliance have to each other flows from the meanings they associate with the language of alliances. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980a, 1980b) assert (and as has been accepted by most scholars of metaphors), metaphors generate expectations since they are seen by individuals as providing meanings to situations in need of clarification. Metaphors are a reflection of the way the brain works, which is to make cognitive connections among categories and patterns. As metaphors, then, the terms "ally" and "alliance" create powerful expectations among states engaged in an alliance that the binding quality of the organization has tangible implications. For scholars too, the metaphorical language of alliances is not just a linguistic convenience but a basis on which hypotheses are posed and theoretical predictions are made. Thus, a whole literature on the study of alliances is part of the canon of the study of international relations, and the binding quality of alliances is an integral part of that literature.

One of the more vivid metaphorical illustrations of the "binding" aspect of alliances is the image of "chain gangs" advanced in an essay by Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder. In their 1990 article Christensen and Snyder suggest that alliances can have the effect of binding states to each other as if they were inmates bound to each other on a metaphorical chain gang.[5] They argue that in some cases countries can be drawn into war because of these binding alliances much in the way that a group of prisoners chained to others might get pulled into a predicament not of their own making:

> In multipolarity, the approximate equality of alliance partners leads to a high degree of security interdependence within an alliance. Given the anarchic setting and this relative equality, each state feels its own security integrally intertwined with the security of its alliance partners. As a result, any nation that marches to war inexorably drags its alliance partners with it. No state can restrain a reckless ally by threatening to sit out the conflict, since the demise of its reckless ally would decisively cripple its own security. (Christensen and Snyder 1990, 140)

While this metaphor is provocative to say the least, it reinforces the inadvertent implications that the term "alliances" already carries because of its own metaphorical roots in the Latin word for "to bind to." It also raises any number of questions about metaphors chosen in the study of international security. For example, why is it more apt to illustrate the concept of linked actors with chain gang workers than it is with, say, mountain climbers or railway cars linked

together to form a train? Prisoners on chain gangs are bound to each other by fetters that virtually trap them, thereby rendering them helpless to each others' actions. Yet military allies are led by individuals who, despite "binding" treaties, possess the ability to *choose* whether to wage war or not. This choice is not reflected in the chain gang metaphor. So to some extent the authors of the metaphor have created a problem where before it there was none. In addition, in choosing the chain gang metaphor, Christensen and Snyder imply that states are motivated in a similar fashion as criminal individuals. If the notion of linked actors were illustrated with mountain climbers or railway cars, for instance, one would not attribute sinister motives to those actors. However, by choosing the metaphor of the chain gang, the authors imply, whether consciously or not, that states are as malevolently motivated as hardened criminals sentenced to hard labor. Since states are implied by the metaphor to share the same motives as chain gang convicts, the range of actions they are hypothesized to undertake will tend to be limited to those that are mistrustful or conflictual in nature. If Christensen and Snyder had chosen the mountain climber metaphor instead, perhaps their hypotheses about ally behavior would have focused more on cooperative actions than on conflictual ones. However, by examining the etymology of the word "ally" in its Latin roots, it become understandable that in subsequent metaphorical renderings alliances are seen as a creature of the "binding" properties that also suggest a loss of choice and the element of "obligation."

Related to alliance metaphors are the metaphors that exist in the realm of influence and dependence in international security that is, situations in which countries recognized with a large amount of power have allies of lesser power in their alliance system. These latter countries often are referred to metaphorically as "satellite states." As is true for any metaphor, often there are other terms that could be employed to convey the same meaning. So often questions about why a particular metaphor is chosen yield interesting observations about the linguistic impact of the chosen metaphor. In the case of the relationship that is captured with the metaphor of "satellite states," any number of other terms might have been brought to bear on this concept. Thus, for example, so-called satellite states might have been referred to as "outlying states," states in the "orbit" of other countries, or "captive" countries (the latter of these terms is suggested as a synonym for satellite states in *Roget's Thesaurus,* 87).[6] No doubt during the Cold War and the space age the term "satellite state" seemed perfectly apt as a metaphor to convey the meaning of a state in another state's orbit given the ubiquity of language that related to

the emergent field of space exploration. Countries deemed "satellite state" might even enjoy a privileged status since many of them enjoyed the protection afforded by the metaphorical nuclear "umbrella."

Similarly situated to "satellite" states are metaphorical "proxy" states. It might be tempting to refer to countries in a subordinate position to others using this term, especially where larger global conflicts are concerned. The *American Heritage Dictionary* (1459) defines "proxy" in a seemingly straightforward way as a "person authorized to act for another; an agent or a substitute." This would seem to apply in an uncomplicated fashion to states often referred to as "proxies" since they substitute for larger states in regional disputes (e.g., in the case of "proxy" states acting on behalf of the superpowers during the Cold War). However, upon closer examination, as applied to international relations the term "proxy" is typically used in a metaphorical sense. That is to say, many of the states involved in so-called proxy conflicts often had disputes with each other that were entirely independent of whatever use the superpowers might have had for these states in terms of their own interests. To take just one example, Ethiopia and Somalia had long-standing border disputes that predated the Cold War. It is entirely possible that these two countries would have engaged in armed conflict with each other with or without the presence of the Cold War superpowers. Indeed, the influence of the United States and the Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa might actually have had the effect of dampening what might have otherwise turned into a protracted shooting war. This is entirely speculation, of course. But the point here is that what is depicted as a "proxy conflict" is in fact a linguistic expression for a preexisting dispute in which the superpowers had an interest. Of course, there were many conflicts waged during the Cold War in which the regional participants were in fact acting as substitutes for what might otherwise have been a direct confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The linguistic economy of using a catch-all metaphorical term such as "proxy," however, complicates the process of discerning empirically which conflicts truly were a function exclusively of the Cold War and which were incorporated into the Cold War but had an inherent existence independent of the larger Cold War dispute.

Relationships of influence and dependence are also found in the terminology of "patron" and "client" states. The metaphorical roots of the phrase "patron–client" state relations are fairly obvious. The English word "patron" comes directly from the well-known Latin root *pater* meaning "father" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1328). "Client" is a bit less obvious, deriving from the Latin *cliēns* meaning

"dependent" or "follower" (ibid., 356).[7] We have here, then, the metaphorical roots of the concept of state dependency in the area of security, namely, a relationship that is imagined between a paternal parent and his dependent. This is a powerful image when grafted onto international security. The concept of patronage in politics in many ways is designed to build on the notion of an unequal relationship of power between one actor in a paternal position and another actor who is dependent on the benefits that accrue from subordinating him or herself to the patron. In international relations, patron states are imagined as having some sort of leverage over client states, the latter of which have a limited range of options. What is typically lost in this picture are the instruments of influence that seemingly subordinate client states have in their relationship with so-called patron states. Unlike the relationship between father and child, relations between sovereign states reflect a range of tools that both sides bring to the table to advance their own interests. Even in the most unequal relationships, neither side has either all the influence or is completely subservient. The metaphor of patron and client, however, imputes a singular direction of influence in the relationship thus obscuring the nuances that can often exist.

Another interesting image of security relationships is evident in the "sphere of influence" metaphor, which is noteworthy for its use of a spatial metaphor, of which there are many in international relations theory. In this case, the spatial metaphor in question utilizes geometry as an image in its harnessing of the visual cue of spheres. Spherical objects typically are globular in shape in which "all points [of the sphere] are equidistant from a fixed point" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1734). When thinking of a sphere people tend to associate the limits of the sphere extending to the edges of a circular shaped arc. This image makes a certain amount of sense in the nuclear age in which the notion of superpowers' spheres of influence were defined by the range of intercontinental ballistic missiles that could deliver nuclear warheads to a fixed range commonly mapped out in a circular manner on maps of the world. Thus, the "sphere of influence" metaphor carries with it the connotation of nuclear weapons strategy. While this is the image suggested by the metaphor, the reality of the Cold War was that the influence of superpower over ally states reflected political boundaries drawn on the map that were decidedly not circular in pattern. Rather, they would reflect the ragged lines of demarcation on which state boundaries are laid out. While it never escaped politicians or scholars alike that "spheres of interest" are metaphorical representations of political relationships, the metaphor is

nonetheless notable for the way that it focuses the mind on identifiable and clearly delineated geometric if not geographic lines of international alliance patterns in the nuclear age. What to call international relations during the nuclear age also recalls a metaphor, in this case the double metaphor of the Cold War.

## The Cold War Double Metaphor

Although this book is focused on metaphors in international relations theory as opposed to metaphors in applied foreign policy, some foreign policy metaphors have so worked their way into general discourse and have become reified to such a degree that they constitute the basic vocabulary of international relations theory. Such is the case with the term "Cold War," which is in fact a double metaphor since both elements in the metaphor—"Cold" and "War"—represent metaphorical images. The term "cold war" was popularized by U.S. presidential advisor Bernard Baruch in April 1947 in a speech to the South Carolina legislature, although according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the phrase had appeared first in 1945 in an essay by George Orwell, and the Spanish expression *la guerra fría* (the cold war) appeared in the thirteenth century to describe the uneasy coexistence between Christendom and the Islamic world.[8] Baruch intended the term to serve as a rhetorical device in the emerging Western effort to confront the presumed expansionary tendencies of the Soviet Union.[9] Like its metaphorical cousins "Iron Curtain" (popularized but not originated by Winston Churchill) and "containment" (a term associated with the writings of George Kennan) "cold war" as a linguistic construction was embraced in the policy world as a succinct means of summing up the nature of studied yet subdued hostility that existed between the West and the Soviet-led communist world. Like other metaphors used by politicians to support their policy actions, the "cold war" image might very well had been relegated to political rhetoric. Instead, the term was embraced by those who reported on and analyzed foreign policy in the post–World War II era including academic scholars. This is not to say that if academics had chosen not to use the metaphor it would have fallen into disuse, but rather, as a framing device for imagining the abstractions of postwar international relations the term "cold war" has become as much a part of academic discourse as it is a creature of the political realm.

The "cold" element in the "Cold War" metaphor is interesting in the sense that it represents a rare but obvious use of the metaphor of temperature in international relations theory. As a contrast to

"cold wars," occasionally armed conflicts are referred to as "hot" wars, although in many ways that term has no meaning except to draw a distinction between wars in which actual military force is used and "the Cold War" in which direct military confrontation between the West and the communist world was limited to indirect conflicts and never escalated to an engagement between the United States and its NATO allies and the Soviet Union and its allies in the Warsaw Pact. While the term "hot war" is occasionally found to indicate a contrast with the "Cold War," it is not common in the theoretical literature.

Before the Cold War it likely never would occur to military theorists that a distinction would have to be drawn between "cold" and "hot" wars. For most scholars of military affairs the point at which hostilities rose to the level of war was a definitional issue largely resolved by Clausewitz in *On War*. Clausewitz famously declared war to be an extension of politics by other means. While politics is practiced on a continuum at one point of which is war, Clausewitz is clear that war is a thing-in-itself, comprising organized armed force brought to bear by one political entity against another. The uniqueness of war is described by Clausewitz in terms of war's internal dynamics, comprising identifiable combatants using organized military force for a political objective. Clausewitz made no distinction between "hot" and "cold" wars. On the contrary, what contemporary scholars might describe as a "cold" war was for Clausewitz just one of the political steps states might take on their way to unambiguously declared war with no qualifications as to its metaphorical temperature.

The "war" half of "Cold War" is also metaphorical in that the events that comprised the Cold War were not literally acts of war as the term "war" typically is conceived. Clausewitz (1968, 101) defines "war" as "an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will." The events of the Cold War do not meet this definition unless the term "violence" itself is understood metaphorically. In fact, the word "war" often is used metaphorically although this might necessarily be obvious from the intent of those who utter the term. In recent years phrases such as the "war on poverty," the "war on cancer," the "war on drugs," and the "war against terrorism" have entered the vernacular.[10] As Philip Eubanks (2000) explains in his book-length essay, an entire vocabulary of commerce revolves around the metaphor of "Trade is War" (e.g., the expressions "trade war" and "economic warfare" are metaphorical). In policy areas, when politicians speak of the "war on poverty," for example, they obviously do not mean attacking an enemy with organized military force with the aim to achieve a political end. Rather, they are using the word "war"

as a rhetorical device (a metaphor) to emphasize the degree of the seriousness by which an issue or problem is being addressed. Franke Wilmer (2003, 221) writes: "War increasingly appears as a metaphor for policies aimed at solving social problems by 'defeating' them, such as the 'War on Poverty,' or the 'War on Drugs.' More recently, a literal war has been waged on a conceptual non-state actor, 'terrorism.' Wars on poverty and drugs may be understood as metaphors for using government resources to 'defeat' a problem through public policy, or to make the problem go away entirely." Most people are aware, of course, that there is a difference between military war fought for political purposes and "wars" waged against a medical scourge such as cancer, and in many ways the word "war" is a "dead metaphor" in its nonmilitary sense in that it has taken on a new meaning as any large organized effort against a perceived ill. Like other reified metaphors "war," as applied in the nonmilitary sense, means something different than its source domain and people are not necessarily confused that the "war on drugs," for example is waged in a similar fashion than a military conflict such as, say, World War I.

Still, the metaphorical use of war and its traditional use in a military context can create interesting juxtapositions that reveal how the metaphorical remnants of the word "war" are still in evidence in nonmilitary uses. For instance, in the aforementioned "war on drugs," there is in fact a political element in the motivations for said war, and the war has been fought in many countries using military personnel and weapons. The "war on terrorism" (as popularized by politicians in the United States) is especially ironic since scholars frequently make a distinction between the application of force that is commonly associated with wars and that which is typically employed using terrorist tactics. In recent years scholars have endeavored to define terrorism in ways that make it a meaningful category in the study of violent conflict. Part of this effort has included a debate on whether terrorism qualifies as a form of crime, a variant of military engagement, or a category unique to itself. Scholars have not reached agreement on this matter. However, the phrase "war on terrorism" would seem to suggest that proponents of this way of framing the issue see war either metaphorically (as in the war on poverty or the war on cancer) or as a form of exercising force that is engaged in a conflict with a different type of strategy that brings force to bear in that conflict.[11] In any case, to the extent that words have meaning, the phrase "war on terrorism" is crafted in such a way to emphasize that the conflict has risen to such a level that terms of mere political debate and diplomacy no longer apply.[12]

On the basis of this discussion the meaning of the term "cold war" takes on new life. For many scholars (see, e.g., Gaddis 1987) one of the most remarkable and ironic aspects of the Cold War was its relative peace and stability. What these scholars are referring to is the lack of direct military engagement between the United States and its allies in the West and the Soviet Union and its allies in the East despite the decades of heated rhetoric between the two sides. Yet most informed people are aware that during the course of the Cold War military confrontations took place and proxy wars were waged by allies of the superpowers in various places around the world, and wars of liberation against colonial powers took place on an ongoing basis from the end of World War II to the end of the Cold War. More than a small number of these proxy wars and wars of colonial liberation were in many ways a function of the Cold War and would not have occurred in the time, manner, and place that they did if it were not for the Cold War, if they would have happened at all. Thus, one reason scholars marvel at the relative tranquility of the Cold War is that, as a metaphor, the phrase "cold war" focused scholarly minds on the absence of conflict that occurred during the period from 1945 to 1991 rather than on the ongoing military conflicts that took place in European colonies as well as those regions in which the superpowers supported local allies. This is not to say that scholars who analyze the lack of direct military engagement between the United States and the Soviet Union (and their respective NATO and Warsaw Pact allies) are either ignorant of other wars fought during the Cold War period or seek to minimize them. Rather, the observation being made here is that the phrase "cold war" prompts certain questions about stability and leaves as secondary other questions about regional hostilities that then shape the scholarly agenda.[13] If metaphors have the impact that linguists assert that they do, then another way of referring to the 1945–1991 period might have spurred scholars to ask questions in different ways and pursue their research agendas in different directions.

Another question that arises with the end of the Cold War is whether the metaphor of "the" Cold War is the same thing as the metaphor of "a" cold war. As discussed, "the" Cold War is a double metaphor that is meant to capture the nature of the relationship that prevailed from 1945 to 1991 between the Western and Eastern military alliances. That relationship was metaphorically "cold" in that it did not escalate into an armed conflict and it was metaphorically a "war" inasmuch as it did not qualify literally as such in the sense that war has been understood since Clausewitz. With the end of "the" Cold War scholars have speculated on what will follow in world

politics. One possibility is presented by Samuel Huntington (1996, 207), who postulates that included in possible future post–Cold War scenarios is a metaphorical "cold peace." Among other possible future scenarios are any number of metaphorical "cold wars" (lowercase, plural). In this usage "the" Cold War has taken on a literal sense as the actual state of affairs that prevailed during the period 1945–1991. That is to say, it has become a reified metaphor in that people associate "the" Cold War as a literal truth. Once the term has achieved the status of literal truth it can be put to use itself as a metaphor for *something else*. So a military confrontation that has not escalated into a direct armed conflict can be said to be, metaphorically, "a" cold war.

As a metaphor, "cold war" (not capitalized) has the potential to pose the same sorts of analytical problems as any other metaphor. With regard to the metaphor of "a" cold war, the most likely analytical pitfall is that naming a conflict a "cold war" will create a "problem" that scholars have to "solve." Any number of post–Cold War conflicts have been or could be problematized as "cold wars" by virtue of calling them as much. For example, the relationship between political Islam and the West has been described by some observers as a new "cold war."[14] Any number of regional dyadic rivalries such as the one between India and Pakistan could also be described metaphorically as "cold wars." In these sorts of disputes there could be a range of disagreements that are soluble. And yet this might be obscured if the larger dispute is defined metaphorically as a "cold war" since "the" Cold War, that is, that which serves as a metaphor for the dispute in question and therefore provides a pattern or template against which the dispute is measured, imputes to the dispute at hand an overall insoluble situation. As a metaphor, "cold war" implies a singularly coherent state-to-state standoff that may or may not accurately describe the situation at hand. The metaphor of "cold war" can also reify a conflict that in many ways has not been formally acknowledged in the way "the" Cold War was. Hence scholars can inadvertently linguistically create a situation that heretofore had not risen to the level that the term "cold war" implies.

## The "World's Policeman" Metaphor in International Security

As Paul Chilton and George Lakoff observe, law-and-order metaphors are common tropes in the rhetoric of foreign policymakers. Among the best known of these law-and-order metaphors is the concept of states acting in a "police" capacity to enforce order. Chilton and

Lakoff (1995, 42) write, "President Roosevelt and his advisors imagined that after World War II international society would be patrolled by 'four policemen', the United States, Britain, Russia and China (the 'Big Four')."[15] Since Roosevelt floated the idea of states working in a police capacity in maintaining international stability more references to the United States alone as the "world's policeman" have been made than can be cited here. Any country can assign to itself the "world's policeman" role, and thus the "policeman" metaphor is not necessarily limited to the United States. In recent years, however, it has been most closely associated with the U.S. role in the world.[16] Variants on the "world's policeman" metaphor include the "cowboy" and "sheriff" motifs as found, for example, in Jennifer Sterling-Folker's article "The Emperor Wore Cowboy Boots" in which she refers to the United States as the "sheriff on the prowl at high noon" (Sterling-Folker 2008, 326).

Once the "world's policeman" metaphor was set in place it has become fodder for theorizing about the nature of international "policing." The former American diplomat Richard Haass (1997, 6) makes a distinction between the concepts of the United States as a "policeman" and a "sheriff" as follows:

> It is important to distinguish between the United States as *sheriff* and the United States as *policeman*. The latter would suggest a greater degree of authority, a greater capacity to act alone, and a greater need to act consistently than is being advocated here. By contrast, a sheriff must understand his lack of clear authority in many instances, his need to work with others, and, above all, the need to be discriminating in where and how he engages. (Emphasis in the original)

Clearly Haass is using these terms as very loose metaphors inasmuch as for all intents and purposes in American law enforcement there is no difference between a policeman and a sheriff aside from the jurisdictions in which they operate. In many if not most states in the United States the office of Sheriff (including sheriffs and sheriff's deputies) acts as a police force in unincorporated portions of counties in which municipal police departments either do not exist or have no jurisdiction. In these areas, the sheriff's department *is* the police with all the authority, capacity, and need to act consistent with municipal police. Haass, who was born in Brooklyn, New York and likely has spent much of his life in large cities and with little experience in rural areas (where sheriffs and sheriff's deputies are common law enforcement personnel), relies on a metaphor of sheriff that is straight out of Hollywood

westerns. His image of the United States as sheriff conjures up caricatured visions of a lone lawman on the western frontier: "The notion of the United States as sheriff is one derived more from necessity than desirability. It would be much less demanding on Americans if it were not necessary for the sheriff to *saddle up* with any frequency" (Haass 6, emphasis added).[17] Haass is both a practitioner of foreign policy as well as a scholar who has held positions at the Brookings Institution and the Council on Foreign Relations. The influence he and others like him continue to exert on foreign policy from their think tank perches illustrates the hold that metaphors hatched in an academic setting can have on the policymaking world leading to what Paul Chilton and George Lakoff (1995) refer to as "foreign policy by metaphor." In this case, the metaphor is a fanciful image of frontier sheriffs worthy of *Gunsmoke*'s Marshall Matt Dillon and motion picture wild west matinees.

The point here is that, absent universally agreed upon definitions of international order, metaphors such as "world's policeman" serve as convenient frameworks around which theories of international security are built. As such, they invite interpretations that often reveal as much about the authors of these metaphors as the concepts they are meant to elucidate. In the case of the "world's policeman" metaphor, there is a tendency among scholars and policymakers alike to imbue the metaphor with their preferences for international security as well as their theoretical propositions. Policymakers who wish to see the United States (or any other country, for that matter) as the "world's policeman" deploy the metaphor in a way that sees international "law and order" at stake. For scholars skeptical of the United States' role as the "world's policeman," the metaphor is an example of how a country take it upon itself to establish certain rules of the game. What the metaphor ultimately means, then, is a matter of how it is employed for the purposes of setting forth theoretical propositions about the nature of international security itself.

## "Failed" States and State "Death"

Among the factors that either contribute to international security or are brought about by it is the phenomenon of "failed" states. As a metaphor, state "failure" brings to mind a sense of helplessness and loss. When an airplane's engine fails, especially on a single-engine aircraft, the consequences can be dire. For scholars, academics, and university faculty the term "failure" evokes those students who have exhibited a complete an utter inability to cope with college studies.

Applied to international security, then, the metaphor of "failed" states has a particularly alarming and ominous ring. What do scholars mean when they talk about "failed" states? Interestingly, no universally accepted definition is to be found in the literature on the topic. Gerald Helman and Steven Ratner (1992–1993, 3) define a "failed state" as one that is "utterly incapable of sustaining itself as a member of the international community." The Fund for Peace employs a measure including twelve indicators to arrive at a Failed State Index.[18] Robert Rotberg (2003) writes that "failed states are tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and contested bitterly by warring factions." For Noam Chomsky (2006, 1–2), among the traits of failed states is "their inability or unwillingness to protect their citizens from violence and perhaps even destruction." "State failure," a term used synonymously with "failed states," is seen by Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, and Ramesh Thakur (2005, 2) as "a continuum of circumstances afflicting states with weak institutions." These are among the many definitional treatments of the subject in question. In some cases the concept is considered self-explanatory to the extent that no definition of the term is given.[19]

Despite the lack of a universally accepted definition of "failed states," until recently the *metaphor* of state "failure" in international security has been notable for its lack of nuance. The metaphor of "failed" states utilizes imagery of utter and complete loss of governmental authority that is rarely found in international relations nor necessarily intended by scholars who use the term.[20] Among the difficulties with the state failure metaphor is that "failure" implies an absoluteness while what is meant by scholars instead exists along a spectrum. It is ironic that most scholars of international relations are teachers of the subject who assign grades on student assignments. The grade of "F" typically stands for "failure" and is a statement that a student did not fulfill the requirements of an assignment or course. It is a final adjudication and terminal judgment that, once assigned, usually is not alterable. By contrast, nonfailing grades range from "A+" to "D−" and represent a spectrum of levels of performance. Ironically this spectrum is more useful as a metaphor for state performance since few states "fail" in the absolute sense the same way a failing grade implies. So what are deemed metaphorically as "failed" states actually are perhaps better described as a range of states that, while perhaps compromised in terms of political legitimacy, governing authority, and territorial integrity still retain a level of sovereignty, legitimacy, authority, and political control that defies the absoluteness that the "failed state" metaphor imputes to them. Nonetheless, the invocation of a

situation of state "failure" is appealing to scholars because of the supposed threat to international security these countries pose.

The concern about failed states stems in part from the belief that failed states pose an inherent threat to international security. A contrary view to the belief that failed states are necessarily dangerous to international security is presented by Justin Logan and Christopher Preble (2006, 5–6) who point out that threats emanate not from state failure but from conditions that merely correlate with them: "The dangers that can arise from failed states are not the product of state failure itself; threats are the result of other conditions, such as the presence of terrorist cells or other malign actors within a failed state. It is not the 'failure' that threatens." Furthermore, Logan and Preble argue that the attention paid to the dangers presented by failed states is based on the premise that state sovereignty, which neglects alternate forms of political authority, is an outdated concept and that "failed" states can be fixed by various forms of nation building. Logan and Preble reject this premise, arguing instead that the problem is not that the state has "failed" in an absolute sense but that international security can be sufficiently safeguarded by countries defending themselves against the dangers that are posed by states that harbor security threats (e.g., terrorist cells). For Logan and Preble, the metaphor of state "failure" paints too broad a picture of what are really specific security threats.

One could disagree with Logan and Preble's criticism of theories of alternate forms of sovereignty and still agree with them that state failure is not necessarily an inherent threat to international security. That is, if one accepts (as Logan and Preble do not) that sovereignty is an outdated construct, one could still say that failed states are not necessarily a security threat if they represent the "success" of alternate forms of political authority that are capable of providing security, military or otherwise. The metaphor of "failed" states implies an existence that is undesirable (who likes to fail at anything?), but why can't political authority not constituting itself as state sovereignty be something other than "failing" at being a state? Perhaps "failed" states succeed as some other sort of non-state actor equally capable of providing security. Like many metaphors, the metaphor of "failure" masks what might otherwise not be seen as an inherent problem that needs to be solved.[21]

As a positive sign, some scholars who study "failed" states at least are aware of the shortcomings of the metaphor. In fact, there now seems to be agreement among scholars that the concept of state failure is imprecise and poorly defined. Stewart Patrick (2007, 646), for example, observes that among the shortcomings of the concept of the

"failed state" are "the absence of clear criteria to define 'failure'; a cavalier tendency to apply this single label to a heterogeneous group of countries; and inattention to the specific histories, trajectories, and regimes of the countries so designated." Promisingly, Patrick suggests that if the term "failed states" is to remain in common parlance, at least it should be situated within measures of relative state strength and weakness "rather than reflecting a binary, either/or condition" (ibid., 648). Likewise, Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, and Ramesh Thakur (2005) place state failure along a continuum, and Robert Rotberg (2004) places countries within a range of "strong," "weak," "failing," "failed," and "collapsed" states. It should be noted that "strength" and "weakness" are themselves problematic metaphors when applied to international relations and only become more so when made part of a mixed metaphor with state "failure."[22]

Further along the "failure" spectrum one finds the metaphor of state "death," which Tanisha Fazal (2007, 17) defines as "the formal loss of control over foreign policy to another state." Before proceeding, it should be obvious that what is meant by state "death" is not literally death as one would associate it with a living organism. States themselves are abstractions that only "live" metaphorically. What is meant by state "death" then is more nuanced than the metaphorical image state "death" brings to mind. Indeed, the metaphor of state death could apply to any number of statuses involving both political autonomy as well as various conceptions of *de facto* or *de jure* sovereignty. For example, Dustin Ellis Howes (2003) argues that (using the title of his article) "when states choose to die" they are not necessarily ceasing to exist, but rather, forfeiting some of their autonomy on certain matters in return for benefits they receive from membership in cooperative international institutions.

Like "failed" states, state "death" implies a complete state of being that does not accurately reflect what scholars mean when they talk about countries that have been compromised in terms of their territorial integrity or political legitimacy. To clarify the term, Fazal (2007, 17) writes that "state death" is synonymous with "exit from the international system," a term that employs a different metaphor—"exit" as opposed to "death"—which could imply different hypotheses and theoretical propositions. "Exiting" a space but continuing to exist presupposes a different set of assumptions about existence than does "death" or dying. Fazal uses both terms metaphorically to draw attention to qualities of the state in international relations, yet a closer examination of the theoretical implications of these distinct metaphors would be useful. Moreover, Fazal (ibid.) concedes that "state death

could also be defined in a number of other ways" and that the term "has referred to internal state collapse or failure, a regime change, conquest, or division." Ultimately, however, for Fazal (ibid.) state death means "loss of sovereignty to another state," which, as noted, need not necessarily imply a complete end of the state's existence since loss of sovereignty could be temporary, incomplete, or the product of foreign occupation (welcome or not) that may usurp the authority of *government* while leaving the *state* intact. Indeed, part of Fazal's discussion of state death includes a categorization of case studies, those included in her analysis and those left out, which make distinctions among states that have "died" and those that do not qualify under the definition she has set forth (see Fazal, 20–25). As Fazal notes, deciding which cases to include in the category of state death is not always unambiguously clear.

## "Violence" as a Metaphor

Inherent in international security is the real or potential violence that states and other international actors do to one another. Yet as a concept, violence has been used in some contexts in a metaphorical sense.[23] "Violence," of course, is as an abstract concept as are many of the categories in the study of international relations. The dictionary gives several definitions for the word "violence" not all of which imply physical force. However, as is true for many words, the secondary and tertiary definitions of a word can seen as metaphors stemming from its primary meanings. Thus, for example, among the ancillary meanings of the words for various human body parts (e.g., "head," "hand," "heart," "foot") are metaphors based on the primary meanings of these words (e.g., "head of the class," "the hand of a textile," "heart of the matter," "foot of a bed"). The same is true for definitions of the word "violence." The *American Heritage Dictionary* (1994) gives as its primary definition for "violence" the following: "Physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing." Subsequent definitions extend into metaphorical applications of the primary meaning, e.g., "abusive or unjust exercise of power; abuse or injury to meaning, content, or intent: *do violence to a text*; vehemence of feeling or expression; fervor" (ibid.).

These types of metaphors of violence find their way into the study of international relations. Two of the more common expressions that embody the metaphor of violence are "structural violence" and "economic violence." By "structural violence" scholars typically mean a series of injustices that are perpetrated against individuals that result

in these individuals suffering a diminished quality of life. As Johan Galtung (1969) originally envisioned the concept, "structural violence" is institutionalized violence.[24] It can be institutionalized, for example, in government institutions and policies that create disadvantages for individuals on the basis of, among other things, race, gender, sexual orientation, or membership in a particular clan, tribe, ethnic group or otherwise historically marginalized community or group. By "economic violence" what is meant is the systematic impoverishment of an individual or group of individuals as a result of the ownership, control, or distribution of economic resources and/or economic policy that has a prolonged, chronic, or systematic negative effect on an individual or group of individuals.

Unlike physical violence in a political context, structural and economic violence do not have to be perpetrated with willful or purposeful volition to persist. This is one sense in which the term "violence" used in these contexts is metaphorical as compared to how the word "violence" is used to refer to the physical application of force (usually in a military or armed conflict context). Structural and economic violence are also metaphorical in the sense that the damage or harm inflicted by them is systematic and in that sense not inflicted via individual, discrete instances of the application of force. A person could live his or her entire life as a victim of structural or economic violence and not be able to distinguish one "act of violence" from another precisely because the harm that is caused by these circumstances is ongoing, chronic, persistent, and systematic. This contrasts with physical violence, which is almost always recognizable as one or more instances of applied physical force. Hence, "structural" and "economic" violence are metaphorical expressions that are designed to describe damage and harm to individuals by employing the term "violence" that is associated with a related concept—the physical application of damaging physical force—but yet is still analytically distinct from that which is being explained, that is, the ongoing harm or damage brought about by political injustice and the maldistribution of economic resources.

There are theoretical as well as policy implications of making analytical distinctions between physical violence on the one hand and political injustice and economic poverty on the other.[25] As discussed, physical violence is recognizable as one or more discrete instances of applied force. The causes of violence can then be analyzed in terms of how a specific constellation of variables can combine to result in violent force. Ending physical violence involves resolving those issues that, when left unresolved, result in the application of force.

By contrast, political injustice and economic poverty are ongoing, systemic phenomena that are the result of institutionalized practices. While one would use certain tools of inquiry to isolate the variables that lead to physical violence, one would use a separate set of analytical tools to dissect the institutions that enshrine injustice and poverty as integral elements to the constitution of a political and social system. Solving injustice and poverty thus require more fundamental changes to the constitution of a society than what may be required to stem physical violence. When "violence" is used metaphorically these analytical distinctions can be lost.

## "Hawks" and "Doves"

Although the *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the metaphor "hawk," meaning "one who preys on others, a rapacious person, a sharper or cheat," as far back as the year 1548, the modern usage in politics as "a person who advocates a hard-line or warlike policy" finds its first use in print—along with the metaphor "dove" meaning "a person who advocates negotiations as a means of terminating or preventing a military conflict"—only as recently as 1962 in the context of the Cuban Missile Crisis.[26] Since that time the metaphors "hawk" and "dove" have been used so many times in so many types of publications and public speeches that it would be impossible to chronicle them all.

As is true for many metaphors, "hawk" and "dove" have taken on literal meaning in international relations. One such example I came across (although by no means the only one nor even the most egregious) is an article that constructed a model of international cooperation in which the main actors involved in negotiations come from either "hawkish" or "dovish" political parties. The article concludes that under certain conditions of trust and costly conflict, "while dovish leaders are better at eliciting cooperation in the short run, mutual cooperation is most likely to endure if it was initiated by a hawk" (Schultz 2005, 1). The terms "hawk" and "dove" are never defined in the article, although hawkish behavior is measured by "a greater willingness to engage in noncooperative or conflictual policies" (ibid., 7). Since "willingness" can only be determined on an *ex post facto* basis (since the will to be noncooperative or conflictual is inferred from noncooperative or conflictual behavior), measures of hawkishness or dovishness are not falsifiable and the terms "hawk" and "dove" become somewhat tautological since being a hawk is the same thing as a measure of hawkishness and likewise for doves.[27]

Furthermore, the relatively recent vintage of the "hawk" and "dove" metaphors as enshrined in international relations is indicative of their entirely arbitrary nature and the fact that any other animal metaphor, chosen just as arbitrarily, has the potential to influence the theoretical propositions that are made about state behavior especially in the area of international security. One could argue that the "dove" metaphor is not entirely arbitrary inasmuch as it evokes the dove depicted in Genesis 8:11, which, returning to Noah with an olive leaf in its beak, symbolizes to Noah that god has ended the flood allowing peace to rein. As for "hawk," as mentioned above, the *Oxford English Dictionary* indicates that the first known use of the term to mean "one who preys on others" was in found in writing in the year 1548, long before it was associated with an aggressive stance on foreign policy. Moreover, hawks are not the only birds of prey, nor are they the only birds of prey used metaphorically to describe human behavior. Among other bird metaphors for aggressive or preying human behavior are buzzards and vultures, metaphorical terms that differ, even if only subtly, from characteristics associated metaphorically with hawks.[28] Additionally, one need not restrict oneself to birds in imagining the preferences and behaviors of those who practice international relations.

The entire rest of this chapter could be taken up with an elaboration of hypotheses about international security derived from animal metaphors applied to states and other international actors. Since space does not permit that, just off the top of my head I have come up with a non-exhaustive list of common animal metaphors and the qualities associated with them: baboon (brutish), badger (disposed to pester persistently), busy/eager beaver (earnest; hard worker), fox (cunning; sly), lone wolf (disposed to acting alone), owl (wise), snake (duplicitous), slug (slow), vulture (possessing qualities of a scavenger), and worker bee (disposed to follow orders as part of a group).[29] And, indeed, occasionally animal metaphors aside from "hawk" and "dove" do appear in the literature, for example, in Randall Schweller's 1994 article investigating metaphorical "balancing" and "bandwagoning" behavior that mixes its metaphors with references also to state behavior likened to metaphorical "lions," "lambs," "jackals," and "wolves" (Schweller 1994, especially 100–104).[30] Still, that these other animal metaphors typically are not routinely used to theorize about international security neither means that they should nor does it mean that the "hawk" and "dove" metaphors are somehow flawed. Rather, the point is that, once attached to states and other international actors, metaphors such as "hawk" and "dove" have a tendency to fix scholars'

minds on a certain set of characteristics that are then use to generate hypotheses about the international behavior of states and other international actors.

That is to say, often it is the metaphor itself that comes to define certain foreign policy preferences, and then it is these metaphors, rather than some empirical observation of foreign policymaking, that generates hypotheses about international relations. The journalists in 1962 who wanted to describe the preferences of members of the Kennedy administration in the face of the Cuban missile situation chose animal metaphors that starkly convey a warlike or peace-oriented orientations. "Hawk" and "dove" fit that bill, but in their subsequent and ritualized use in formulating theories of international relations they create a stark dichotomy between those favoring war and those favoring peace. Obviously the choices facing foreign policymakers are rarely that pronounced, at which point the hawk – dove dichotomy becomes more important in influencing analyses of case studies than the empirical evidence itself. The "hawk" and "dove" monikers also oversimplify policy nuances, as Mark Lawrence (2009) points out in his review of Nicholas Thompson's dual biography of Paul Nitze and George Kennan, *The Hawk and the Dove* (2009) in which Lawrence writes that these terms (Nitze is the hawk and Kennan is the dove) blur both the similarities and differences between the two foreign policy icons that are the subject of Thompson's book.[31] "Hawk" and "dove," like many reified terms, are taken as *a priori* categories rather than the metaphors as which they started out.

## "Pariah" and "Rogue" States; "Predators" and "Parasites"

As the discussion of "hawks" and "doves" above illustrates, when it comes to classifying actors in international relations, metaphorical terms come in handy, even if they are not necessarily applied consistently. Among other metaphorical monikers that can be applied to actors (typically states) behaving beyond the bounds of internationally accepted behavior are "pariah" and "rogue" states. That both political actors and scholars of international relations alike do not agree on what states fall into these categories is a clear indication of their metaphorical nature. Among "pariah" states are obvious candidates such as Iraq, Libya, and Sudan, the subjects of a book about international sanctions and politics in the Middle East (Niblock 2001). Countries such as these acquire their "pariah" status by violating international norms and undertaking actions that, according to

other states, put international stability at risk. Earlier in the twentieth century "pariah" states included those that exhibited "provocative policies and territorial ambitions" such as "Soviet Russia, Fascist Italy, Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany" (Bederman 2002, 122).

What qualifies as a pariah state, however, is not clear. Depending on one's definition, pariah state status can be earned by different countries for different reasons, including the mere existence of the state and not necessarily any one or more set of actions. For example, among the members of what Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (1988, 209) calls the "pariah club" are Israel, South Africa during the Apartheid era, and Taiwan. In making these categorizations, Beit-Hallahmi relies on the definition of "pariah states" devised by Stephen Meyer (1984, 55), that is, "countries that for one reason or another have been shunned by their regional neighbors, if not by the international community in general." For Meyer (ibid.), the criteria for qualifying as a pariah state are "if by five years after achieving independence it did not have diplomatic relations with at least ten percent of its regional neighbors and belong to at least one regional alliance/organization."[32] For other authors, what qualifies as a "pariah state" is situational, for example, relative to the potential risks that flow if these states were to acquire nuclear weapons (see Harkavy 1973; 1977). Other definitions and other examples of pariah states can be found in the literature revealing that what is meant by the term is far from universally agreed upon by scholars and practitioners of international relations alike.

What is clear from this lack of clarity is that the concept of "pariah states" is metaphorical as is, ironically, the origin and meaning of the word "pariah" itself. The English word "pariah" comes from the Indian subcontinent, specifically, the Tamil word *paraiyan* meaning "hereditary drummer" referring to a member of groups of individuals who fell into "untouchable" castes (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Defined as "outcast," the term thus is doubly metaphorical, grounded in the meaning of those who were members of "out castes" as well as those who have been "cast out" of society. "Pariah states" thus can be seen metaphorically as outcasts from international affairs, that is, countries that are taboo or practice taboo behaviors within the accepted norms of international relations. Because of the metaphorical quality of the term, what qualifies as taboo is subject to interpretation, leading to the plethora of definitions of what constitutes a pariah state and disagreement among scholars regarding which countries fall into this classification of states.

Although the terms "pariah state" and "rogue state" often are used synonymously in the IR literature, the metaphorical connotations of

the two expressions offer different ways of seeing the conceptual issues they are meant to highlight. The definition of "rogue," in fact, is quite distinct from "pariah." A "rogue" is, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* a "dishonest, unprincipled person; a rascal." If "pariahs" are outcasts (in some cases simply on the basis of how other states view them and how they are politically constituted), then "rogues" are states that act in intentionally destructive or irresponsible ways that purposefully undermine other countries' security, international norms, or regional or international stability in general. In some cases countries included in this classification are the same that are placed in the "pariah state" category. Thus, for example, in his study of post–Cold War U.S. foreign policy, Robert Litwak (2000) sees Iraq (prior to the U.S. military operation in 2003), Iran, and North Korea as "rogue states" posing challenges to American security because of the mischief they practice in regional and global affairs.[33] Not surprisingly, an author with a very different view of world affairs, Noam Chomsky (2000), places that very same United States in the "rogues' gallery" of states that exert force for their own gain.

Of course what qualifies as an international norm, what actors make and sustain them, and among what actors they are generally accepted will determine which states abide or do not abide by those norms. In the United States, "General Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, manufactured the 'Rogue Doctrine' as the basic template for US military strategy in the post–Cold War era" (Klare 2000, 46). Nonetheless, "the precise membership of the club of [rogue] states," and "what they threatened to do to be made part of it . . . have evolved from administration to administration" (Lennon and Eiss 2004, vii). Thomas Henriksen (2001) traces "rogue" actors back to the Gauls, Visigoths, and Vandals menacing the Roman Empire and observes that what qualifies as a "rogue" changes with historical circumstances. Ultimately, one cannot help but arrive at the conclusion that what qualifies as a rogue is in the eye of the beholder.[34]

A more original metaphorical formulation for international actors "behaving badly" is Oded Löwenheim's imagery of "predators" and "parasites," or what he otherwise calls "persistent agents of transnational harm." From the Barbary pirates to groups adopting strategies of terror in the twenty-first century, actors threatening Great Power authority have been a constant feature on the international scene. "Predators" use force to gain advantage over Great Powers while "parasites" abuse "the institutions of violence and Great Power authority and feed . . . on them" (Löwenheim 2007, 64). Like "pariah"

and "rogue" states, "predators" and "parasites" provide powerful metaphorical imagery to highlight dangerous nature of international security and the safety of other international actors that is at stake. As we have seen, however, which actors fall into these categories is subject to debate.

## "Guns versus Butter"

Although the origins of the term are unclear, it would appear that the expression "guns versus butter" originated around the time of World War I when national policymakers in the United States in particular articulated an image to express the economic tradeoffs that were necessary during war time. As security metaphors go, the implications of the linguistic formulation of "guns versus butter" are probably more profound for policymakers than for scholars of international relations. The imagery of "guns versus butter" is potentially very potent for domestic policy debates over the budgetary realities of devoting funds to either national defense or domestic economic welfare. So as a rhetorical device the guns versus butter metaphor can have appreciable effects for national politics.

For scholars of international security the guns versus butter metaphor perhaps is not significant for persuasive purposes as it is in national policymaking, but it does pose some analytical problems. Specifically, the metaphor vastly oversimplifies the debate over budgetary allocations and sets up a false dichotomy between national defense spending and spending on domestic economic welfare.[35] The "guns" half of the metaphor implies that the economics of national defense involves only spending on goods and services that have a military application. How could "guns" mean anything other than guns? Yet obviously a great deal of military industries have civilian and/or nonmilitary applications, or at the very least utilize or lead to innovations that have civilian uses. To take just one rather striking example of how "guns" can actually also imply "butter," the foodstuff Spam was invented in the United States in 1937 and found widespread use during World War II in military rations but obviously also could feed civilian populations. Spam is a perfect example of not guns *versus* butter but guns *equals* butter so long as we understand "butter" metaphorically to mean food (in this case, Spam).

The "butter" part of the metaphor also is somewhat misleading inasmuch as it implies that spending on domestic economic welfare necessarily takes something away from national defense. Even the most pure of Realist scholars would agree that what is meant by power in

international relations is a fungible commodity. Power includes not only military resources but also the size and health of a country's economy as well as the size and health of a country's population. Indeed, no less than Napoleon contended that "an army marches on its stomach" and the same can be said for the entire population of a country. Few would disagree that a powerful country is one with a well-fed and nourished civilian population. Hence, spending on metaphorical "butter" can strengthen the power of that which is purchased through spending on guns, metaphorically or literally. The "guns versus butter" metaphor is hardly the most significant for how international security is studied, but it serves as a good example of how even the seemingly most innocuous metaphor can have theoretical and analytical implications.

## The Narratives of Security: Metaphors of Insecurity and Order

Efforts to conceptualize international security in metaphorical terms demonstrate an ongoing process of finding images that express shifting senses of what constitutes security and what threatens it. For Samuel Huntington (1996), international security can be expressed metaphorically as "world order." In one of his most noteworthy statements on international security Huntington contrasted this order with a metaphorical "clash," in particular, a "clash" of civilizations. Here "clash" serves as a metaphor for what Huntington sees as the conflictual, oppositional, and confrontational stances taken by civilizations, one or more against others.[36] To further the metaphor, Huntington argues that "clash" of civilizations is characterized by metaphorical "fault line" conflicts. This tectonic metaphorical imagery is echoed by Michael Brecher (2008) who depicts aspects of international security in terms of "international political earthquakes."[37]

While Huntington and Brecher opt for tectonic metaphors of "fault lines" and "earthquakes," James Rosenau (1990, 7) prefers climatological ones, choosing to describe "postinternational politics" in the metaphorical language of "turbulence" (the passage below is from Rosenau's metaphorically titled *Turbulence in World Politics*) and other forms of inclement weather:

> Doubtless every era seems chaotic to the people who live through it, and the last decades of the twentieth century are no exception. It is as if Spaceship Earth daily encounters squalls, downdrafts, and wind shears as it careens into changing and uncharted realms of experience. Sometimes the turbulence is

furiously evident as thunderclouds of war gathering or the lightening of a crisis streaks across the global sky; but often the turbulence is of a clear-air kind, the havoc it wreaks unrecognized until after its challenges have been met or its damage done.[38]

Like Huntington and Brecher, Rosenau seeks to find an appropriate metaphorical language with which to make the changing nature of international security intelligible to readers. Rosenau is aware, however, that metaphorical imagery can only go so far in the formulation of a theory of changing international conditions.[39] The post–Cold War world, or "postinternational" world as Rosenau calls it, comprises or will comprise actors, issues, resources, and relationships that are different from that which preceded them. Metaphors can aid in conceptualizing these changes, but they cannot specify them. As Rosenau (7–8) writes:

While equating the turbulence of world affairs to stormy weather captures well the current human condition, its use here as a metaphor may divert from my larger purpose. The goal in identifying a hitherto unimaginable scheme is to facilitate empirical explanation rather than to provide poetic expression. What is needed is a conception of turbulence that denotes the tensions and changes that ensue when the structures and processes that normally sustain world politics are unsettled and appear to be undergoing rearrangement.

Rosenau's book is, then, devoted to laying out a theory of international politics that specifies analytically that which is captured with the metaphorical image of "turbulence."[40] As a metaphor for the post–Cold War world this may in fact be particularly apt, yet as Rosenau points out, the metaphor cannot substitute for a specification of how changes in the number and types of international actors have an effect on the overall order of international politics.

One point of agreement among Huntington, Brecher, and Rosenau is that "clashes," "political earthquakes," and "turbulence" can be contrasted with what presumably is clearly discernible, that is, international "order." Hedley Bull (1977, 8) defines international order as "a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society."[41] In this formulation international order is either an intervening variable or a means to an end depending on what is meant by "sustains" in Bull's definition.[42] By contrast, Bull (20) defines "world order" as "those patterns or dispositions of human activity that sustain the elementary or primary goals of social life among mankind as a whole." In other words, as Bull (ibid.) makes the distinction, "international order is order among

states" while world order is order among men. Both concepts refer to "order" metaphorically inasmuch as the literal usage of the term is simply a "condition of logical or comprehensible arrangement among the separate elements of a group" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1273).[43]

Bull's metaphorical use of "order" is meant to convey the desirability of that which it brings about. As indicated, the literal sense of the word "order" is simply an arrangement of separate elements within a group. In Bull's formulation, order is neither a neutral state of affairs nor an end in itself, but rather something in service to international society, which itself is in service to mankind. The goals of international society for Bull are fourfold: "Preservation of the system and society of states . . . Maintaining the independence or external sovereignty of individual states . . . The goal of peace . . . Limitation of violence resulting in death or bodily harm" (Bull, 16–19). Furthermore, world order "is morally prior to international order" because "order among *mankind as a whole* is something wider than order among states" (ibid., 22, emphasis added). As Nicholas Onuf (1989, 155) reminds us, however, this term is metaphorical as well: " 'Order' is not a strict, literal representation of the condition of the universe as apprehended by human beings who, after all, observe a great deal of instability and disarrangement in what they are capable of apprehending . . . 'Order' is a metaphor, a figure of speech, a disguise. It is constituted by performative speech and constitutes propositional content for such speech. One asserts that 'order' stands for, or counts as, the way the world is, can be, should be, will be."[44]

And so, in many ways, the invocation of "order" takes us back to the beginning of what constitutes what is metaphorically referred to as international "security." Both terms project an image of safety and logical arrangement that is only imperfectly achieved and therefore only subjectively perceived in the realm that is known as international relations. The metaphorical narratives of security are thus inextricably tied up with the metaphorical narrative of order. Absent the conditions that would render security and order measurably present, the terms are used as metaphors for what one can imagine in other realms but in international relations is merely a construct that imperfectly replicates what is perceived elsewhere in the human experience.

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# Chapter 7

# Game Theory Metaphors

The area of international relations theory that is most characterized by overt metaphorical imagery is that of game theory. Although the imagery of game theory would suggest that the games were outgrowths of metaphorical thinking, the origins of game theory actually are to be found in the area of mathematics.[1] The metaphors that populate game theory models—images such as prisoners' dilemmas, stag hunts, and games of chicken—are outgrowths of numerical problems.[2] In numerical analysis, the metaphorical stories associated with the various games, rooted as they are in mathematical problems, serve largely an illustrative purpose. However, as games have come to serve as the core of social science analyses in fields such as international relations, the metaphors contained within them have taken on a life of their own. In the narrative of international relations theory, the metaphors of game theory are perhaps the most obvious stories of all.

Game theory metaphors are numerous. They include images of schoolyard fights, retail competitions, driving rules, radio frequency selections, prisoners' dilemmas, stag hunts, and hot rod standoffs, among others.[3] Each of these metaphors encapsulates and tells a story that presents a problem to be solved. While the plot lines suggested by other metaphors in international relations can be oblique, the metaphors of game theory present obvious story arcs complete with characters, points of tension, and plot resolutions. It is the metaphorical assumptions that inform the stories of game theory that dictate the conclusions that are often drawn. The following discussions of prominent game theoretical scenarios in international relations illustrate this point.

## Prisoner's Dilemma

Among game theoretic scenarios the Prisoner's Dilemma game is examined perhaps the most often in international relations theory.[4] Interestingly, the Prisoner's Dilemma seems to be based as much on what *scholars* imagine is the nature of relationships among prisoners as it is on the lived experiences of prisoners themselves. The implications of international relations theory are not insignificant inasmuch as the imagined nature of prisoner relationships is used to make predictions about international affairs. Notably, prisoner relationships are presumed to be based on mistrust. Many game theorists then go on to accept without question the proposition that this presumption of mistrust among prisoners is replicated in the situation among states.[5] Yet the validity of the Prisoner's Dilemma situation is hardly ever critically examined.

The Prisoner's Dilemma model was formulated at the RAND Corporation in 1950 by researchers Merrill Flood and Melvin Dresher (see Flood 1952a; 1952b). Flood and Dresher did not initiate their studies with observations of social relations between two prisoners. Rather, they were interested in the mathematical problem of why actors would choose self-defeating strategies when higher payoffs are available through cooperation (Poundstone 1992, 106). The problem lies in the payoff structure, which dictates that each actor chooses a strategy that maximizes payoffs depending on the other actor's moves. Therefore, it is logical for each actor to choose an optimizing strategy, even though the result of both actors pursuing this strategy will make them worse off in the end. In this sense, the dilemma is purely one of numerical payoffs and requires no metaphor to envision the problem nor solve it. It was only later that fellow RAND researcher Albert Tucker made the model more vibrant by weaving the arbitrary story of two prisoners to provide a narrative structure for the puzzle.[6] The model therefore could have been illustrated with any reasonably entertaining tale of actors facing choices within a fixed payoff structure and a rank ordering of preferences.

The genesis of the Prisoner's Dilemma game shines a new light on an analysis of international relations metaphors. As game theorists point out, the strategic interaction of the Prisoner's Dilemma does not necessitate the assumptions about human nature and narrowly construed self-interest that are inherent in conceptions of how prisoners would react to the situation in which they are placed in the familiar scenario of the game (Campbell 1985, 10). In fact, game theory in general is not meant to be a perfect model of the lived experiences of humans. Rather, it is an experimental science in which its students

are encouraged to use their imagination in conceptualizing situations of strategic choice (Gintis 2000, xxiv–xxviii). Thus, the irony of much of the scholarship surrounding Prisoner's Dilemma is that extensive research has gone into solving the game, rather than using the model as a metaphor with which to understand analogous realms of human interaction.

It is important to note then that Prisoner's Dilemma is not really a game based on actual prisoner interactions. In actuality, it is a mathematical model of choice among various options in which the logic of the situation requires strategies that maximize gains among differing levels of rewards. The problem could involve actions taken by any sentient being capable of the most rudimentary ability to choose among a variety of options. Robert Axelrod (1984, 95) demonstrates as much, comparing the actors in Prisoner's Dilemma to bacteria.[7] Axelrod and others see the problem intrinsic in Prisoner's Dilemma as almost a natural occurrence whenever living organisms are engaged in strategic choice.[8] This is all fine and well; but conclusions such as these flow from the mathematical problem in question, not the metaphor of prisoners that has been attached to that problem. It is the assumption of motives on the part of the prisoners that poses analytical problems, and it is that which should be subjected to critical examination.

This is not the same thing as saying that Prisoner's Dilemma is designed in such a way to make the discovery of cooperation impossible. For Liberal theorists Prisoner's Dilemma is a device to demonstrate strategies of cooperation. For example, when the game is played on an iterated basis, when cooperative strategies are reinforced, when information is made transparent or more plentiful, or when actors value their reputation, cooperation can be fostered.[9] Additionally, the Prisoner's Dilemma has been used to explain the existence of international regimes, which are said to facilitate cooperation, and presents perhaps the richest solution to the structural constraints that govern the Prisoner's Dilemma (Krasner 1983a; 1983b, Keohane 1984, Stein 1990). Yet all these solutions to the Prisoner's Dilemma leave the dilemma of cooperation intact. They accept the assumption that states can be likened to prisoners, each of which is a self-interested actor operating under conditions of anarchy. They do this despite evidence that the Prisoner's Dilemma game does not accurately depict the world of international relations, let alone the real world of prisoners in confinement.[10] Game theorists are thus inclined to see cooperation within the constraints of the Prisoner's Dilemma game as always contingent, with actors never having the opportunity to escape the parameters built into the game's foundational story.

For many political scientists game theory appears to validate the proposition that mistrust among prisoners is replicated in the situation among states. However, as others have observed, game theory has limitations.[11] Among these limitations is the imperfect way in which Prisoner's Dilemma models international relations. Another drawback of game theory is its inability to completely capture the imperfections of human rationality.[12] Strangely enough, some theorists, such as Robert Axelrod, eliminate the requirement that human agency be a part of the Prisoner's Dilemma model, arguing instead that the principles of the game can apply equally to cognitive and noncogitative organisms. This denial of human agency renders the human element in the Prisoner's Dilemma metaphor moot and begs the question of why the metaphor is needed in the first place if its qualities are unnecessary for theorizing about strategic choice. In other words, quite a few game theorists seem unconcerned about the experiential bases of the Prisoner's Dilemma model.[13] The Prisoner's Dilemma model assumes that prisoners are inherently disinclined toward cooperation, given the nature of their confinement despite the fact that real-life observations of prisoners would tend to suggest otherwise.

The problem of leaving the experiential bases of the Prisoner's Dilemma metaphor unexamined is that the mathematical model that is the genesis of the game is allowed to impute motives on the part of prisoners instead of letting the experiences of prisoners open up new possibilities for understanding the choices that humans make. So instead of the prisoner metaphor serving as the impetus for theorizing in a seemingly unrelated realm, scholars try simply to solve the Prisoner's Dilemma abstracting it from any real-life context.[14] Moreover, the metaphor of criminal mistrust in the model generates its own metaphors that are then taken as assumed features of different realms of human interaction. This is the case even when game theorists endeavor to find cooperative solutions to the dilemma. For instance, in his discussion of the communities of cooperation produced by iterated play using the "tit for tat" strategy in the Prisoner's Dilemma game, Robert Axelrod (1984, 56) employs a metaphorical language that is decidedly warlike in its imagery: "A new strategy is said to *invade* a native strategy if the newcomer gets a higher score with a native than a native gets with another native. Since natives are virtually the entire population, the concept of invasion is equivalent to the single mutant individual being able to do better than the population average" (emphasis in the original).[15] Ironically, what started as a metaphor for differential preferences takes on a life of its own and is seen as a real-life situation involving detained criminal suspects,

which then is reified into a theory of enemy invasion. This is a good illustration of the process whereby metaphors generate meaning by making problems out of seemingly innocuous observations of the human experience.

Because the Prisoner's Dilemma begins with assumptions of conflicting interests in the context of strategic choice it creates for scholars the need to solve the "problem" of international cooperation. As Anatol Rapoport and Albert Chammah (1965, 25) put it: "Prisoner's Dilemma is, *by definition*, a noncooperative game" (emphasis added). Even if one were to try and build a non – zero sum element into Prisoner's Dilemma and similar games, one would find that the zero sum aspects are difficult to eliminate from the framework of game theory.[16] So while there are critics who find fault in the assumptions of Prisoner's Dilemma—such as the inability of prisoners to cooperate ahead of time or communicate with each other in order to outwit the police—these critics nonetheless maintain that, short of redefining the parameters of the model, one must work within the payoff structure inherent in the game. The effort then becomes to find "solutions" to the "problem" of Prisoner's Dilemma rather than to rework the parameters of the game so as to eliminate its flawed constraints.

The Prisoner's Dilemma approach is not without its critics. Hayward Alker (1996), for example, points out that the stories used in game theory to illustrate mathematical problems frequently reflect theorists' own view of the world, not necessarily universally agreed upon dilemmas. This is perhaps no more true than in the case of the Prisoner's Dilemma.[17] Although the Prisoner's Dilemma can be interpreted in several ways, the standard interpretation is based on an assumption that prisoners are inherently averse to cooperation in light of the constrained situation in which their choices are made. So it is not surprising that theorists are reluctant to consider alternative ways of approaching the Prisoner's Dilemma game other than ones that present limited solutions to the assumed inherent problem. As Roger Hurwitz (1989, 119–121, 128–130) observes, storytellers who embrace collectivist norms are more likely to portray prisoners as devoted to each other than storytellers who come from more individualistic traditions. Without some larger experiential context for a game like Prisoner's Dilemma, solutions are contingent on whatever assumptions about problems game theorists bring with them to the "game-solving" process.

If Alker is right and the problem of cooperation is one that has been invented by the stories told by scholars and others, why then would social scientists choose models such as the Prisoner's Dilemma

to frame their analyses of politics and international affairs? William Poundstone opines that game theory reflects the prejudices of theorists and perhaps there is not much that can be done about that. Poundstone (1992, 170) writes: "Game theory is a kaleidoscope that can only reflect the value system of those who apply it. If game theoretic prescriptions sometimes seem Machiavellian, it is generally because the value systems of those who applied the game theory are Machiavellian." Metaphors such as the one in the Prisoner's Dilemma play a generative role in theory creation. Language constructs meanings, and in turn realities and the practical problems that emerge within those realities. Once realities and their attendant problems are constructed they provide a window into the linguistic foundations of social relations. But when scholars attempt to reconstruct those realities through such devices as game theory they can do so in ways that are divorced from the socially constructed realities in which people actually live. Game theorists who apply Prisoner's Dilemma to international relations perhaps unwittingly end up using the Prisoner's Dilemma metaphor to generate a harsher vision of world affairs than really exists. The irony of Prisoner's Dilemma, then, is that what started as a simple mathematical puzzle has become a metaphor for almost every type of social interaction, with the exception perhaps of the experiences of real prisoners themselves.[18] The failure to disentangle the mathematical roots of game theory, the metaphors used to represent mathematical games, and the real experiences of people who "play" these games, is a problem that is endemic to game theory.[19] Game theorists who focus on the Prisoner's Dilemma may forget that their "model" was, or should be, an extension of the metaphor that provides much of its imagery, not a thing unto itself.

Observation reveals that in the real world prisoners do not act according to the predictions engendered by Prisoner's Dilemma games. James Der Derian describes an episode that confirms this. For a period Der Derian taught convicts world politics course at Gardner State Prison. At one point the students were learning about theories of international cooperation and decided to stage their own classroom Prisoner's Dilemma exercise. Defying the logic of standard Prisoner's Dilemma simulations, the real-life prisoners in Der Derian's class found that their fellow inmates interpreted the game from the perspective of norms established among inmate communities: "They explained how traditional codes of silence, pre-scripted stories, and other intersubjective rituals of honor—all specific to their prison society—defied generalization into timeless, reductionist, instrumentalist, (i.e., rationalist) principles. In other words, situated,

constructed identities, rather than permanent, unitary interests were at work" (Der Derian 1998, 117). In a chapter in another book (Marks 2004, Chapter Four) I build on Der Derian's findings. The chapter demonstrates that a reexamination of the prison metaphor ultimately undermines the assumption of the Prisoner's Dilemma model, and suggests that a frame of reference that takes into account the experiences of real-life prisoners offers a way to imagine communities in which cooperation is possible.[20] Since metaphors construct perceptions of reality, a metaphor of the prison that builds on prisoners' construction of their own domain provides a new way of conceptualizing international relations in the real world.

## Stag Hunt

In the words of Brian Skyrms (2004, 1), "the Stag Hunt is a story that became a game." Specifically, as many scholars of international relations know, the game theoretic model Stag Hunt began as a hypothetical scenario postulated by the political philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. "The story is briefly told by Rousseau, in *A Discourse on Inequality*: 'If it was a matter of hunting a deer, everyone well realized that he must remain faithful to his post; but if a hare happened to pass within reach of one of them, we could not doubt that he would have gone off in pursuit of it without scruple' " (ibid.). As Skyrms points out, Rousseau's stag hunt parable is a story of a social contract. However, the principles illustrated by the story can manifest themselves in other situational scenarios. Skyrms (2) observes that "David Hume also has the Stag Hunt. His most famous illustration of a convention has the structure of a two-person stag hunt game: 'Two men who pull at the oars of a boat, do it by agreement of a convention, tho' they have never given promises to each other.' "[21] Hume revisits this theme as a story of two neighbors who own a meadow in common, each of whom waits for the other to drain it (ibid.).

As Skyrms (3) points out, in game theoretic terms Prisoner's Dilemma and Stag Hunt are different games as defined in terms of their utility structures and strategic payoffs: "In prisoner's dilemma, there is a conflict between individual rationality and mutual benefit. In stag hunt, what is rational for one player to choose depends on his beliefs about what the other will choose. Both stag hunting and hare hunting are *Nash equilibria*." The more interesting contrast between the two games, however, may have to do with their metaphorical qualities. Skyrms (2) hits on something when he observes that the "stag hunt does not have the same *melodramatic* quality as the prisoner's

dilemma" (emphasis added). What is lacking in the tale of the prisoner's dilemma is the shadow of the future, which transforms the dire situation of suspects faced with a one-time scenario of potential mistrust into an ongoing social contract between mutually dependent individuals: "The shadow of the future has not *solved* the problem of cooperation in the prisoner's dilemma; it has *transformed* it into the problem of cooperation in the stag hunt" (ibid., 6, emphasis added). Changing the situational aspects of strategic interaction changes the reward structure of the game. In other words, what determines individuals' interpretation of cooperation problems resides in the metaphorical expression of what is at stake.

For Skyrms, the stag hunt is a metaphorical expression of the social contract, or, as Skyrms (9) puts it, "the whole problem of adopting or modifying the social contract for mutual benefit can be seen as a stag hunt." The state of nature, illustrated by both actors hunting hares, is an equilibrium, but the social contract, illustrated by both actors cooperating to hunt a stag, is also an equilibrium, as laid out in the payoff structure of the game. The metaphor of cooperation in a state of nature finds expression in the stag hunt parable. By contrast, the "melodramatic" quality of the prisoner's dilemma, as Skyrms (108) puts it, tells a different story where, "by definition, Defect is the best response to any strategy encountered." No social contract is envisioned in the prisoner's dilemma model, reflecting a metaphorical expression of perpetual noncooperation: "If two people cooperate in prisoner's dilemma, each is choosing less rather than more" (ibid., 3). If one wants to convey through metaphor the lack of incentive for cooperation, prisoner's dilemma is the situation that applies. However, if one needs a metaphor for the social contract, then according to Skyrms, stag hunt is the story to tell.

Scholars of international relations have used the stag hunt metaphor to convey these themes. For Kenneth Waltz, the social contract, illustrated by cooperative interactions in the stag hunt scenario, applies only to the governed realm of domestic politics since the anarchic structure of the international system allows only for actors to find equilibrium at mutual defection in the form of going their own way. This "self-help" image of functionally similar states produced by international anarchy is predicated on Waltz's (1959, 169–170) assumption of rationality leading to actors' self-interest:

> If we examine the requirements of rational action, we find that even an example as simple as the stag hunt we have to assume that the reason of each leads to an identical definition of interest, that each will draw the same conclusion as to the methods appropriate to meet the original situation, that all will agree

instantly on the action required by any chance incidents that raise the question of altering the original plan, and that each can rely completely on the steadfastness of purpose of all the others.

As Michael Williams contends, however, Waltz misinterprets Rousseau's intentions in laying out the stag hunt logic. Like Skyrms, Williams argues that the hare-hunting strategy of actors represents a response to variable gains that predates the social contract. Countering Waltz, Williams (2005, 66) maintains that the "parable which Waltz represents as exemplifying Rousseau's contribution to an understanding of the objective nature of international politics is representative, for Rousseau, of reason in the early stages of the corruption which would culminate in contemporary society." Of course, Waltz would argue precisely that absent the existence of a governed society Rousseau's depiction of the stag hunt in its early stages serves as an apt model for international relations where states exist in anarchy without societal rules to govern their behavior.

From a metaphorical standpoint herein lies the rub. It is not whether international relations represents an anarchy or a society, but what qualities of international relations are conjured up by scholars' individual readings of the stag hunt story. Obviously, what the stag hunt means for understanding international relations is indeterminate since Waltz and Williams (and others, for that matter) draw their own conclusions about what qualities and interests to attribute to states based on their interpretation of the stag hunt parable. Indeed, an entirely different interpretation of the stag hunt metaphor is told from a gendered perspective. Rebecca Grant argues that the stag hunt need not make assumptions about the conflictual nature of man, especially when human nature is viewed in something other than masculine terms. Grant retells the stag hunt story in which the pursuit of a hare by one hunter does not represent a "defection" that causes insecurity among other hunters, but instead is seen as a reflection of the commitments the hunter has to feed his family (Grant 1991, 15).[22] A gendered perspective understands the stag hunt, or better yet, the "hare hunt," as a metaphor for the nurturing of the family, not an opportunity to undermine fellow human beings. A metaphor that implies conflict to one observer implies cooperation to another.

In sum, there is no reading of the stag hunt that is "correct." There are only metaphorical expressions of impressions of the prospects for cooperation when variable rewards are in play. As Skyrms points out, both stag hunting and hare hunting are Nash equilibria, and thus which strategy scholars predict actors will pursue depends on

their interpretation of humans' interests. In this sense, theories of international relations premised on the stag hunt metaphor could be articulated with or without it. As a metaphor the stag hunt is both indicative of scholars' prior beliefs about the nature of international relations and a device to suggest hypotheses for predicting behavior.

## Chicken

Among the best explications of chicken as a metaphor is the one offered by Thomas Schelling in *Arms and Influence*. Schelling (1966, 116) lays out the contours of the chicken story succinctly: "This is described as a game in which two teen-age motorists head for each other on a highway—usually late at night, with their gangs and girlfriends looking on—to see which of the two will swerve aside. The one who does is then called 'chicken.' " However, among Schelling's observation is that, when applied to the study of international relations, the chicken metaphor can be expanded beyond the scenario of teenagers in their hot-rods on a deserted highway at night:

> "Chicken" is not just a game played by delinquent teen-agers with their hot-rods in southern California; it is a universal form of adversary engagement. It is played not only in the Berlin air corridor but by Negroes [*sic*] who want to get their children into schools and by whites who want to keep them out; by rivals at a meeting who both raise their voices, each hoping the other will yield the floor to avoid embarrassment; as well as by drivers of both sexes and all ages at all times of day. Children played it before their were old enough to drive and before automobiles were invented. (Ibid., 116–117)

In an abstract sense, the game of chicken is recorded in various forms in ancient history. Schelling finds the first instance of chicken in ancient Troy when Antilochos would not yield the road to Menelaos as they approached each other on horse-drawn chariots.

Chief among Schelling's deterrence metaphors that are inspired by the Chicken game is his depiction of "brinkmanship," a word that immediately evokes the metaphorical image of threat Schelling seeks to convey. Brinkmanship "means exploiting the danger that somebody may inadvertently go over the brink, dragging the other with him" (ibid., 99). Schelling does not stop there, however, and revels in the possibilities of threat that are possible at the metaphorical brink of danger: "Any attempt to intimidate or to deter the other climber depends on the threat of slipping or stumbling. With loose ground, gusty winds, and a propensity toward dizziness, there is some danger

when a climber approaches the edge; one can credibly threaten to fall off *accidentally* by standing near the brink" (ibid., emphasis in the original). To drive home his point, Schelling supplements the climber metaphor with other images of brinkmanship. Individuals can, for example, metaphorically "rock the boat" and threaten to tip it over to get other occupants of the boat to row (ibid., 91). States can "lay a trip-wire, one that is plainly visible, that cannot be stumbled upon, and that is manifestly connected to the machinery of war" (ibid., 99). Schelling (100) also likens deterrence to navigating among arthritics at a cocktail party or playing a game of chess.

What all of these metaphors evoke is the sense of danger that Schelling associates with deterrence failure. Deterrence can be used to keep individuals from committing any type of act. For example, an individual can attempt to deter his or her spouse or partner from stopping for a drink on the way home from work by threatening not to have dinner waiting on the table. Moreover, the repercussions of both the deterrent threat and the failure of deterrence can be dire, but also mundane. In the aforementioned example, the withholding of dinner will not result in the starvation of the spouse or partner in question, nor will stopping for a drink on the way home from work (in the event the deterrent threat does not have the desired effect) result in much beyond irritation for the aggrieved partner (assuming it only occurs on a limited basis). Schelling's choice of metaphors that evoke images of grave danger, metaphors such as falling off the brink of a cliff or setting off a trip-wire, lead to a theory of deterrence in which the context of deterrence is one of life and death. That issues involving deterrence are always or even frequently ones of life and death is an empirical question, one that most likely yields answers that put such an assertion in doubt. For the purposes of theorizing about deterrence, however, Schelling's metaphorical images frame the concept in ways that lead to conclusions that limit the scope of analysis only to those matters that revolve around imminent and dire threat.

As many of these examples show, and as Schelling concedes, the parameters of Chicken are not identical from one scenario to the next. For example, in the classic story of teenagers in hot-rods the encounter is a one-time affair. However, in other situations, for example, drivers challenging each other in everyday driving circumstances, the "game" is of an iterated nature. As Schelling (118) notes, "if you can get a reputation for being reckless, demanding, or unreliable—and apparently hot-rods, taxis, and cars with 'driving school' license plates sometimes enjoy this advantage—you may find concessions made to you." Furthermore, in an extended footnote, Schelling (118–119,

note 7) observes that three motivational structures can be engaged in Chicken, one involving "test cases," one involving situations in which something is put at stake, and one where actors are at risk of losing something in dispute. Chicken can also involve situations in which potential rivals have the option to withdraw (ibid., 119–120). Thus, like other games in the game theory arsenal, the contours of Chicken are far from unambiguous.

Part of the ambiguity of Chicken are the attitudes attributed to those who play it. In a trenchant critique of nuclear strategy, Bertrand Russell (2001 [1959], 15) compares chicken as it is played by "youthful degenerates" and by "eminent statesmen." As played in the former scenario, that is, "by irresponsible boys, this game is considered decadent and immoral." In the latter scenario, by contrast, "it is thought on both sides that the statesmen on one side are displaying a high degree of wisdom and courage, and only the statesmen on the other side are reprehensible." At least, that is how practitioners of foreign policy in nuclear-equipped states see it. Russell (ibid.) is unconvinced: "This, of course, is absurd. Both are to be blamed for playing such an incredibly dangerous game." What Russell does is impute motives to actors that reflect his own interpretation of the chicken metaphor. But what Russell overlooks is precisely what matters for metaphorical interpretation, that is, what a metaphor means depends on the experiential context of those conceive it. In the Chicken game, in particular, experience is an important factor in one's conceptual mapping of the scenario in play. When honor and shame are involved with games of potential dire harm, the *mathematical* values attached to each of these *ethical* values depends on one's experiences in life where "games" of this nature are played.

The key to both understanding and winning the Chicken game is trying to fathom *someone else's* motivations. As William Poundstone (1992, 199) writes, "the player of chicken has a big stake in guessing what the other player is going to do." Teenagers playing a game of chicken have to figure out how their opponents value their lives relative to their reputation and honor. Foreign policymakers and leaders, who *in their minds* are playing metaphorical game of chicken when practicing nuclear deterrence, have to figure out if their opponents think the game can be won. Scholars studying nuclear deterrence strategy have to draw on their own experiences to reconstruct the calculations of foreign policymakers and leaders. Perhaps more importantly, *scholars have to decide if Chicken is a metaphor for nuclear deterrence strategy, or if nuclear deterrence strategy is a metaphor for Chicken*. If it is the former, then scholars must correctly calculate the

values politicians attach to military defeat relative to the advantage they gain from facing another state down. Scholarship on the game of Chicken then should focus on attaching the correct values to each of the options available. If it is the latter, then Chicken becomes less a model and more an *ex post facto* description of historical facts. If this is the case, then as a metaphor Chicken becomes part of the storytelling of international relations as opposed to a true heuristic device.

## "Two-Level" Games

In addition to the games that constitute game theory itself is the metaphor of "two-level" games.[23] That the term "two-level games" is a metaphor is not in dispute. In introducing the concept, Putnam (1993, 436) names one of the sections of the essay "Two-Level Games: A Metaphor for Domestic – International Interactions."[24] Putnam explicitly creates the metaphor of "two-level games" to generate a model of interactions between domestic and international political actors but acknowledges that a metaphor is not a theory and that his metaphor is a starting point, not the conclusion.

Taking Putnam's lead, the logic of two-level games is spelled out straightforwardly by scholars such as those in the edited volume *Double-Edged Diplomacy* (1993), which raises the interesting question, why refer to the phenomenon as "two-level games" as opposed to the metaphor contained in the book's title, namely, "double-edged diplomacy"? Both "two-level games" and "double-edged diplomacy" are metaphors, so why is one metaphor better than the other as the title of the book versus the working metaphor around which the theory is built? The answer to this question is found in the introductory chapter to the book written by Andrew Moravcsik. Moravcsik suggests that the theory of two-level games is different in three ways from earlier theories that seek to explain the convergence of international and domestic politics: "First, it is a theory of international bargaining . . . The second departure from previous theory concerns the emphasis on the statesman as the central strategic actor . . . The third and most distinctive departure from previous theory is that the statesman's strategies reflect a simultaneous 'double-edged,' calculation of constraints and opportunities on both the domestic and international boards" (Moravcsik 1993, 16–17). In other words, the essential aspect of the metaphor from the perspective of framing the theoretical debate is not the "two-level" element but the element of "games." In fact, the "two-level" metaphor is seemingly interchangeable with the "double-edged" metaphor, and the latter is listed as an

integral feature of the former. "Two-level" and "double-edged" are meant simply to highlight the way in which two types of interactions are involved involving two types of actors. Theoretically speaking, then, these parts of the metaphor provide little in terms of the heuristic utility of the "two-level game" metaphor.

What is theoretically utile, then, is the "game" portion of the metaphor. What is meant by two-level games is not merely diplomacy in a broad sense engaged in with interlocutors in the realms of international and domestic politics, but a metaphorical "game" in which payoffs from strategic interaction are at stake. As Moravcsik (23) points out, as a metaphor the emphasis of two-level games is viewing "the relationship between domestic and international politics through the eyes of the statesman." It is interesting to note that among the definitions of "diplomacy" is "tact and skill in dealing with people" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 526), which carries a different connotation than "game," which often implies clear winners and losers in a competitive exercise. Games are played by individuals, hence the significance of the metaphor for highlighting this aspect of the model; the statesman metaphorically is playing a "game" complete with a metaphorical "win-set" (Moravscik, 23).

True to the notion of metaphors as means to generate theory, the chapter authors in *Double-Edged Diplomacy* used the metaphor of two-level games to arrive at a theory of international and domestic bargaining. As Moravcsik (24) points out, the volume's "authors were . . . encouraged to educe from the case studies their own theoretical and conceptual insights into the dynamics of successful and unsuccessful domestic/international negotiations." Indeed, the authors did arrive at a set of common hypotheses and theoretical propositions that were guided by the initial definition of the problem as one of metaphorical "two-level games." This is not surprising. As we have seen previously, metaphors often delineate what is interesting, what is worth studying, and what "problems" need to be "solved." The authors of the chapters of *Double-Edged Diplomacy* were seemingly given free rein to arrive at hypotheses and theoretical propositions, but the scope of hypotheses and theoretical propositions that would be conceivable was framed by the definition of the problem as a metaphorical "two-level game" as opposed to some other metaphor that would determine the issues and questions involved.[25]

Leaving aside the fact that theories of two-level games are just as likely to fall into the same traps as single-level games but multiplied by two (since the metaphorical bases of the games are reproduced at two levels instead of one), the irony of two-level games is that whereas

their purpose is to span the division between the international and domestic "levels of analysis" in the study of international relations, by creating a divide between two levels of game playing they end up reinforcing the division they were designed to bridge. As Michael McCoy (2000, 189) has observed, the presumed existence of separate levels of politics is not an fact, but rather a function of culturally situated observers.[26] Two-level games as a metaphorical construction suggests that politics take place in analytically and empirically distinct realms. As has been suggested elsewhere (see, e.g., Luke 1991, Walker 1993, Rosenau 1997, Campbell 1998, Weldes, Laffey, Gusterson, and Duvall 1999, Manning 2000, Marks 2004), part of the implication of levels of political activity is the assertion that distinct political realms insulate areas of order from those characterized by "danger." The two-level metaphor reinforces the conception that foreign policymakers are involved in an elaborate "game" to defend state interests against "outside" influences from "above" and "below." At the level "above" states lie threats of international security. At the level "below" states lie threats from interests that would seek to alter state behavior. The "two-level" metaphorical image, then, reflects the ongoing assertion within IR theory that international relations is an affair of states, neatly contained within their borders, protecting state interests from what Walker (1993) would deem dangers on the "outside, or what two-level game language would cast as influences residing at levels "above" and "below."

## Cautionary Notes on the Use of Game Theory Metaphors in International Relations Theory

While metaphors are often only subtly applied in other areas of international relations, game theory metaphors often are applied in an overt fashion. It is therefore useful to examine the unique difficulties that can arise with these types of overt metaphorical constructions. In the first place, as Duncan Snidal reminds us, game theory metaphors are not the same thing as *theories* of games. The metaphorical stories embodied in most games do not specify the theoretical propositions that derive from the games. "We do not improve a metaphor simply by translating it into a game matrix. Glib assertions that 'Issue *X* is Prisoner's Dilemma,' or that the 'Cuban Missile Crisis was a game of chicken,' efficiently convey a metaphor, but do not make the metaphor more plausible or take much advantage of the power of game theory . . . Real rigor requires tightening the correspondence between the metaphor and the issue at hand" (Snidal 1986, 30).

Hence, in order for a game theoretic metaphor to be fruitful for the purposes of theory it must be translated first into an analogy in which there is correspondence between the metaphor and the issues of international relations under investigation and then into a model whereby some causal logic implied in the metaphor is stated as a hypothesis that can be tested by examination of strategic interaction using real world cases (ibid., 31–34).[27] Only then can game *theory* serve as a means to make predictions about how actors will interact under conditions that were *suggested* by a metaphor and then transformed by an analogy into a model that simulates real cases of international relations. As Snidal (36) states, game metaphors are useful "to illuminate and clarify international issues" but for game theory to be more useful scholars need to "tighten up correspondences between empirical situations and game models, and separate assumptions from predictions."

Aside from not properly distinguishing between metaphor and theory, the use of metaphors in game theory can lead to other difficulties. Like games in general, the games of game theory involve rules that impose constraints on choice (Fierke 2002, 339–340). Furthermore, the metaphors of game theory can be made to seem as if they constitute the reality of a situation rather than merely abstract linguistic representations of actual circumstances. R. B. J. Walker maintains that game theory reduces serious matters of peace and war to the efficient language of econometrics and "strategic choice," thus diverting scholars' attention from the matters of life and death that are at stake (Walker 1990, 8). This is not surprising inasmuch as most game theoretic metaphors are adjuncts to the mathematical models from which they emanate.

Additionally, game theory metaphors are prone to reification. By providing a linguistic shorthand they replace the mathematical problems they were intended to illustrate and, instead, serve as a problem in their own right. They also generate their own jargon that is more the stuff of insider lingo than it is of theoretical innovation. The following passage is a good example of how game theory jargon often overshadows the metaphors on which the games are based: "Just as stag hunt easily degenerates into prisoners' dilemma in the absence of a sovereign authority, so too prisoners' dilemma can easily degenerate into the game of deadlock, in which conflict is preferred to mutual cooperation" (Snyder and Jervis 1999, 22). The authors of this passage gloss over the dilemmas of cooperation purportedly captured by game theoretic metaphors and fixate on simplified means for summarizing complex issues. After all, the principle of mutual aid that is

illustrated by the stag hunt metaphor does not literally "degenerate" into the quality of mutual mistrust illustrated in Prisoner's Dilemma any more than hunters in search of a stag literally transform into two criminal suspects detained in precinct headquarters.

Among the errors that scholars can commit when applying game theory metaphors is applying them to inappropriate circumstances given the purpose for which the metaphor was created. For example, the metaphor of brinkmanship found in the Chicken game typically has been associated with crisis situations where the threat of total annihilation is imminent. Applying the Chicken game imagery, in which crisis and immediacy are important aspects of the metaphor, to noncrisis situations or to circumstances in which threats are not immediate may thus be a misleading use of that metaphor. In one of the more widely used introductory college texts on international relations, for example, Joshua Goldstein and Jon Pevehouse (2006, 304) liken international trade negotiations to the metaphorical situation modeled in the Chicken game. The problem with doing this is that the concepts modeled with the Chicken game metaphor may translate poorly to situations of trade negotiations where the time frame for decision making and the consequences of failed negotiations are not as dire as those implied by the chicken image. In games of chicken, joint decisions to defect can result in mutual annihilation by the participants. In trade negotiations, by contrast, even the most spectacularly failed trade talks do not lead to the same disastrous outcomes that result in the types of situations, e.g., nuclear deterrence, that are modeled by the Chicken game.

The problem is not simply that a metaphor may be inappropriately applied, but that subsequent theorizing based on that inapt application then leads scholars to dubious predictions based on that metaphor. In the case of the Chicken game metaphor applied to trade negotiations, although the reality of trade talks is that they tend to take place over an extended period and rarely if ever do failed trade talks result in the same sort of disaster that failed nuclear deterrence would, the dire outcomes imagined by the chicken metaphor can falsely lead scholars to make predictions about the imagined disastrous results of failed trade talks. In the Goldstein and Pevehouse text noted previously, students just being introduced to the basic concepts of international relations may labor under the mistaken impression that trade negotiations have the same immediacy that nuclear deterrence does. No doubt the 24 hour news media have contributed to this false impression since every diplomatic snag between countries is treated as if it were a life-or-death situation. The purpose

of metaphors in international relations theory is to provide useful imagery with which to make sense of abstract concepts such as trade. When a metaphor implying immediacy is inaptly applied to a situation that does not require it, the bad theoretical habits that are abetted by non-scholarly sources such as the news media can be reinforced with negative consequences for students attempting to learn about difficult ideas.

The Chicken game highlights another problem of metaphors in game theory, that is, oversimplification. Game theory typically holds that the game of Chicken models the limited choices confronted by states, especially in all-or-nothing situations like the ones faced by states engaged in nuclear deterrence. With both "cars" (states) rushing headlong toward each other in a game of nerves (a metaphor for the drive for nuclear supremacy among nuclear states) and the assumption of self-preservation, the options available to players in the game are limited only to nuclear victory (military security), utter political defeat (military vulnerability that leads to foreign policy impotence), or mutual annihilation (mutually assured destruction—MAD), assuming a uniformity of interests.

The irony is that the real-life game of chicken engaged in by teenagers itself rarely ends with the three stark outcomes in the theoretical situation modeled by game theory. Rather, usually there exists a *multiplicity* of choices and outcomes. Teens playing chicken with their cars can choose any number of options, including making choices to collaborate to save their reputations, finding other ways to prove their manhood (e.g., fist fights, drinking games, etc.), teaming up against a common enemy or scapegoat, etc. All of these options add dynamics that are not modeled in the simplistic game theoretic scenario. Even if the real-life game is played to its logical conclusion, the outcomes can be less than total victory or defeat for either side (head-on automobile collisions need not necessarily end in death). The starkness of options and outcomes of the game theoretic Chicken simply is not warranted given the complexity of the real-life game of the same name. The simplified *metaphor* that is part and parcel of game theoretic Chicken is thus revealed as misleading in its analytical conclusions.

Game theory is at once the epitome of the scientific method and at the same time its antithesis. From a scientific point of view, game theory represents a form of modeling of social situations just as models are used to pose hypotheses about physical and natural phenomena. For example, if aeronautical engineers want to understand the movement of air over a prototype wing they can build a wind tunnel and see how air generated by a fan flows over a model of the wing. Or,

biologists might model the transmission of genetic traits through successive generations in a long-lived species by selecting for that trait in a species with a much shorter life span (e.g., the ubiquitous fruit fly in laboratory experiments). And, of course, chemists model the structure of molecules metaphorically through the use of shapes and spatial relationships, as any student who has purchased a set of colored and shapes blocks and rods for a college chemistry class can attest. Game theory, like the models used in the physical and natural sciences models behavior in a social setting by simulating that behavior on a smaller scale.[28]

On the antiscientific front, game theory stands out for the contrived and artificial nature of its models. Instead of using physical models or experiments as is common in the physical and natural sciences (or even experimental social sciences including economics, political science, and sociology), game theory relies on storytelling and fiction. For all the strides made in computer simulations and game theory tournaments running programs playing Prisoner's Dilemma strategies against each other (see, e.g., Axelrod 1984), game theory as applied to the study of international relations is noteworthy for its reliance on stories that not only embellish the mathematical problems posed in game theoretic scenarios but actually suggest if not constitute the problems themselves. That is to say, the essence of game theory is to discover solutions to problems in which the pursuit of a maximum numerical return leads to suboptimal returns because these returns are contingent on decisions made by others. Mathematicians can devise computer programs to avoid strategies that yield lower returns, which is why, in its unadorned form, game theory is pure mathematical science.

There are also instances of ambiguity in metaphorical terms invoked in game theory. For example, it has been argued that cooperation problems modeled in game theory can be ameliorated by "transparency" in a game theoretic scenario. "Transparency" is obviously a metaphor, but what exactly does it imply? The *American Heritage Dictionary* (1903) actually offers several definitions of "transparent," any one or more of which could be what is meant by scholars when they use the term. Among those definitions are "capable of transmitting light so that objects or images can be seen as if there were no intervening material [as a synonym with "clear"]; easily seen through or detected; obvious; free from guile; candid or open." Any of these definitions could be what is meant by the metaphor "transparent" as it is applied to institutions such as international regimes that help actors overcome game theoretic dilemmas.[29] Regimes could allow states

and other international actors to see "clearly" on an issue; regimes could make the actions of regime members easily detected or obvious; regimes could represent political institutions that are candid or "open." But as Alexandru Grigorescu (2003, especially 646–648) has pointed out, it is precisely the broad range of political phenomena that have been analyzed using the concept of transparency that has rendered the metaphor so ambiguous in its meaning. For Grigorescu, what the metaphor of transparency implies for the study of international relations is unclear when the exact meaning of the metaphor is not clearly defined.

Finally, it is perhaps with not too much curiosity that a branch of international relations theory is metaphorically referred to in a way that almost seems to trivialize what are presumably serious aspects of world affairs such as war and diplomacy. Although game theory is not restricted to the study of international relations (it is also used regularly in the study of economics, mathematics, and other fields), as applied to international relations the metaphor of "game" theory takes on ironic qualities. The word "game" is defined as an "activity providing entertainment or amusement; a pastime. A competitive activity or sport in which players contend with each other according to a set of rules" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 744).[30] This is not necessarily to say that game theorists reduce international relations to nothing more than the subject of amusement, but the theoretical exercise itself is metaphorically likened to a pastime or competitive sport and scenarios that are meant to model international relations, among other things, are linguistically imagined as "games."[31] This need not be, of course (as is true for any metaphorical allusion). Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944, 1), the founders of game theory, explain that their aim is to provide tools for the "application of the mathematical theory of 'games of strategy,' " and game theory is also referred to as comprising theories of "strategic interaction," which, not without its own connotations, implies something far different than that it is a theory of "games." Neither may be better than the other, but their implications for how international relations is imagined are far different from each other.

Aside from having a more literal quality, "strategic interaction" implies more of a tone of *gravitas* than "game" theory. "Strategy," as the dictionary defines the word, describes something that is "important or essential in relation to a plan of action" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1775). While games can involve competition, the linguistic connotation of the term is light-hearted, at least in comparison with questions of "strategy." Neither term is "correct" as a way to

conceptualize international relations, but their meanings are potentially quite distinct in terms of what they imply and the theoretical propositions they suggest. Game theory is a staple of international relations theory and likely will stay that way. How the metaphors of game theory are construed can have a powerful impact on game theoretic propositions, and thus it is worthwhile to subject these metaphors to analytical interrogation to see how they influence the theoretical process.

## Taking Heed of Cautions: Games Without Stories

As the previous section illustrates, when dilemmas of human interaction are told as metaphorical stories, as opposed to mathematical problems, analytical problems can arise. One "solution" to the problems so posed is to frame issues of strategic interaction in new ways that minimize the influence metaphors have on creating the debate. Two examples are the "Red – Black" game and the game theory – inspired television program *Friend or Foe*.

### The "Red – Black" Game

What dilemmas of human interaction, as opposed to mathematical problems, are posed by game theory is determined by the stories that constitute game theory in a social science setting. A quintessential example of metaphors creating problems is the Prisoner's Dilemma. The essential problem of the Prisoner's Dilemma as applied to social interactions is one of cooperation. Yet the numerical problem told through the story of Prisoner's Dilemma can be presented in any number of ways. This is illustrated by the fact that some social scientist investigators use the payoff structure of the game to *discern* human motivations rather than *assume* them by having subjects play the game not as Prisoner's Dilemma but as the game of "Red – Black."

Quite simply, "Red – Black" works like this: subjects are told that they are going to play a game in which each player can choose between Red or Black without communicating to the other their choice. If both players choose Red they each receive a score of three. If one player chooses Red while the other chooses Black, the player who chooses Red receives a score of one while the player who chooses Black receives a payout of four. The scores are reversed if the first player chooses Black while the second player chooses Red. If both players choose Black they each receive a score of two. The payoff structure can be summarized thus: Red – Red (3 – 3), Red – Black (1 – 4), Black – Red

(4 – 1), Black – Black (2 – 2). Each player is told that the goal is to maximize the total score after playing the game over a series of iterations. What the players are not told is to whom the score accrues, each player individually or both players collectively. In this way no assumptions are made about the narrowness of self-interest. Rather, the purpose is to figure out if players will construe "total score" as the amount each player receives *individually* or the overall amount the players have accrued *combined*. If the players understand "total score" to mean their *individual* payouts they will choose Black more often than Red, but if they understand "total score" to mean the *combined* score for both players they will choose Red more often than Black. This is because the total score for both players combined is optimized when they both choose Red (3 + 3=6), whereas if individual payouts are desired each player will hope to maximize his or her own score by choosing Black (4) if the other chooses Red (1). Obviously the latter pattern yields a lower combined score (4 + 1=5) than Red – Red, so which color each player chooses depends on how and what they understand "total score" to mean (payouts on a combined or individual basis).

Played in this fashion, the puzzle posed by what is typically referred to as "Prisoner's Dilemma" becomes one of a numerical problem rather than a dilemma of cooperation. However, when the mathematical puzzle is adorned with the story of prisoners with a dilemma, assumptions are built into the situation and the game becomes one of cooperation. In this sense, the game is no longer a matrix model for *understanding* choices for optimizing returns and instead becomes one of *assumptions* about human nature for which the numerical structure of the game is simply the device for testing those assumptions. The science of mathematics is replaced by a study of human motivations.

## "Friend or Foe"

Another illustration of a game of strategic interaction that can be studied without a metaphorical back story is the television game show *Friend or Foe* which aired on the Game Show Network (GSN) for two seasons starting in 2002. *Friend or Foe* explicitly employed game theory in the format of the program. On each episode six contestants vied for a cash prize by answering a series of trivia questions. At the beginning of each show the contestants, who were previously unknown to each other, would form pairs for the purpose of the competition.[32] The pairs would then be placed in separate "isolation booths" where they

would answer trivia questions. Each member of the pair would have to agree with the other as to the right answer to each of the questions. Right answers to each question yielded a monetary reward. At the end of the first round the pair that had answered the fewest number of questions correctly would proceed to the "Trust Box" where they would then face a strategic choice, the results of which would determine the division of the prize money won in the first round. At the trust box each contestant could choose "Friend" or "Foe" by selecting a button in the box that the other contestant could not see. If both contestants chose "Friend" the money would be split equally between them. If one contestant chose "Friend" while the other chose "Foe" the contestant selecting "Foe" would win all of the money while the contestant choosing "Friend" would get nothing. If both contestants chose "Foe" neither won anything. The payoff structure can be summarized thus: Friend – Friend (50%–50%), Friend – Foe (0%–100%), Foe – Friend (100%–0%), Foe – Foe (0%–0%). Play continued to a second round where the pair with the fewest correct answers was eliminated and sent to the Trust Box to compete for the accumulated prize money in the same manner as the first pair, and to a final round wherein the winning pair is given a chance to win additional money in a bonus round before making its way to the Trust Box to compete for their share of the prize money.[33]

As the payoff structure for *Friend or Foe* illustrates, the game was a modification of the Prisoner's Dilemma wherein each player calculated the benefit of mutual cooperation relative to the costs of being left with nothing in the event the other player defected. The main difference, and key to the entertainment value of the program, was that in the event one player would be suspected of defection, the other player would have to decide if he or she wanted to sabotage the winnings of the presumed defector by also choosing to play "Foe." In other words, assuming one contestant goes home with nothing in the case of the other defecting, the calculation of the contestant's partner involved asking him or herself whether if it would be better that at least one contestant won some money, or that he or she not be "suckered" even if neither contestant won any money. Since the costs of mutual defection are the same as single defection, the zero-sum nature of the game is higher than in the classical Prisoner's Dilemma and supplemented by a negative-sum aspect as well.

The other obvious difference between *Friend or Foe* and Prisoner's Dilemma is that the former does not require a metaphorical story to illustrate the dilemma of strategic choice that is presented to players. The monetary rewards are sufficiently spelled out in the payoff

structure and neither player needs to be reminded that friendly cooperation yields more prize money than rivalry resulting in defection. One could argue that the terms "friend" and "foe" are metaphorical representations of cooperation and defection. This is no doubt linguistically true. But what is significant is that "friend" and "foe" are not part of a metaphorical story of cooperation and defection but rather an experiential context in which the contestants interact and which makes no assumptions about nor imputes any motives to the players aside from their desire to win money. Indeed, the essential features of the television program would remain unchanged even if it had a different name, no name at all, or if it was called *The TV Show in Which Contestants Answer Trivia Questions and Then Determine Who Wins Certain Amounts of Money by Either Choosing to Share the Money or Trying to Win it All By Making Such a Selection Without the Other Contestant Knowing Which Choice Was Being Made*. Unlike other games such as Prisoner's Dilemma, Stag Hunt, and Chicken, the absence of a metaphorical back story changes nothing about the decisional dynamics of *Friend or Foe* in the same way the name itself (metaphorical as the terms "friend" and "foe" may be) alters nothing about those dynamics of strategic choice.

The examples of Red – Black and *Friend or Foe* show how problems of numerical payoffs can be told without the elaborate narrative structure of most of the scenarios that constitute game theory. This is not to say that narrative stories are inappropriate for modeling problems encountered in the study of international relations, but as the earlier section of this chapter highlights, there are any number of analytical difficulties that crop up in game theoretic stories that complicate scholarly inquiry. Game theory stories often reify or even create problems of cooperation that are as much a function of the framing role of those narratives as they are objective characteristics of international relations. Attentiveness to that fact is a first step in exercising caution to avoid the analytical pitfalls that game theory presents.

# Chapter 8

# Metaphors and Changing Conceptions of International Relations

Metaphorical images of international relations are as old as the study of international relations itself. Given the abstract nature of the concepts that comprise international relations, it is logical to assume that theorists would rely on metaphors to make sense of the abstractions of the field just as scholars do in virtually every other academic discipline. By the same token, since metaphors are part of the narrative of international relations, it is not surprising that this narrative story has changed over time and continues to do so. No historical review of international relations explicitly focused on the role of metaphors in the discipline has been written. However, close readings of overviews of the field reveal that metaphors are integral to the study of international relations as it has progressed through time. This chapter offers a broad summary of changing metaphorical conceptions in the narrative of international relations. It reviews general trends in how international relations has been imagined metaphorically and highlights the way that metaphors continue to shape how concepts are framed. One of the main conclusions of the chapter is that how scholars conceive of international relations metaphorically reflects larger shifts in how politics and society are organized. The metaphors used by scholars to imagine international relations serve as indicators for how political leaders and society in general understand the world.

## Harald Kleinschmidt's History of International Relations

The best historical review of metaphors in international relations is embedded in Harald Kleinschmidt's brilliant and thorough, though much overlooked 2000 book, *The Nemesis of Power: A History of International Relations Theories*.[1] Although the book is not explicitly designed to provide an overview of metaphors in the study of international relations, the ubiquity of metaphors in the field creates a situation in which Kleinschmidt's history of theories of international relations is inevitably also a history of the metaphors that permeate the discipline. Because Kleinschmidt's book provides the most comprehensive overview of the evolution of implied metaphors in international relations theory, the first part of this chapter adheres very closely to his carefully laid out progression of metaphorical images.

According to Kleinschmidt, many of the first metaphors in international relations helped scholars visualize the world. These metaphors were spatial in nature and took as their point of departure the rudimentary maps of the world created by European theologians and cartographers. Initially, the world was understood to comprise several bodies of water and areas of land that were nonetheless part of a unified entity under god's domain:

> The standard occidental medieval world map, the *mappamundi* of Latin sources, was drawn on models of antiquity and presented the world as a tricontinental spherical land mass. The land mass was encircled by a narrow strip of water into which a large number of islands were interspersed. The land mass was commonly referred to as the *ecumene* . . . The religious connotation of this world picture was made explicit in the many maps that presented the *ecumene* above or below symbols or figures of the divine world, usually a figure of the trinity or angels or both. (Kleinschmidt 2000, 21–22)[2]

It is worth noting that maps are metaphorical in nature, that is, they are not literal reproductions of physical reality, but rather are representations of geographic features highlighting similarities between that which is experienced through human contact with the physical world and the seemingly unlike medium of two-dimensional illustration. In medieval maps, geographic features were understood metaphorically as occupying a space relative to the divine forces of the universe. In other words, the unity of the world as indicated in medieval maps must be understood as simply a metaphor with which to understand man's place relative to the larger world governed by the divine.

These metaphorical images of the world led to theories of international relations that stressed what Kleinschmidt (21) calls "universalism": "As a theory of international relations, religious universalism in the early Middle Ages was informed by a specific concept of space, which drew on the Bible, depicting the world as round as well as permeable and rendering existing administrative boundaries as secondary." Specifically, relations among groups in the Middle Ages were governed by political rule vested in the early institutions of the Christian church and its immediate antecedents: "In other words, universalism, be it associated with the Roman Empire or with the Christian Church, was bound to continue to be defined in the terms which were set by the world picture that had been transmitted in the Roman Empire and displayed the *ecumene* as the permeable domain of universal rule" (ibid., 36). In this sense, contemporary scholars would scarcely recognize relations under the system of universalism as *international* in origin. Yet to the extent that medieval observers and practitioners of political affairs understood the world, interactions among rulers represented the division of authority and its geographic locations in the metaphorical terms of universalism depicted within biblical texts and their graphic manifestations including maps.

One of the qualities of metaphors is that when they are used frequently they can take on a literal quality and they lose their ability to generate new understandings of that which they initially brought to light. When this happens, new metaphors emerge as heuristic devices to supplant the old metaphors that no longer fulfill this role. This was the case in the case of the spatial metaphors that gave rise to medieval theories of universalism in the study of international relations. Specifically, when humans began to experience a physical world of continents and bodies of water that could be explored at length (as opposed to the *metaphorical* images of geography inherent in the Latin *mappa-mundi*), new metaphors of international relations emerged that led to new theories to replace the old theories of universalism. Kleinschmidt (80) writes: "Univeralism could no longer be confined to a world picture which described the world as a spherical tricontinental land mass. Instead, it had to be tied to a *picture* of the world as the globe where land and water were interspersed in the complicated way that happens to be the case" (emphasis added). In short, in the medieval era humans experienced the world close at hand and represented it metaphorically in maps that implied a closeness of humans to both the physical world and to the institutions of society and government. This metaphorical map of the world supported the universalist view of international relations. This was supplanted by a pluralistic view of the world supported

by metaphors capturing the new experiences of physical contact with the world brought about by advances in geographic exploration. Integral to this were new forms of political organization that would set the stage for a new understanding of how political activity was organized across geographic lines.

Kleinschmidt (51) observes that by the fourteenth century new images of human relations began to have an impact on the way scholars theorized about international relations. Specifically, metaphorical images of the world depicted in maps were replaced by a new metaphor, that is, the metaphor of the social contract, which was carried over from urban politics to international relations. The social contract as a metaphor displaced universalism as a theory of world affairs. These are the beginnings of what contemporary scholars would recognize as theories of international relations among distinct geographically defined groups. The metaphor of universalism, as depicted graphically in medieval maps, privileged a politics of "international relations" under the domain of a centralized political authority. By contrast, the metaphor of contractualism highlighted and emphasized the legitimacy of secular actors, thus paving the way for a vision of international relations that acknowledged the sovereignty of secular rulers. This evolution was prompted by new metaphorical images of the world that informed scholars' understanding of how to explain that world. Eventually what would come to replace the spatial metaphors of the past were metaphorical images based on machines and man.

As Kleinschmidt (114) observes, by the seventeenth century theorists became convinced "that the maintenance of stability was a positive value in its own right . . . This conviction was in turn rooted in a tendency to compare living beings and indeed the whole inanimate world with technical devices, mainly the sophisticated machines (*automata*) which became fashionable in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the then most recent technological innovation." Jernej Pikalo (2008, 49) echoes Kleinschmidt's thesis, observing during the time frame in question "metaphors of mechanical motion, particularly clockwork mechanisms, became appropriate for a time when people were literally set in motion due to political and social transformations." The mechanical metaphors that scholars relied on formed the bases for radical shifts in the theories they used to explain politics in general and international relations in particular. Perhaps the most notable of theories to emanate from mechanistic metaphors is the theory of the balance of power, explored at greater length in Chapter 5.

One of the main impacts of the machine metaphor on theories of international relations was that it suggested that relations among states were, or at least should be, part of a self-regulating system, not subject to the ambitions of capricious rulers. Among the commentators who articulated this perspective was Jonathan Swift. While Swift accepted the metaphor of the balance of power, he "avoided the use of the scales model because he focused on the distribution of power among many actors simultaneously engaged in a contest for primacy within the system of European territorial polities. Swift argued the position that the maintenance of the balance among all actors in the system was the first condition of stability in the system and should therefore have priority over the partial interests of the involved rulers and their dynasties" (Kleinschmidt 2000, 124). It is worth noting here that like many scholars of international relations prior to the contemporary period, Swift not only sought to explain outcomes but also to advocate for certain positions. Theorists of the present day typically seek scholarly neutrality, yet as the example of Swift demonstrates, the metaphors on which one relies for explanation also leads one to prefer certain outcomes over others since metaphors fundamentally shape how humans see the world.

As discussed earlier in this book, one of the ways that metaphors operate on the human mind is by constructing individuals' realities. Thus, while metaphors are integral to creating new understandings, they can also reinforce perceptions of reality. In the case of machine metaphors of international relations, Kleinschmidt (125–126) explains that once these metaphors enshrined theories of international relations that envisioned restraint by capricious rulers, evidence of the lasting nature of the balance of power was sought in history: "Not unlike political theorists in general, several international theorists went to great efforts to collect evidence for what they believed to have been the Greek origin of the balance of power, although they agreed that the words and the term had not then been in use . . . In other words, they must have assumed that the use of evidence from sources of antiquity in the eighteenth century was possible without interruptions and fundamental changes." Here we see how metaphors can truly serve as the basis for enduring theories of international relations, as opposed to mere illustrative analogies that highlight the similarities between two or more cases of international affairs.

While theories of international relations are properly seen as explanations of such relations, throughout history they have served as the basis for prescriptive approaches as well. This is no less true for the balance of power theory, which emanated from mechanistic metaphors.

Inasmuch as scholars and rulers alike wanted the "machine" of international relations to operate smoothly, it made sense to counsel balances of power that kept the machine working efficiently and in balance. As Kleinschmidt (2000, 128–129) observes: "The logic of the eighteenth-century mechanistic balance-of-power theory was that it induced governments to follow the same standards, conventions as well as norms and act uniformly. If all rulers did the same at the same time, abiding by the same rulers, making their intentions known and controlling themselves as well as each other, the balance would work and everyone would benefit." What started out as a metaphor for international relations turned into a full-blown theory that purported to explain relations among international actors and thereby also suggest the actions they should take assuming they all shared the same perceptions about the world and valued common outcomes.

The mechanistic metaphors that framed the study of international relations would eventually fall out of favor. What took their place were visions of world affairs that Kleinschmidt groups together under the rubric of "Biologism."[3] Biological metaphors took as their point of departure the physical conditions of humans. These metaphors took a number of guises: "New words coming in use at the beginning of the nineteenth century betray a concept of the international system that differed from that of the eighteenth century. Among the newly current phrases were 'community of states', 'world state system', 'general concert', 'cultural family', 'society of nations' and 'monarchy of nations' " (ibid., 153). These terms focused on relations among humans. However, as Kleinschmidt explains, it was the biological nature of humans that provided among the most durable and enduring metaphors used to explain international relations.[4]

Among the areas in which biological metaphors would have an impact on theories of international relations was the aforementioned balance of power model. As Kleinschmidt explains, one of the seminal events that gave credence to biological metaphors in the conception of the balance of power was the French Revolution. The old mechanistic metaphors that supported balance of power theory predicted stability in political affairs (since machines were seen as self-regulating and orderly entities). By contrast, biological metaphors suggested dynamic change, something the French Revolution certainly implied for international relations. Kleinschmidt (154) cites the German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) in this regard: "In Fichte's description, the mechanistic balance of power turned into a chimera, something that idle or scrupulous propagandists strove for or argued with in order to defend sinister and, in any case, immoral goals. The

balance of power was against nature and nonsensical, and its pursuit at the hands of a ruler was ludicrous at best." The practical implications for understandings of international relations from the new biological image of the balance of power were felt at the Congress of Vienna after the Napoleonic wars. Scholars and rulers alike recognized that states were not constrained by the presumed self-regulating elements of a machine-like balance of power, and thus allowances had to be made in both the theory and practice of international relations for dynamic forces that disrupted prevailing systems of stability.

Nationalism also was given a boost by biological metaphors. Again, the French Revolution served as a turning point, forcing scholars to reexamine the images they used to conceptualize political entities. Specifically, the terms "state" and "nation" were associated with the presumed living nature of polities; that is, states and nations were seen as living " 'organisms' made up from sets of institutions of government for the ruled" (ibid., 161). Consequently, "theorists concluded from these terminological changes that states and nations were 'organisms' that needed to be compatible. The boundaries of 'states' were to be identical with the 'living spaces' of the nations and, if nations desired revisions of the boundaries of their states, governments were expected to fulfil these desires" (ibid., 162). Thus, what contemporary scholars might take as relatively straightforward in terms of the creation of nation-states actually was the product of shifting metaphorical imagery that led to new theories of political organization.

Conceptions of the international system also began to flow from the metaphors of biologism. Whereas mechanistic metaphors induced scholars to think of international relations as a large machine, biological metaphors led more logically to notions of the world as constituted by groupings of biological agents, specifically, humans. Of course, one way to conceive of human groupings is as societies, and thus new theories frequently centered on theories of international society. Kleinschmidt (165) cites one scholar, Johann Battista Fallati (1809–1855): "In Fallati's metaphorical language, world society was the widest possible extension of the biologistic model of the human body." Kleinschmidt (168) sums up the transformation of theories of international relations that took place during the French Revolution as follows: "Once again, international theories did not change autonomously but as part and parcel of a more fundamental change in perceptions of and attitudes to the world . . . As a standard model, the static, well-ordered, smoothly operating and self-equilibrating machine gave way to the dynamic, integrating, conflict-absorbing and tension-provoking living organism represented as the human body."

According to Kleinschmidt, all modern theories of international relations to the present day have their origins in biologism and the metaphors that underlie it: "No single European or North American international theory is on record which has called into question or sought to refute the concept of the international system as an overarching organic entity in its own right and as larger than the sum of its parts" (ibid., 171). Specifically, Kleinschmidt identifies two broad traditions that have embodied biologism from the nineteenth century to the contemporary period. The first, Realism, is well known to present day scholars. The other Kleinschmidt refers to is functionalism, which includes Liberalism, but also other schools of thought. Thus, while contemporary Realism would seem to differ radically from functionalist theories of liberal social theory and liberal institutionalism, according to Kleinschmidt, all of these theoretical traditions have their roots in biological metaphorical imagery. Where Realism differed from the Liberal schools of thought was in the assumptions it made about human nature, and hence the motivations of states. Whereas Liberals trusted that states would see advantages to abiding by international rules and institutions to keep the peace, Realists asserted that it was wiser to assume that states would rely on their own resources for security and therefore it was preferable to give states the ability to exercise rational decision making than to rely on global organization (ibid., 196–197).

From a practical point of view, the assumptions of Realism, combined with its grounding in biological metaphors, suggested the types of policies that Realists thought were preferable if the goal was peace among states. Specifically, since states were presumed to be like individuals in terms of their desire to act in self defense, and since the international system was anarchic, it was logical to deduce that states would benefit more from a lack of the type of international institutions favored by functionalist Liberals rather than their presence: "As war could not be removed from the world through human efforts because living beings seemed to share a 'natural' inclination to it, it made no sense to rely on international organization as a means to promote peace. Instead, eternal vigilance and ascertainable readiness to use military force were recommended as the best deterrents against war." (Ibid., 207). Thus we can see that the implications of Realist theory, as is the case for other theories of international relations, follow logically from the metaphors that inform it.

While Kleinschmidt maintains that biological metaphors continue to this day to frame theories of international relations, they are not monolithic. Contemporary international relations theory is imagined

with a host of original, innovative, and colorful metaphors that range across theoretical and paradigmatic perspectives. Indeed, with the advent of so-called globalization, there is a sort of renaissance within international relations theory of efforts to think up new metaphorical ways to envision the world. The next section offers a non-exhaustive peek at some of the most original metaphors to emerge in recent years and how they shape thinking about international relations.

## Of "Worlds," "Webs," "Holograms," "Ladders," "Mobius Strips," "Fragmegration," "Distant Proximities," and "Black Spots"

As the foregoing discussion demonstrates, the metaphorical narrative of international relations is an ongoing and dynamic one. Scholars of international politics are constantly searching for new ways of conceptualizing the metaphorical space of international relations as the story of international relations continues to be told. This is no less true for contemporary scholars of IR as it was for scholars in earlier times. This section reviews some of the most notable efforts by contemporary experts to metaphorically conceptualize international relations.

A good place to start is James Rosenau who alone has suggested no fewer than a half dozen metaphorical images with which to visualize international interactions. One of Rosenau's most notable efforts has been to describe the reconstitution of international relations metaphorically as "The Two *Worlds* of World Politics" (emphasis added). In this chapter subtitle from Rosenau's 1990 book *Turbulence in World Politics* (the chapter's main title is "Studying Structures") the word "world," which in its normal use has attained a literal and unremarkable status as a synonym for the planet earth, is turned into a metaphor by which world politics is imagined as consisting of two metaphorical "worlds."[5] The term "world," of course, is widely used as a metaphor. Many areas of activity are referred to metaphorically as a "world" of one thing or another (e.g., "a world of possibilities," "ABC's Wide World of Sports," the retail establishment Mattress World, etc.).[6] Since metaphors often serve a generative function of creating new ways of understanding, in this usage to call something a "world" is to create the new knowledge that a particular set of actions, now grouped together, constitute a self-contained realm—a world—having its own rules, actors, identities, relationships, and expectations.[7] It is not for nothing that the online fantasy game *World of Warcraft* has so immersed its players in the environment in which the game takes place that many players have experienced difficulty

distinguishing the world of the *World of Warcraft* from the quotidian world in which they otherwise live.

It is no accident, then, that the practical effect of Rosenau's label of two "worlds" of world politics is to create the impression that international relations is now constructed not of one world but of two. The metaphor is ingeniously crafted to generate a new understanding about how international relations is constructed in the post–Cold War era. Scholars typically use the word "world" synonymously with "international" such that they use the expressions "international politics," "world politics," "international affairs," and "world affairs," interchangeably.[8] In the customary usage, there is only one set of "international" politics (although there may be regional politics) just as there is only one "world." The metaphor of "two worlds," however, generates new meanings such that the old world of one world is now understood as comprising literally two worlds. It is not surprising that approaches such as Rosenau's use metaphors to participate in replicating through language the reconstruction of international politics from one world to two.

It is worth noting two things in this discussion. First, some scholars would argue that Rosenau does not go far enough in identifying two worlds of world politics and that, in fact, in the post–Cold War era international politics has been fractured so much that there are multiple "worlds" in which "world" politics takes place. Second, Rosenau could have chosen a different terminology to express the notion that international politics in the post–Cold War era no longer represents a single set of realities in terms of overarching rules, identities, behaviors, etc. Rosenau could have chosen a different metaphor, say, two "realms" of world politics, or he could have chosen more literal language to assert that world politics now takes place governed by (at least) two sets of expectations that replace the one set of expectations that governed the previous era of international relations (i.e., the state-centric period). Whether Rosenau was being deliberate with the goal of using a metaphor to emphasize the reconstruction of international politics or simply was employing a well-crafted turn of a phrase to play on the notion of "world" politics, the net effect is the same, that is, to metaphorically generate a new understanding of the parameters of international politics as international politics itself changes into something new.

In addition to the "two worlds" metaphor Rosenau developed in *Turbulence in World Politics* (the title of which also constitutes a metaphor, discussed at greater length in Chapter 6 of this book), Rosenau posited a series of more complicated images in his 2003

book *Distant Proximities*. One of Rosenau's metaphors suggests an alternative to a more established metaphorical image in the study of international relations, namely, the classic "levels of analysis" image by which different variables thought to influence international relations are "located" metaphorically in a succession of horizontal spaces.[9] Rosenau's suggested alternative is the similarly imagined "governance ladder."[10] Like "levels of analysis" the "governance ladder" separates variables influencing international relations into horizontal spaces, however Rosenau's metaphor envisions a greater degree of fluidity in terms of what issues are governed at various levels and how they are governed by the institutions of governance that both influence international politics and are influenced by it:

> The governance ladder focuses on the movement of issues up and down the various rungs as they arrest the attention of officials and publics, thereby becoming governance issues. Issues that first generate widespread awareness at local levels get onto the ladder at the bottom rungs, while those that originate at the global level occupy the top rungs, just as those that get onto political agendas at the national level perch on the middle rungs. Some issues remain on the same rung throughout; some start at the bottom and move to the top; and some start at the top and percolate down. (Rosenau 2003, 395)

It should also be clear here that Rosenau is not necessarily talking about levels that serve as rubrics for theory construction. That is to say, it is not as if there are some theories that operate at the systemic level of analysis and others that operate at the domestic level of analysis as is formulated in the levels of analysis metaphor. Rather, Rosenau's governance ladder metaphor is designed to alert scholars that issues can be governed by a variety of governmental actors and thus what is needed is a single theoretical framework that captures the fluidity of issue-governance as issues move "up" and "down" the ladder among different levels of governance.[11]

Rosenau takes this governance ladder metaphor further by suggesting that the dynamics of globalization have made it nearly impossible to say that governance takes place at any one fixed "level" of political activity. To capture this concept Rosenau suggests a mixed metaphor combining the image of a mobius strip with that of a web to form what he calls the "mobius-web of governance":

> Mobius-web governance is rooted in the impetus to employ rule systems that steer issues through both hierarchical and networked interactions across levels of aggregation that may encompass all the diverse collectivities and individuals who participate in the processes of governance. These interactions constitute

a hybrid structure in which the dynamics of governance are so intricate and overlapping among the several levels as to form a singular, weblike process that, like a mobius, neither begins nor culminates at any level or at any point in time. (Ibid., 396–397)[12]

Whereas the levels of analysis metaphor posits that there are rival theoretical paradigms that offer competing explanations for international relations on the basis of variables that are fixed at distinct horizontally layered spaces, Rosenau's mobius-web metaphor suggests that by acknowledging that governance encompasses actors and issues residing at a host of places in which political authority is exercised, one can construct an overarching theoretical framework that takes into account the interrelated nature of international politics in a globalized world.

Rosenau's thesis about varying metaphorical locations of political authority is part of his larger theory of globalization. For Rosenau, globalization consists of both the concentration of political authority in supranational institutions and the disaggregation of political authority through interdependence, a process Rosenau refers to as "fragmegration" (ibid., 11). As the term implies, "fragmegration" is a metaphorical amalgamation of the words "fragmentation" and "integration," the former referring to the disaggregation of political authority brought about through processes of global interdependence and the latter referring to the concentration of political authority in supranational institutions such as the EU that are as much a part of globalization as the fragmenting processes that they accompany. Rosenau's "fragmegration" formulation provides an image that helps scholars who are so inclined to visualize the complex construction of world affairs that is not captured by traditional metaphors such as the "billiard ball" and "container" metaphors for the state that fail to capture the growing heterogeneity in actors and venues that constitute international interactions. "Fragmegration" also serves as a synonym for the metaphorical title of Rosenau's book, in which "*Distant Proximities*" entail the spatial distances implied in globalization and the spatial proximity that is implied by localization as integration and fragmentation proceed apace.

The history of metaphors that see international relations in ways that are more complex than "levels of analysis" stretches back to at least the 1970s. A notable example of metaphors that challenges state-focused images of international relations is contained in the title of Richard Mansbach, Yale Ferguson, and Donald Lampert's 1976 book *The Web of World Politics.* The metaphorical "web" in the book's

title refers to the interlinked relationships among a variety of "global actors" that supplement traditional state actors in world politics. As a visual cue to reinforce the "web" metaphor, the cover of Mansbach, Ferguson, and Lampert's book is illustrated with a picture of a globe overlaid with a spider web with the names of six different types of global actors situated within the web. The "web" metaphor is designed to highlight how these six types of actors interact across a network of relations that intersect with each other in ways that are not imagined by traditional views that see states as the sole or primary actors that are sealed off from each other as visualized by metaphors depicting states as "individuals" or "containers." Mansbach, Ferguson, and Lampert's "web" metaphor is prescient for the way it suggested a new way of conceptualizing an interdependent international relations many years before contemporary approaches such as Constructivism offered theoretical tools for doing this.

Similarly, Robert Kaplan (1994, 75) suggests the metaphor of a "hologram" to reflect the shifting loyalties and nodes of political authority that characterize the post–Cold War world:

> In this hologram would be the overlapping sentiments of group and other identities atop the merely two-dimensional color markings of city-states and the remaining nations, themselves confused in places by shadowy tentacles, hovering overhead, indicating the power of drug cartels, mafias, and private security agencies. Instead of borders, there would be moving "centers" of power, as in the Middle Ages. Many of these layers would be in motion . . . Henceforth the map of the world will never be static. This future map—in a sense, the "Last Map"—will be an ever-mutating representation of chaos.

Kaplan's hologram metaphor is an interesting one because its complexity does not easily conjure up ready-made images that imply preexisting beliefs about the nature of international relations. Other graphic concepts such as "billiard balls" and "webs" that have been offered up as metaphors for international relations evoke images that are familiar. While most people have seen holograms and have a sense of what they are, they would be hard-pressed to describe them in simple terms. For the record, a hologram is a "pattern produced on a photosensitive medium that has been exposed by holography and then photographically developed," while holography is defined as a "method of producing a three-dimensional image of an object by recording on a photographic plate or film the pattern of interference formed by a split laser beam and then illuminating the pattern either

with a laser or with ordinary light" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 863). In many ways the difficulty of defining a hologram in all its complexity parallels the difficulty Kaplan intends to convey in understanding the complexity of a post–Cold War world in which one- and two-dimensional metaphorical "maps" do not adequately depict the changing nature of international relations.

Certain miscellaneous concepts in international relations also have been captured metaphorically. For example, in recent years scholars have searched for ways of describing ungovernable regions that fail to rise to the level of states. Since many theories of international relations deem states as the main actors in international affairs, those actors or parts of the world in which statehood is either not achieved or is less than complete need to be defined in some fashion. As is common in most other areas of international relations, metaphors serve a role in giving a name to this category of actors. One group of scholars has chosen to refer to para-states or quasi-states as metaphorical "Black Spots." According to Bartosz Stanislawski (2008, 366):

> Black Spots represent territories in which and from which both transnational organized crime (TOC) and terrorism operate, often becoming criminal-terrorist entities . . . Black Spots may be compared to the astronomical notion of black holes in the universe—we know they exist, but they are difficult or impossible to see. Black Spots are places in the shadows of global attention, located off the beaten track, not covered by the mainstream media, and usually below the radar of security agencies. They are the forgotten islands of international disorder and most of their inhabitants usually prefer them to remain as such.[13]

Among the interesting aspects of this passage is the inclusion of additional metaphors to give substance to the base metaphor of "Black Spots." These "Black Spots" are located "in the shadows." They are "off the beaten track" and "below the radar" of other international actors. They are metaphorical "islands" in the sea of international relations. In addition, Stanislawski (369) cites King (2001) who describes a similar phenomenon of parts of the world that escape media attention as metaphorical "informational black holes."

The presence of numerous metaphors in this passage indicates, among other things, that the "Black Spots" metaphor itself is a new one and does not necessarily immediately conjure up in the reader a sense of what concepts in international relations are captured by the image. To some extent, as a new metaphor designed to give meaning to a new phenomenon in international relations the metaphor

itself is in need of clarification until it becomes part of the standard discourse of international relations theory. Additionally, the "Black Spots" metaphor also gives rise to related metaphors that refine the concept of ungovernable regions that lie outside international efforts to provide the trappings of statehood. David Crane (2008, 391) refers to "dark corners" which "form when the international community is distracted, looking elsewhere to solve a crisis." There is consistency with the "Black Spots" metaphor here inasmuch as both "Black Spots" and "dark corners" imply a spatial image in which certain parts of the world are figuratively out of sight of international attention. Obviously, in an age of satellite technology and highly developed forms of surveillance no part of the world is literally unseen by international observers, so the purpose of the "Black Spots" and "dark corners" metaphors is to emphasize how the issues that characterize these parts of the world are ones that either escape the attention of the world community, are not of pressing concern to it, or represent matters over which international actors are relatively powerless. There is an ironic quality to the "dark corners" metaphor as well in that the focus of Crane's article in which he develops this metaphor is West Africa which is part of a continent which at times in the past was referred to derisively as "the dark continent." This latter metaphor conveyed the idea that Africa was somewhat opaque and unintelligible to outsiders, but there was a racial quality to the metaphor as well.

When it comes to the abstraction that is international relations there is no one set of metaphorical images that "best" captures the nature of actors, identities, norms, practices, or behaviors that constitute that which scholars of international relations study. Furthermore, the very conceptualization of international relations by means of metaphorical images is as much part of how international relations is constructed as are the meanings that actors themselves use to construct the intersubjective realities in which what constitutes international relations takes place. For example, in the classic telling of international relations from the perspective of Realism international relations is constructed of metaphorical hard-shelled container-like states. This is not a new observation as other chapters in this book document. Realists, however, typically use these types of metaphors merely to help visualize what they see as relatively unchanging and objective qualities of the international system.

The efforts of scholars such as those reviewed in this section, on the other hand, explicitly use metaphors as a way to suggest multiple ways in which international relations can be conceptualized and

how it changes over time. This is to illustrate the fact that the stuff of international relations is neither fixed nor objective, but rather, highly abstract in terms of the multiple meanings that can be attached to the material world. Traditionally minded scholars such as Realists obviously recognize the existence of non-state actors such as nongovernmental organizations and multinational corporations but these actors are not built into the international system as autonomous actors from the Realist point of view because they are not constructed as such via means such as metaphorical imagery. Scholars who construct international relations as comprising relevant non-state actors, such as those who use the Constructivist approach, favor metaphors that emphasize the variety of non-state actors that exist in the world today. The metaphors discussed in this section—metaphors that include "webs," "holograms," "ladders," "Mobius-webs," "fragmegration," "distant proximities," and "black spots"—are not simply mental images of world politics but also widen the definition of international relations by suggesting that it is constituted of something more than merely state-to-state relations. Thus, whether the authors who advance these metaphors are explicitly Constructivists or not, their contributions are consistent with novel ways of conceptualizing and theorizing international relations.

## Medieval Politics as a Metaphor for International Relations

Among the ways in which contemporary international relations can be imagined is with the aid of a metaphor that in some ways takes IR scholarship back to the earliest period in which international relations was conceptualized according to Kleinschmidt's history of the field, namely, the metaphor of medieval politics. The medieval metaphor is often thought to be an apt image for current developments in international relations because it provides a framework for studying a post–Cold War world in which the identities of actors and political spaces are in question. As Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach (2004, 78) observe, "the similarity between medieval Europe and the world that is emerging today makes it fashionable to suggest that we are experiencing a sort of 'new medievalism.' "[14] "New" or "neomedievalism" (as some scholars refer to it) recalls a period of history in which boundaries and identities were more fluid than they allegedly have been in the modern state system. As Mathias Albert and Lothar Brock (1996, 72) write, "the feudal system of medieval Europe

was founded not on a territorial but on a functional partition of political space." This characterization is shared by John Agnew (1994, 60) who opines: "In medieval Europe there were few fixed boundaries between different political authorities. Regional networks of kinship and interpersonal affiliation left little scope for fixed territorial limits. Violence was widespread not because state borders were clearly established but because of frequent switches in political allegiance across fuzzy boundaries." Given changes brought about by the end of the Cold War (e.g., European integration, globalization, and increased flows from person to person, regardless of state boundaries) politics in medieval times seems to be an apt metaphor current circumstances.[15]

Ole Wæver has taken this concept and suggested a visual metaphor to give it shape. Wæver's vision (1997, 64) proposes political authority exercised in concentric circles rather than the traditional image of political spaces that is visualized in the form of cartographic maps. Wæver's new metaphor (61) extends the historical timeline of neomedievalism to the era of empires. In Wæver's view, inviolable state borders that contain the state offer an obsolete vision, especially in an integrated Europe. Furthermore, the extension of authority from European institutions to the European citizenry makes it harder for states to justify their existence as the sole locus of political authority.

The neomedieval metaphor and Wæver's metaphor of empires are relevant in theoretical discussions of globalization.[16] While the processes of "globalization" are subject to debate, the picture that is emerging is of a world with fragmented authority and overlapping political allegiances.[17] As political authority becomes diffused among a variety of state and non-state actors, the processes of globalization have the potential to render much of the discourse of the traditional state obsolete.[18] Other types of actors, whether they are nongovernmental organizations, religions, multinational corporations, labor unions, consumer groups, or any of the other myriad groupings that create loyalties and exercise some type of authority (political or not) could erode the authority of the state and thus its primacy in the study of international relations.[19]

In sum, neomedievalism serves as a metaphor for changing post–Cold War possibilities in the realm of international relations. With the advent of globalization and economic integration prevailing models that emphasize the state as the primary actor in world affairs are thought to be misleading in terms of their propositions. Neomedievalism serves as an apt metaphor for a world populated by

a variety of non-state actors exercising a range of varied functions and roles. As Torbjørn L. Knutsen (1997, 286) observes:

> If scenarios such as these are useful, it is not because they depict a new, post-Westphalian reality. Rather, they are useful because they are metaphors that help us make sense out of a period of postmodern turbulence . . . Treated as metaphors, old visions and ideas may be turned and twisted until they produce new perspectives, unexpected visions novel concepts, appropriate terms, innovative syntheses and other tools of theory-building which help us capture the rough outlines of post-modern international relations.

Like other metaphors in the study of international relations, neo-medievalism provides a framework for hypothesizing the nature of interactions among units. The popularity of this metaphor stems in part from its emphasis on change in international affairs, in particular, widespread change from a state-centric system to one in which non-state actors increasingly play a salient role.

## ALTERNATIVE METAPHORICAL NARRATIVES OF "INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS"

One thing that is apparent in an examination of metaphors in international relations theory is that there is by no means agreement about what metaphorical narrative best tells the story of international relations. Furthermore, changing conceptions beg the question about the metaphor of "international relations" itself.[20] Although "international relations" could be considered a literal expression, it is a metaphor nonetheless and as such suggests certain conclusions that might necessarily be suggested either by alternate metaphors or by other literal terms. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines "relations" as "the mutual dealings or connections of persons, groups, or nations in social, business, or diplomatic matters; sexual intercourse."[21] Among the synonyms for "relations" that could be used in the word's stead to describe dealings among international actors are "interactions," "affairs," "dealings," "matters," "concerns," "proceedings," goings on," and "life." Any of these words would suggest subtle differences in the way that the practice of international "relations" currently is understood.

There is nothing even inevitable in the "international" part of the "international relations" equation as other terms, some of them metaphorical, could substitute as a perspective within which the subject matter of "IR" is studied. As a way of framing the subject matter of

"international relations," for example, Jon Burton (1972, 21) prefers "world society": "If we employ the term 'world society' instead of 'international relations', if we approach our study in this global way instead of the more traditional 'national' way, we will tend to have a wider focus, to ask questions that are more fundamental and important to civilization, and to be able to assess better the relevance of our own national behaviour to the wider world environment." Similarly and more recently, Anna Agathangelou and L. H. M. Ling (2004; 2009) have suggested the rubric of what they call "Worldism," which rests on a metaphorical image of the authors' borrowing of Gandhi's vision of an "oceanic circle" that implies a connectedness among humans.[22] This imagery is designed to make the study of "international relations" more inclusive by dissolving notions of sovereignty, making hierarchy obsolescent, relativizing normality, replacing legitimacy with engagement, and reframing power (Agathangelou and Ling 2004, 42–44; 2009, chapters 5, 9). The authors' project is an ambitious one and may prove daunting for most scholars. However, it does illustrate the possibilities for reconceptualizing the study of international relations by bringing alternative metaphors to bear on the field.

Another alternative to "international relations" is Richard Mansbach, Yale Ferguson, and Donald Lampert's notion of IR framed as a "complex conglomerate system." Unlike "international relations," which tends to focus on states, the "complex conglomerate system" comprises six types of "global actors," which interact with each other as they perform a series of "global tasks" not readily imagined by traditional theories of international relations.[23] What emerges is a qualitatively different picture of relations constituted by a greater range of exchanges than that which is pictured by the term "international relations": "The principle feature of the complex conglomerate system is the formation of situationally-specific alignments of different types of actors using a variety of means to achieve complementary objectives" (Mansbach, Ferguson, and Lampert 1976, 42). Since the complexity of what the authors imagine is not adequately captured by the phrase "international relations," "complex conglomerate system" presents an image that is more multifaceted and therefore more accurate in terms of reproducing the reality of what constitutes world affairs.

Mansbach, Ferguson, and Lampert's suggestion for reimaging what is typically referred to as "international relations" is an intriguing one for many reasons, not least of which is the alternate metaphors it puts forth. Indeed, "complex conglomerate system" comprises

three metaphors: "complex," "conglomerate," and "system." Inasmuch as "system" is already used in discussions of "international relations" and has been analyzed previously Chapter 3 of this book we can lay it aside at this point to focus on the other two words. "Complex" as an adjective is defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary* (386) as "consisting of interconnected or interwoven parts, composite; composed of two or more units; involved or intricate, as in structure; complicated." In addition to the synonymous and metaphorical "interwoven" contained in this definition, the dictionary goes on to list as synonyms for "complex" the words "complicated," "intricate," "involved," "tangled," and "knotty." What is interesting here from a metaphorical perspective is the contrast between what is implied by "complex" and the implications of "international relations" as ways of imagining the phenomena in question. "Relations" as a metaphor conjures up a sort of linear exchange between two actors. Individuals "relate" with each other in forms consisting of conversations, commercial transactions, sexual union, and the like. By contrast, "complex" systems are marked by a metaphorical interweaving of exchanges that create a metaphorical "web" such as the one in the title of the book in which the "complex conglomerate system" moniker is suggested (*The Web of World Politics: Nonstate Actors in the Global System*). In settling on the "complex" theme the authors provide a metaphorical foundation for their theoretical propositions that posit expanded types of interactions not suggested by "international relations." That Mansbach, Ferguson, and Lampert chose to use the word "complex" as opposed to one of its synonyms ("complicated," "intricate," "involved," "tangled," "knotty") suggests theoretical propositions that might have differed subtly given the subtle nuances each of these words suggest.

"Conglomerate" is an interesting metaphor since technical-sounding terms not normally used in everyday language typically tend toward the literal end of the literal – metaphorical spectrum. As defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary* (397), "conglomerate" means "gathered into a mass; clustered," and as used in geology "made up of loosely cemented heterogeneous material." When combined with "complex," "complex conglomerate system" suggests a bit of a mixed metaphor since "complex" imagines the units involved as "interwoven" or "tangled" while "conglomerate" presents the image of a "gathered cluster" or elements "cemented" into a mass (the Latin origin of "conglomerate," *conglomerāre,* contains the term *glomerāre* meaning "to wind into a ball"). With "system" defined as a "group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent elements

forming a complex whole" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1823), what emerges from "complex conglomerate system" is in fact several mixed metaphors that connote something more multifaceted (to use a geometric metaphor) than what is suggested by "international relations" which implies fewer (metaphorical) dimensions with which to make propositions about the interactions of actors around the world. This may or may not have been the expressed intent of the authors, but inasmuch as the metaphors in the expression correspond to the model itself there is a synergy that emerges between the phrase "complex conglomerate system" and the theory that emanates from it.

The point here is not to say that "international relations" as a metaphor is inappropriate as a way of framing academic debate nor that some other set of metaphors is better. Rather, the purpose of this discussion is to highlight how metaphors in many ways frame what is important to study and how it is to be studied. Metaphors have been prevalent throughout the history of international relations and along the way have determined through their framing what is worthy of debate. The story of this historical progression of metaphors in international relations theory tells much about the role that metaphors play. In medieval times international relations was imagined with the aid of metaphors that envisioned a unity of the world. Ironically, the metaphors of "neomedievalism" in contemporary IR theory emphasize the variety of actors that comprise the world. In the intervening period international relations has been imagined metaphorically in mechanistic and biological terms and with the metaphor of "international relations" itself. Metaphors both reflect prevailing conceptions of the world and frame the study of it. Changing metaphorical conceptions of international relations then are important to understanding the prevailing state of theorizing about the world.

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# Chapter 9

# Conclusion

## The Pervasiveness of Metaphors in International Relations Theory

Although the role of metaphors in international relations theory (or any theoretical project, for that matter) is not always readily obvious, metaphors are among the primary elements in narrative explanations for international relations. To see this we can take the example of John Hobson's (1902) famous metaphorical characterization of the "economic taproots of imperialism." As anyone who has weeded a garden knows, to completely eliminate a pesky weed one needs to pull it out by the roots. Hobson means to imply by way of the "taproot" metaphor that capitalism (the metaphorical taproot of imperialism) has to be completely eradicated if imperialism is to end. When one thinks of the roots of a plant or tree the image that comes to mind is one in which the vegetation that emerges from those roots is intimately related to those roots. The type of roots (i.e., what species of plant is genetically encoded in those roots) will determine the species of plant that will emerge above ground. The roots of a tomato plant can no more give rise to an elm tree than the roots of an elm tree can lead a tomato plant to emerge. When Hobson says that capitalism is the taproot of imperialism, he is offering a narrative explanation of an aspect of international relations in which metaphors play a central role.

This points to a larger issue. The frequent, and in most cases unconscious, use of the metaphor of "root(s)" to mean "causes" suggests theoretical conclusions that are rarely actively intended. As the example from Hobson demonstrates, referring to something as the "root" of something else implies a deterministic view of outcomes.

No amount of tampering with the roots of a plant will change the species of that plant unless the root is pulled up entirely from the ground and the plant dies. To speak of an outcome "rooted" in a source is to theorize that the source fully determines the outcome. We can contrast this with the far less metaphorical terminology of "causes." Most scholars would agree that causation entails variation, not determinism. Outcomes that are caused by sources can be altered and varied when the causal sources are themselves varied.

Of course, most scholars use the terms interchangeably and would argue (in most cases rightly) that they have no intent to imply or suggest determinism when they innocently talk of the "roots" of some dependent variable. Doubtless this is the case and in no way do I mean to suggest that there is some deliberate effort to overstate the nature of determination when scholars use the metaphorical language of "roots" to mean "cause." Indeed, when scholars go back and forth between the terms "roots" and "causes" (and other words, for that matter), they do so for the purposes of writing lively prose. My point simply is that metaphorical language has the ability to shape scholarship and give it meanings in subtle and unintended ways, and that is what makes attentiveness to this fact something that scholars may like to be attentive to in their work.

The realization that metaphors are ubiquitous in international relations theory is helpful in reconciling the competing theoretical schools of thought that often divide the discipline. International relations as a field of study at various stages in its development has been divided into any number of competing factions that have differed in their ontological, epistemological, and methodological priorities. At present, according to Nuno Monteiro and Keven Ruby in their succinct and focused dissection, international relations theory is split into three broad approaches, which the authors label as Instrumentalism, Social Constructivism, and Scientific Realism. Instrumentalism encompasses long-standing paradigms such as Realism and Liberalism (and their variants) that adopt a positivist framework for inquiry, emphasizing an empiricist epistemology that determines the range of ontological subjects capable of being investigated using available tools of observation (Monteiro and Ruby 2009, 33). Social Constructivism (which encompasses the paradigm of the same name) adopts an anti-positivist framework for inquiry, emphasizing an interpretivist epistemology that is intertwined with the ontology of socially constituted phenomena that is capable of being investigated through reconstructing the social world (ibid.). Scientific Realism, which represents an effort to rethink many of the paradigms in the study of international relations,

adopts a postpositivist framework for inquiry, emphasizing a representationalist epistemology that is determined by the ontological universe of all mind-independent phenomena capable of being investigated using observation and inference to the best explanation (ibid.).[1]

Monteiro and Ruby point out that all three of these strategies are in some way flawed, at least if the goal is to set forth through a philosophy of science the ideal way to establish scientific foundations for the field of international relations. Furthermore, as long as each of these strategies succeeds in yielding useful results for understanding international relations, there is no need for one strategy to prevail over others. The authors further add that by keeping the dialogue among these approaches open there is room for further refinement of the tools scholars use to explore the field.

I would add another observation that highlights basic similarities in all three of the current frameworks for inquiry detailed by Monteiro and Ruby: regardless of the ontological, epistemological, or methodological elements in Instrumentalism, Social Constructivism, and Scientific Realism, all three of them at some point in the theorizing process use the language of metaphors to determine the nature of what is being investigated, frame questions, make assumptions, pose hypotheses about causation and/or constitution, delineate the scope and criteria for empirical research, and formulate theoretical propositions.[2] As Willie Henderson (1994, 359) points out (with reference to metaphors in economics), "the choice of metaphor will influence the way in which the analysis develops in language terms and the relationship between metaphor and narrative is continuously reinforced." Metaphors are inevitable elements in all forms of human communication, and this is no less true for international relations than it is for any other field of academic inquiry. In addition, as David Patrick Houghton (2009) observes, metaphorical communication is one way that ideas spread throughout the academic and policy communities in international relations. In fact, the one thing that unities all three of the perspectives outlined by Monteiro and Ruby is the inevitability of metaphors in the language of those perspectives. So in addition to philosophical awareness as part of a "prudent attitude towards philosophical foundations" (Monteiro and Ruby, 40), awareness of metaphors in the language of international relations scholarship is essential to making that scholarship useful in terms of explaining outcomes and guiding other scholars toward equally fruitful research. After all, as Markus Kornprobst (2009) observes, international relations is a "rhetorical discipline" in which scholars communicate with each other in both dialogue and debate. To the

extent that they can find common ground by, for example, engaging in a communal interrogation of the metaphors they use to frame the study of IR the more common ground can be found.

## Metaphors as Part of the International Relations Canon

Metaphors define the study of international relations much the way seminal texts do. Farah Godrej has suggested that there are certain books or "canonical texts"—works that constitute the canon in Western civilization (or in any civilization, for that matter)—that establish the foundation for the fundamental meanings and understandings that shape cultures and societies. In essence, Godrej (2004, 5) suggests a social constructionist analysis of the canon, in which "we can accept the view that the cannon is, in some sense, a construction of *our* making" (emphasis in the original). In many ways, the role Godrej attributes to canonical texts in constituting a field of knowledge can also be assigned to metaphors. In international relations theory, metaphors in a sense constitute the "canon" of intellectual thought; they provide the meanings by which scholars construct the field. In reviewing the five qualities Godrej identifies in canonical texts, we can find examples of metaphors in international relations theory that fulfill much the same roles.

Godrej's first criterion for a text to be considered canonical is that it "illuminate[s] a key concern or dilemma . . . about how . . . lives should be lived and political communities organized" (ibid., 5). A good example of a metaphor in international relations theory that mimics this quality is the metaphor of "levels of analysis." This metaphor meets Godrej's criterion in that it represents a concern or dilemma and it corresponds to how scholars think communities of political actors are organized. With regard to the former, scholars of international relations see it as a dilemma that the international system occupies an "anarchic" level of analysis that does not correspond to the hierarchical rules of politics that govern "lower" levels of analysis (principally, the "unit," "domestic," or "state" level of analysis). Scholars have created means for "bridging" the levels of analysis, for example, with so-called two-level games. With regard to the latter, scholars of international relations maintain that political communities are organized into separate spheres at each level of analysis (e.g., the international system, domestic political communities).

Second, Godrej (5) posits that canonical texts illuminate concerns or dilemmas "in some profound, intellectually complex and often

rather original manner." As applied to metaphors in international relations theory, an example of this can be found in the metaphor of "evolution" as a way of conceptualizing change. Dynamism as framed by this metaphorical construction is intellectually complex in that it represents a fundamental set of understandings about the relationship between actors and their social environment over time. The metaphorical image posed by "evolution" has become so embedded in international relations theory that it has taken on a canonical status.

Godrej's third aspect of canonical texts is that these texts have enduring qualities. A good example of this as it applies to metaphors in international relations theory is the metaphor of the balance of power. The balance of power metaphor has endured for so long in thinking about international relations that its first appearance in the literature long predates contemporary international relations theory. Although in contemporary international relations theory the balance of power metaphor is most closely associated with the Realist school of thought, the metaphor is so firmly in place in the field that few scholars can avoid confronting it, even those scholars who work in paradigms that challenge the core assumptions of the Realist school.

Godrej (6) next claims that texts that constitute a canon "*represent*, in some way, the major traditions of thought within the Western world" (emphasis in the original). Metaphors in international relations theory do not represent the entirety of Western thinking, but they do mimic the role of canonical texts in IR theory in that they represent the major traditions in the field and they make it easy to identify specific traditions within international relations theory. An example of a metaphor that is associated with a specific theoretical tradition is "structure." As applied to international relations, the concept of "structure" is metaphorical inasmuch as that which is conceptualized with the concept lacks the physical qualities typically associated with structures in their material form and therefore is only metaphorical structural in nature. Structural theories of international relations constitute specific analytical approaches to the field. For instance, Neorealism is often referred to as "structural" Realism to distinguish it from classical Realist analyses of international relations. One can easily identify works written in the Neorealist tradition by their invoking of structural metaphors with which they conceptualize world affairs. Like canonical texts, metaphors such as the "structure" metaphor define traditions of international relations thinking.

Fifth, Godrej (7) points out that despite their enduring nature, canonical texts are contested. Likewise, although metaphors in international relations theory frequently serve to frame the field in

enduring ways, they too are contested in terms of their fundamental claims. Perhaps the most fundamental metaphor in contemporary international relations theory is the metaphor of "anarchy" in the international system. International relations does not literally take place without order or rules, but in the eyes of most scholars of international relations the absence of an international government has rendered world affairs metaphorically lacking ordered governance. However, as widely accepted as the "anarchy" metaphor would seem to be, it is contested. In particular, a growing number of theorists working within the Constructivist paradigm have argued either that the international system is not anarchic at all or that the notion of anarchy must be modified to take account of the social rules that govern the actions of international actors. As Alexander Wendt (1992) has famously stated, "anarchy is what states make of it."

What the foregoing demonstrates is that, like works that constitute the canon of civilizational thought, metaphors in international relations theory fundamentally frame inquiry in the field in all of its aspects. Metaphors do not merely "dress up" international relations theory with interesting but ultimately trivial allusions to related realms, but rather they play an essential role in generating assumptions, prompting hypotheses, framing theories, and suggesting areas for empirical research. Like canonical texts, metaphors constitute the very field of international relations and make possible the abstract analyses and empirical investigations that take place within it.

## The Unintentional Quality of Metaphors in International Relations Theory

None of this should necessarily be taken to mean that all scholars of international relations or any other discipline intentionally use metaphors to get across some point or to steer theorizing in one direction or another (although obviously some do). In the majority of cases in which metaphors are used reflexively (as opposed to deliberately with such devices, for example, as the "billiard ball" metaphor of the international system), there is no conscious effort among scholars to have the metaphors say anything deliberate about the theoretical conclusions that should be drawn. But this is not to say that the metaphors do not have this effect. Rather, as with the "roots" metaphor discussed earlier, metaphorical prose can unintentionally frame theoretical discussions in one way or another. Cognitive linguists have established that metaphors are essential to human cognition and provide the frameworks by which virtually everything humans

experience is known. This is no less true in academic inquiry as it is in everyday life.

In many respects the influence of metaphors in international relations theory is analogous to the perspectives journalists bring with them to the reporting of the news. In his much misunderstood book, *Bias,* Bernard Goldberg (2002) chronicles the way that journalists' understanding of the world influences their reporting. It is not that journalists, editors, and broadcasters sit around rubbing their hands together thinking of ways to purposefully distort the news, but rather, their internalized understandings of the world create a finite set of possibilities that necessarily excludes that which is not included in what they see as objective reality. A similar process operates with metaphors in international relations theory (and virtually every other academic discipline). Metaphorical representations construct the reality from which assumptions are drawn, hypotheses are posed, theoretical propositions are derived, and experiments are undertaken.[3] If, as many international relations scholars have come to accept, the world is socially constructed, it is not a far leap to conclude that the world of academic inquiry is socially constructed as well. Metaphors are one of the main mechanisms by which that social construction takes place.

Furthermore, just as journalists tend to see the world in a similar fashion as those with whom they congregate (metaphorical birds of a feather), the socially constructed theoretical world of scholars comes to be that way in part because of the shared nature of their experience. It almost goes without saying that for aspects of the human experience to be socially constructed, there must be a society that does the constructing. Those who constitute a society and share a communal experience come to define what is perceived as the reality around them. The metaphors that gain credence in the construction of international relations theory do so because they are shared among scholars. Someone could propose a new metaphor for the purpose of imagining some aspect of international relations (e.g., the "billiard ball" metaphor that is now so common in international relations theory) or an author could use specific metaphorical language reflexively to describe some quality of international relations (e.g., the metaphor of "soft" power), but if these linguistic terms are unintelligible to their peers they will not gain currency in the field. The state of theorizing at any given moment in the field of international relations is a direct reflection of the metaphorical language that is shared among scholars at that time.

Scholars also ought to be careful about strained metaphors or trying to fit a metaphor to empirical circumstances instead of the other

way around. Such is the case, for example, with John Hulsman and Wess Mitchell's (2009) effort to liken post–Cold War U.S. foreign policy to the story line of the motion picture *The Godfather*. Although inevitable similarities exist between the choices of a nuclear superpower and an organized crime syndicate both facing changes in the environment in which they operate, Hulsman and Mitchell's attempt to map out exact correspondences between elements in the fictional Corleone family and schools of thought in American diplomatic circles tries too hard to construct an analogy between these two realms when in fact a suggestive metaphor might have better made the case. Such is the unintentional quality of metaphors in international relations theory.

## What Does It All Mean?

What a review of international relations shows is the persistence of metaphors in IR theory. This is not solely due to the fact that human thought and communication invariably involve metaphorical imagery, although this is undoubtedly true for international relations as it is for any field of inquiry. There is also a deeper issue involved here: although some scholars of international relations have looked to the tools of scientific realism to inject rigor into theoretical analysis, there needs to be an acknowledgment that even in the physical and natural sciences such rigor does not exclude reliance on metaphorical frames of reference. International relations largely comprises abstract concepts and practices. These abstract concepts and practices are not capable of being directly observed, and hence, metaphors are necessary for translating existential impressions into analytical categories.

Metaphors are part of the narrative of international relations. As is true in the physical and natural sciences, they frame the assumptions and propositions of international relations theories. In the present period, organic and evolutionary metaphors predominate. The implications of this are not insignificant. As Iver Neumann (2004, 265) astutely points out, the organic and evolutionary metaphors that currently prevail in IR theory have real implications for the field: "Every set of metaphors is an enabling and constraining prerequisite for thinking. It will therefore itself be an influence on where thinking goes." The fact that organic metaphors have been used in IR theory, where there is an emphasis on scientific modes of inquiry, is not accidental. During the era in which mechanistic metaphors predominated in the study of international relations, scholars of international affairs—who

often served as advisers to statesmen and kings—thought that affairs among states could be *made* since international relations itself was constructed, much as a machine. The theories, policies, and practices of international relations all rested on mechanistic metaphorical premises that invited active involvement on the part of scholars and advisers who saw their theories as adjuncts to statecraft. In the modern era, in which biological and organic metaphors predominate in the study of international relations, scholars of international affairs—many of whom advocate for a detached objectivism—hold that affairs among international actors are organically occurring phenomena, much as biological organisms are. The theories, policies, and practices of international relations rest on biological metaphorical premises that lead scholars to see their theories as objective explanations with limited bases for involvement in statecraft.

The debate between those scholars who accept the abstract nature of international relations and those that believe it can be subjected to scientific investigation is a long one that has been amply chronicled, especially within the context of the behavioral revolution. As Nicolas Guilhot points out, early Realists sided against scientific methods. These Realists "resented the methodological imperialism of the behavioral revolution. They saw the promise of an empirical science of politics as an illusion: for them, politics was not entirely rational and could not be comprehended by scientific rationalism" (Guilhot 2008, 282). It makes sense, then, that much of the theorizing conducted by these early Realists drew on metaphorical imagery with a long history in the effort to conceptualize international relations. Hans Morgenthau's treatment of the "balance of power," for example, updates and refines a metaphor that can be traced back for centuries.

What is more interesting and more telling, however, is the tenaciousness of metaphors in international relations theory even after the supposed triumph of more scientific approaches to the study of IR after the defeat of the early Realist movement.[4] In fact, the irony of the triumph of Neorealism and other scientific approaches to the study of international relations is, try as scholars might, they cannot eliminate metaphors as a means for coming up with assumptions and theoretical propositions about international affairs. For example, as Stephen Brooks (1997, 447–450) points out, although Neorealists, such as Kenneth Waltz, seek to eliminate assumptions about human nature in their scientific perspective on international politics, these assumptions find their way into Neorealist theory. Specifically, states are assumed to be concerned with security and insecurity because they are wary and anxious by nature (ibid., 449).[5] Human nature is used

here metaphorically inasmuch as states are not literally humans, but rather, are merely assumed to have similar motives.

This reliance on metaphors of human nature extends even to the scientific realism of Alexander Wendt's social theory of international politics. For Wendt (1999, 51), scientific realism rests on three fundamental principles: "1. the world is independent of the mind and language of individuals; 2. mature scientific theories typically refer to this world, 3. even when it is not directly observable." It is the first and last of these principles that are relevant for a discussion of metaphors. As regards observables, Wendt points out that all scientific endeavors from physics to political science encounter empirical realities that, despite the lack of tools to observe them directly, are no less empirically real. The question, then, is how to conceptualize empirical realities that are not directly observable. Wendt's answer is that metaphors can be involved: "In the realist view, the theorist baptizes an unobservable phenomenon by proposing a description of its properties and some hypotheses about how these relate to observable effects. Essentially, when dealing with unobservables the realist—in natural as much as social science—is combining a causal with a description theory of reference. *This baptizing often occurs through metaphors*" (ibid., 63, emphasis added). This engages the first of Wendt's three principles, a mind-independent world. Since that which is observed is framed metaphorically, the language of metaphors is essential for making sense of the world.[6] That Wendt acknowledges the role of metaphor in scientific realism as a basis for his social theory of international politics is significant inasmuch as it represents continuity in the historical evolution of the study of international relations.

What is perhaps more interesting is what metaphors Wendt selects to assist in uncovering the unobservable elements in international relations. In particular, when it comes to the interests of actors, specifically states, Wendt makes reference to the same metaphorical construction as previous generations of realists, namely, "human nature." However, he does this in a way that conceals its metaphorical aspect. Specifically, Wendt (1999, 115) argues that the "*material force* constituting interests is human nature" (emphasis added). Rather than treating human nature as a metaphor for interests, Wendt argues that human nature is a material force constitutive of interests. Thus, instead of treating human nature metaphorically in order to gain insight into the unobservable nature of states' interests, Wendt, like Morgenthau and Waltz before him, reifies the metaphor of human nature into the essential material qualities of states.

In fact, as cognitive linguists tell us, "human nature" is a series of thoughts and dispositions through which the material world is experienced metaphorically. Human nature is itself an unobservable that can only be measured through inference. Rather than engage in an infinite regression from one metaphor to another, scholars have chosen to infer intent from the behavior of international actors (principally states) and arrive at assumptions of human nature that are in that instance metaphors for scholars' own prior beliefs. Thus, the common thread running through much of international relations theory is a debate not over international relations but over human nature. If, as cognitive linguists assert, all thought is metaphorical, and since metaphorical thought is how human experience is expressed, the history of international relations as a discipline is the history of how scholars of international relations conceive of human nature and impute these conceptions to states and other international actors. The use of human nature as a metaphor is therefore not only a consistent theme in international relations theory but also an indicator of evolving human experiences and their manifestation in word and thought. In the end, one cannot divorce the assumptions underlying international relations from the underlying experiences of the scholars who study it.

Perhaps one of the most controversial implications of an investigation into the role of metaphors in international relations theory is that, because metaphors are integral to human thought and communication, scholars of IR (or any other discipline, for that matter) cannot help but impute their own impressions about international relations into the study of the field. As an examination of metaphors in IR theory shows, for every metaphor that is in use there are other metaphors that either offer a competing perspective or potentially can take its place. In one sense, there is nothing inherently more useful in one metaphor versus another. The choice of which metaphor to use is on one level an arbitrary one as long as the metaphor leads to useful theoretical insights.[7]

However, inasmuch as no one metaphor is inherently better than another, the question arises, is the choice of metaphor truly arbitrary or does it reflect some other dynamic perhaps involving explicit or implicit deliberation on the part of scholars who make such a choice? There is reason to think that in fact the answer is that which metaphors get used in international relations theory (as is true for other academic disciplines) is a product of, if not active deliberation, then at the very least a certain degree of conceptual mapping by scholars themselves. The metaphors a person uses is indicative of how and what

that person *thinks*. So, while international relations theory (and theory in other academic disciplines, for that matter) may to a degree be value-neutral, it is not "*thought-neutral*" (and it may very well not be value-neutral as well).[8] Quite simply, it is naive to think that academics are not influenced by their own experiences when metaphors in theory and research come into play. As Trevor Barnes (1996, 158) observes, "metaphors do not just suddenly emerge but are a response to the context in which academics live and work." James Rosenau (1990, 33) goes even further, arguing that "science is not so much a value-free enterprise as a value-explicit one. It requires observers to be clear about their presence in the research, to acknowledge biases and idiosyncratic perspectives that may skew their interpretations."[9]

To say that metaphors in scholarly inquiry reflect the thoughts and experiences of scholars is to assert something that has long been one of the issues at the core of debates over international relations theory in particular and social science in general. The ability to leave one's own preferences and biases at the doorstep of academic inquiry has been a hallmark of social science rigor. But is it ever really possible? Some scholars would say no. It could be (and has been) said that the interest scholars show in studying something is reflective of the thoughts scholars have about it, and even scholars' preferences that flow from such thoughts. Hedley Bull (1977, xii), for example, has said as much in his efforts to study international order: "If I did not *think* of order in world politics as a desirable objective, I should not have *thought* it worthwhile to attempt [the] study of it" (emphasis added). Bull's thoughts about international order are based in metaphor, and thus it is the nature of Bull's metaphorical thinking that leads him to understand what is desirable and thereby worthy of study. What this book has shown is that the metaphorical expressions of Bull, and virtually all IR scholars, reveal the underlying metaphors that reflect how these scholars comprehend the world. It bears repeating, scholarship may be a value-neutral, but it is not *thought*-neutral.

Since metaphors are reflective of how scholars think, and since metaphors are integral to how scholars think about the subjects they study, one cannot avoid the conclusion that scholars' prior thoughts inevitably enter into how they undertake the study of international relations. This is a proposition accepted by philosophers of science (and the physical and natural sciences at that), let alone social scientists. As Theodore Brown (2003, 12) contends: "The models and theories that scientists use to explain their observations are metaphorical constructs. To understand how science works and to account for its success, we have no need for the proposition that scientists have

unmediated access to the world 'as it really is.' We have no grounds for believing that there exist objective, mind-independent truths awaiting discovery. Rather, statements we regard as truths about the world are the product of human reasoning."[10] This principle can be applied to words useful in scientific inquiry but which have no meaning apart from those that humans ascribe to them for the purposes of engaging in science. Max Black (1990, 72), for example, writes that the "term 'gene' has its place within a man-made theory, in whose absence it would have no intelligible use." At the very least, while there may be mind-independent information, there is no mind-independent way of *thinking about it*.

Thinking about information involves thinking about the language of international relations theory. In a very positive contribution, K. M. Fierke (2003, 80) suggests that "it would be useful to look more closely at some of the ways language analysis is implicitly or explicitly involved in IR practice." This way, IR scholars can be made "aware of the importance of greater clarity about the relationship between scholarly concepts and the language of [their] subjects of analysis" (ibid., 78).[11]

It would be impossible to create, much less communicate, theories of international relations without a collection of shared discursive categories, and among these most certainly are the metaphors that express the stories IR scholars tell about the world.

As trite, obvious, and clichéd as it might sound, words and thoughts have meanings and consequences. When humans thought that the world was flat their understanding of that world was shaped on that perception. Thinking about the world in a metaphorical way as a flat object led to theories about what was possible within that flat world. Just as objects can only move in certain directions on a flat plane, for example, it was thought that the possibilities for human movement and organization were limited by the flat nature of the earth. More importantly, what humans perceived as possible—in terms of faith, religion, and politics—was predicated on the implications of thinking of the world as a metaphorically flat object. The possibilities for heavenly salvation depended on how humans were thought to be physically situated to the divine. By the same token, the possibilities for political authority depended on how humans were thought to be physically situated to each other. That the earth was not really flat was irrelevant. What mattered was what was experienced of the earth, how those experiences were expressed metaphorically as thoughts, and how those metaphorical thoughts were conveyed from human to human in metaphorical communication.

By the same token, experiences with a spherical earth also are manifest metaphorically in human cognition and are conveyed metaphorically through human language. The way people encounter a spherical object registers in thought in far different ways than experiences with objects that are flat. From a political standpoint, the possibilities for locating political authority are multiplied with the expansion of physical properties and with changed sensations of physical space. For example, as anyone who has ever unraveled the elastic band encasing the core of a golf ball knows, one can set out in one direction on a globe and move forward without end seemingly infinitely. As humans' physical experiences with a spherical earth expressed themselves as metaphors of seemingly infinite space, the possibilities for infinite political organization would be a logical extension of those metaphors expressed in thoughts and words.[12] Even more to the point, when humans achieved the ability to experience a spherical earth as something suspended in space (via air and space travel) the metaphorical expressions of those experiences as conveyed in language opened up still more new ways of conceptualizing possible and potential forms of political organization.

To make this point even more pointedly, experiencing a *spherical* world as *flat* has still more implications for how metaphors can shape human interaction. This is highlighted in Thomas Friedman's 2006 ironically, yet insightfully and instructively, titled book, *The World is Flat*. The premise of Friedman's book (which is graced with an ironically appropriate cover depicting the visual metaphor of the earth occupying one side of a flat coin) is that a metaphorical "flattening" of the world is occurring through globalization and greater economic, political, and cultural interconnectedness.[13] Globalization, of course, is a much-studied phenomenon that can be addressed from any number of angles.[14] What makes Friedman's book stand out is perhaps not so much his arguments—which, after all, have been made in one form or another by other authors who have chronicled globalization—but the singularly provocative message of the metaphor that forms the book's title. That humans know that the world is spherical is less important than that they experience it and think of it metaphorically as *flat*. As they convey those thoughts, steeped in metaphor as they are, theories about what is politically possible are inevitably shaped by the metaphors that give rise to them. In many ways, then, Reza Aslan (2009, 52) is right when he offers "with apologies to Thomas Friedman, the world is not flat. It is our minds that have flattened. Globalization has not only altered the way we view the world. It has changed the way we view *ourselves*" (emphasis in the original). Hence,

to say that the world today is flat is not to say that today's flat earth is the same as the flat earth of 600 years ago. The experiences of flatness today are in their own way distinct from those of the past. But they are experiences nonetheless, expressed in thought as metaphors and conveyed in words that reflect those metaphorical thoughts. Words have meanings for explaining what happens and predicting what is possible.

The fact that metaphors influence how scholars undertake their analyses is not an indictment or an incrimination of those scholars who strive for scientific rigor. In many ways the influence of metaphors provides a consolation for those scholars who otherwise do not see a way to reconcile the material world with how they think about it.[15] It is worth keeping in mind that all scientists, from chemistry to physics, are humans who think metaphorically. In fact, within the physical and natural sciences the process of naming concepts is highly metaphorical and often celebrated as such. Scientists such as physicists delight in playful metaphorical terms such as "string theory" and "black holes" to identify highly complex, and in many cases unobservable, phenomena. This does not reflect "bias" or "lack of objectivity" as much as it does an admission that so-called mind-independent reality can only be known by using the (metaphorical) mind. The solution is not to try and eliminate metaphor from cognition but to embrace its inevitability and acknowledge its role in human thought, including in academic scholarship. In this regard Donald McCloskey (1985, 75) refers to Jacob Bronowski (1965, 36), who so eloquently opined, "the symbol and the metaphor are as necessary to science as to poetry."[16] This book does not suggest that metaphors be eliminated from international relations theory but that they be actively interrogated. As McCloskey (81) rightly avers, "unexamined metaphor is a substitute for thinking—which is a recommendation to examine the metaphors, not to attempt the impossible by banishing them." Once the presence of metaphors is acknowledged, their utility can only be enhanced by paying attention to their role in the theoretical process.

Metaphors come and go in international relations theory. Some are proposed but, for whatever reason, never catch on as narratives for formulating propositions about world affairs. The first step toward making metaphors useful in the study of international relations is to be aware of the larger role that language plays in the field of IR itself. While recent years have witnessed a "linguistic turn" in the study of international relations, this "turn" has for the most part been in the direction of studying the discourse of practitioners of foreign policy and world affairs. For the linguistic turn to be complete, IR scholars

need to metaphorically "turn" their attention to themselves and to the language of their craft. This volume represents what one hopes will be just the first effort to critically examine the language of international relations, in particular the language of metaphors in international relations theory.

# Notes

## Chapter 1

1. I began to pursue this topic in Chapter 3 of my previous book, *The Prison as Metaphor: Re-Imagining International Relations* (Marks 2004). A number of the metaphors that have been used in international relations theory are also summarized in Chilton and Lakoff (1995). The discipline of international relations itself also has been conceptualized through metaphors (see Agathangelou and Ling 2004, 2009, especially chapter 3). For a brief review of metaphors in political science in general, see Miller (1979), Lunt (2005).
2. On the role of metaphors in scientific inquiry, see Brown (2003).
3. For worthwhile expositions of metaphors in foreign policy analysis, see Andrews (1979), Milliken (1996), Slingerland, Blanchard, and Boyd-Judson (2007), and Flanik (2009) as well as the extensive works of Robert Ivie (see, e.g., Ivie 1980, 1982, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2004). Although not specifically focused on metaphors, the emphasis of the chapters in James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro's *International/Intertextual Relations* (1989) highlights the role of discourse in the practice of international relations, much of which is metaphorical in nature.
4. I am aware, as Paul Chilton (1996, 4) observes, that any number of scholars of international relations have taken on policymaking roles in government administrations. Keeping this in mind, at a certain point it is necessary to delineate the scope of an academic inquiry such as the one undertaken here, and thus for the purpose of maintaining focus the primary emphasis in this book will be on metaphors used by scholars and academics to devise theories of international relations, keeping in mind Chilton's note of caution that the line between theory and practice is not always clearly drawn. For analyses of metaphors used in the discourse and rhetoric of politics and foreign policy see, for example, Edelman (1971), Chilton and Ilyin (1993), Thornborrow (1993), Shimko (1994), Medhurst (1997), Mutimer (1997), Musolff (2001, 2004), Charteris-Black (2005, 2009), Hirschbein (2005), Carver and Pikalo (2008), Paparone (2008).
5. Among the colorful images that have been introduced to frame issues in international relations are the metaphors of "spectators at a crowded horse race" to depict states (Wolfers 1962, 14–19),

"seduction" to describe regional integration (McSweeney 1999, 170), and "sandpiles" to imagine the size of wars (Cederman 2003). International relations also has been imagined with the aid of science fiction and motion picture metaphors (see Weber 2001, Weldes 2003). These metaphors and others are omnipresent in international relations theory, and for that reason alone it would be beyond the ability of one scholar working alone to track down, list, and analyze all of them.

6. The focus of this book is on metaphors in international relations theory as it is formulated in the English language. Aside from the practical reasons for limiting the study in this way there is a theoretical point to be made, namely, the linguistic aspects of any theoretical endeavor, including the use of metaphors, frame and delineate how theory is developed. In the policy realm it has been noted that metaphors in different languages actually can be translated to mean the same thing but nonetheless are subject to competing *political* interpretations. See, for example, the discussions of metaphors in the framing of European integration in Musolff (1996) and Schäffner (1996).
7. The "billiard ball" metaphor to describe power politics was first advanced by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*. See Terence Ball's (1975, 215ff.) discussion of the Hobbesian metaphor. For additional explications of the billiard ball metaphor, see also Wolfers (1962, 19), Burton (1972, 28–32), Mearsheimer (1994–1995, 48), Deibert (1997, 167–169).
8. See also Roggeveen (2001, especially 30).
9. See also Vincent (1986, 123). For the egg-box metaphor, see Jackson (1990, 267).
10. In addition to the international system being seen as a "burning house," the state itself is often seen metaphorically as a "house." See Chilton and Lakoff (1995, 53–55). On the "forest" metaphor, see Singer (1961), Holsti (1985), Kubálková, Onuf, and Kowert (1998). The "jungle" metaphor, connoting anarchy, is another common metaphorical motif in structural theories of international relations. On the jungle metaphor, see Hoffman (1981, 35).
11. At an October 2005 panel discussion at Columbia University, Albright resurrected her comments from her September keynote speech in Iowa: "And while there are a lot of people who talk about diplomacy as a game of chess, I have discounted that a long time ago, because chess is a slow game with two people. Life is more like a pool table where there are lots of different balls and different people come and they take a cue stick and one ball hits another" (Albright 2005b, 32).

## CHAPTER 2

1. The review of metaphors offered here focuses primarily on studies in the Western tradition. For a comparison of metaphors in Eastern and Western philosophy, see Punter (2007, Chapter 2).

2. For discussions of metaphors in intellectual discovery see, for example, Booth (1978, 55), Tourangeau (1982, 18), Dirven (1985, 98), Newmark (1985, 295).
3. Sometimes metaphors become so commonplace that they become what Robert Claiborne (1988, 14) calls "lost metaphors—words and phrases we still use figuratively, but whose original, literal senses have been obscured or erased by times and change."
4. For an excellent review of the history of metaphor in philosophy, see Johnson (1981).
5. Metaphors are closely related to two other linguistic devices: metonymy and synecdoche. Metonymy is a "figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated, as in the use of *Washington* for *the United States government*" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1136–1137, italics in the original). Synecdoche is a "figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole (as *hand* for *sailor*), the whole for a part (as *the law* for *police officer*), the specific for the general (as *cutthroat* for *assassin*), the general for the specific (as *thief* for *pickpocket*), or the material for the thing from which it is made (as *steel* for *sword*)" (ibid., 1821, italics in the original).
6. On mathematics as metaphor, see Lakoff (1987, Chapter 20).
7. As Duncan Snidal (1986, 34, n. 11) points out, mathematical equations offer ways to pursue the deductive implications of a metaphor or a model. In that sense, metaphors often are ways of suggesting what numerical principles can be expressed in the form of mathematical equations. Or, as Max Black (1962, 242) puts it: "Perhaps every science must start with metaphor and end with algebra; and perhaps without the metaphor there never would have been any algebra."
8. Similarly, the naming of pets and other animals is based on metaphorical substitution, reflecting an understanding of how they correspond to human society. See Lévi-Strauss (1966, 204–208).
9. Hence, when children are taught to count it is not assumed that they know *a priori* that two plus two equals four. Rather, "four" is a new concept that is evoked by metaphorically representing the addition of two to two in the form of a novel numerical quantity.
10. Metaphor is so ingrained in human cognition that when individuals suffer from aphasia, it typically afflicts the person's ability to express himself or herself in ways that employ metaphorical imagery. See Jakobson and Halle (1971, 90) and Stachowiak (1985, 559–599).
11. This sentiment is echoed by Paul de Man (1978, 25), who writes that "being and identity are the result of a resemblance which is not in things but *posited by an act of the mind* which, as such, can only be verbal" (emphasis added). See also Ricoeur (1978).
12. John Searle states: "The basic principles on which all metaphor works is that the utterance of an expression with its literal meaning and corresponding truth conditions can, in various ways that are specific to

metaphor, call to mind another meaning and corresponding set of truth conditions" (Searle 1979a, 85). See also Brown (1976, 170), Searle (1979b).

13. Portions of this section are adapted from my earlier book *The Prison as Metaphor* (2004).
14. For contrary views to the cognitive approach to metaphors, see Davidson (1979), Rorty (1979).
15. See also Lakoff and Johnson (1980a).
16. For an example of research on foreign policy using Lakoff and Johnson's embodied mind approach to metaphors, see Beer's (2001, 96–103) examination of the Persian Gulf War.
17. See also McCoy (2000, 41).
18. For example, Lakoff and Johnson's view that metaphors represent human experiences was asserted by Giambattista Vico in *The New Science* (first published in 1725). Terence Hawkes (1972, 39) sums up Vico's thesis as follows: "Metaphor, in short, is not fanciful 'embroidery' of the facts. It is a way of *experiencing* the facts. It is a way of thinking and living; an imaginative projection of the truth" (emphasis in the original).
19. See Nietzsche (1979). The connection between Nietzsche and Lakoff and Johnson is made explicit in Murphy (2001, especially 2).
20. As Paul Cantor (1982, 73) observes, "For Nietzsche, man becomes man only through a process of metaphor." Cantor (73) goes on to quote Nietzsche (1979, 50–51): "The drive toward the formation of metaphor is the fundamental drive, which one cannot for a single instance dispense with in thought, for one would thereby dispense with man himself."
21. As Sarah Kofman (1993, 25) points out: "Metaphorical activity is termed instinctive because it is unconscious, and because like all drives it seeks sole mastery of the world. It is not just a drive like any other; it could be called the general form of all drives. It is instinctive also because it is hereditary and specific."
22. For Nietzsche, "The starting-point, 'the impression,' is itself a metaphor, a transposition of a nerve stimulus which varies from one individual to the next, producing individual sensation-images in the symbolic language of one of the five senses" (Kofman 1993, 35).
23. Lakoff (1987, xv) rejects "objectivism" in favor of "experiential realism" or "experientialism."
24. Terence Hawkes (1972, 91) offers a similar view: "In the long run the 'truth' does not matter because the only access to it is by means of metaphor. The metaphors matter: they are the truth."
25. This formulation is supported by Zenon Pylyshyn (1979, 435), who argues that "metaphor *induces* a (partial) equivalence between two known phenomena, [while] a literal account describes the phenomenon in the authentic terms in which it is 'seen'" (emphasis in

the original). On literal versus metaphorical expression, see also Black (1962, 30–34).

26. Hayden White (1978, 114) offers a similar view, arguing that while all language contains a mixture of "dead" and "vivid" metaphors, the former (which share qualities with literal expression) possess more "objectivity" or "nonpoetic" qualities than the latter.
27. Lakoff (1993, 205) also puts it this way: "Those concepts that are not comprehended via conceptual metaphor might be called 'literal.' " For more on the relationship between metaphorical and literal language, see Brinkley (1974), Cohen (1976).
28. Or, to put it another way, "metaphor is . . . primarily a matter of *thought*, not language" inasmuch as "conceptual metaphor is ubiquitous and unavoidable for human beings" (Slingerland, Blanchard, and Boyd-Judson 2007, 56, emphasis in the original).
29. A good contemporary example of how metaphors can affect public policy can be found in the "greenhouse" metaphor associated with global warming. See Brown (2003, 164ff.).
30. One of the most grisly examples of this occurred in Nazi Germany, where the metaphorical depiction of the "Jewish problem" in terms of illness allowed Nazi leaders to suggest a "final solution" designed to eradicate this metaphorical "disease." See Sontag (1978, 82–84).
31. A recent example of metaphors in the study of economics is the metaphor of market "earthquakes" (see Dash 2010). On metaphorical images in the study of traffic patterns, see Vanderbilt (2008).
32. Zoltan Kövecses (1986, 8) calls these "epistemic correspondences" whereby what is known about the source domain of a metaphor is brought to bear on what is learned about the target domain. This capacity of metaphors was recognized by Black (1979, 36–40) even before the cognitive linguistics revolution in the study of metaphors. See also Schäffner (1996).
33. Hobbes (1962, 34) declared that abuses occur "when [men] use words metaphorically; that is, in other sense than that they are ordained for; and thereby deceive others." Ironically, as many scholars have noted (see, e.g., Ball 1975, Ashcraft 1977, Miller 1979, Chilton 1996), despite the fact that Hobbes denounced metaphorical language, metaphors permeate his own work, for example, his "state of nature" metaphor to elaborate a thesis about anarchy.
34. Cooper is not an unqualified supporter of Black, it should be noted, observing that Black ignores situations in which metaphors are used not to generate theory, but rather, to merely give expression to theories that have already been formulated and accepted. See Cooper (149).
35. Boyd (359) gives as some examples metaphors of "'worm-holes' in general relativity, the description of the spatial localization of bound

electrons in terms of an 'electron cloud,' [and] the description of atoms as 'miniature solar systems.' "

36. Brown (28) cites Thomas Kuhn (1993, 539), who observes that theory change can be brought about by changes in the metaphors that aid scientists in their conceptualizations of nature. For additional thoughts on the role of metaphors in science, see also Hesse (1966, 1972, 1980), Arbib and Hesse (1986), Haack (1987–1988).
37. Brown's thesis can also be observed in the social sciences. In international relations examples can be found in the form of evolutionary theories of change (borrowed, of course, from evolutionary biology) and George Modelski's theory of "long cycles" (borrowed from the study of large-scale systems such as climatology, annual seasons, and the life-cycle of animate beings). See Modelski (1987).
38. For additional observations on metaphors in physics, see Stahl (1987).
39. For similar statements on the usefulness of metaphors in theorizing, see Nisbet (1969, 4) and Geertz (1993, 211), both quoted in Little (2007, 33).
40. Similar sentiments are expressed by Barbour (1974), Zashin and Chapman (1974), Barnes (1996).
41. On the limited utility of old metaphors, see Steiner (1975, 21), quoted in Little (2007, 34).
42. Philip Eubanks (2000, 136) offers a variation on this view, writing, "we cannot sufficiently analyze a conceptual metaphor without taking into account the intellectual habits, conventional values, and points of controversy that unite communities around particular topics and communicative occasions."
43. Miller cites Ricoeur (1977) as being influential in his development of the "manifestationist view."
44. The role of narrative in international relations was highlighted by an anonymous reviewer of this book. I am greatly indebted to the reviewer for bringing to my attention this key element in analyzing the role of metaphors in international relations theory.
45. The relationship between narrative and metaphor is spelled out by Mark Johnson (1993, 154): "Narratives make use of other imaginative framing devices (e.g., prototype structure, conceptual metaphor) which often give us perfectly adequate descriptions of a situation without rising to the level of narrative unity."
46. Other scholars have asserted that the study of IR is based on narrative stories. Franke Wilmer (2003, 223) writes: "IR thinkers and policy makers . . . rely on the construction and maintenance of a network of categories, terminologies, and more important, meanings—Foucault simply calls them 'notions' . . . —that are used to create and reproduce discursive continuity among International Relations storytellers and a certain structure of power in the relationship between these storytellers." Also drawing on Foucault and echoing these sentiments,

Jim George (1994, 30) writes, "the process of discursive representation is never a neutral, detached one but is always imbued with the power and authority of the namers and makers of reality."

47. Furthermore, as Polkinghorne (171–172) asserts, "narrative explanations are genuinely explanatory, for they can answer the question of why something has happened." For a narrative to be explanatory, "it should be intelligible in human terms, it should have an appropriately unified subject matter, and it should be causally related."

## CHAPTER 3

1. The "anarchy" metaphor has been so prevalent in the field that Brian Schmidt's disciplinary history of international relations is titled *The Political Discourse of Anarchy.* Schmidt (1998, 1) proclaims on the first page of his book that anarchy "has served as the core constituent principle throughout the evolution of the field of international relations."
2. In the *Leviathan,* Hobbes (1962, 100) writes: "Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man." Ironically, as Roger Masters (1964) shows, relations among "primitives" in a "state of nature" are not characterized by the presumed "anarchy" that is attributed to them, thus rendering the "state of nature" metaphor questionable to begin with.
3. "States, like people, are insecure in proportion to the extent of their freedom. If freedom is wanted, insecurity must be accepted" (Waltz 1979, 112).
4. For an extensive discussion of the "primitives in a state of nature" metaphor in international relations, see Jahn (2000, especially Chapter 8). The scholars Jahn identifies as embracing the metaphor of primitives in a state of nature include Waltz (1959), Bull (1977), Hoffman (1981), and Doyle (1983).
5. Wight suggests that one "way of pursuing the enquiry would be to take a definition of a state-system and refine it." To that end he draws on the works of Monatgue Bernard, who defines state-system as "a group of states having relations more or less permanent with one another" (Wight, 22, referring to Bernard with no source given), and A. H. L. Heeren's 1846 *A Manual of the History of the Political System of Europe and its Colonies,* which Wight (22) quotes (with no reference to the page number in the Heeren original) offering a definition of state-system as "the union of several contiguous states, resembling each other in their manners, religion, and degree of social improvement, and cemented together by a reciprocity of interests."

6. Kaplan's six international systems are "(1) the 'balance of power' system, (2) the loose bipolar system, (3) the tight bipolar system, (4) the universal system, (5) the hierarchical system in its directive and non-directive forms, and (6) the unit veto system" (21).
7. While the meaning of "system" is in dispute, so too are modifier terms and the scope of what "systemic" relations include. Many scholars utilize the expression "international system" that is made up of states. The phrase "global system" and the "world system" also have currency in the field, and the "international" system, the "global" system, and the "world" system can comprise actors aside from states.
8. Martin Wight (1977) supposed that there could be multiple international systems or one international system depending on the potential for cultural differentiation (or lack thereof) among systems of states.
9. In some ways, "system" in international relations provides the same metaphorical function as "universe" in cosmology: Both terms define a context relative to something else. "The" universe in cosmology is that which is deemed knowable, although physicists now agree that some other universes may exist. Likewise, scholars of international relations speak of "the" international system, although there may be other systems including regional systems within "the" international system.
10. This problem is in many ways the impetus for much systemic theorizing. In his effort to effect systemic theories of international relations, Morton Kaplan (1957, 4) confronts the fact that "any set of specified variables may be considered a system."
11. Elsewhere Wendt (314) includes other metaphorical aspects of structure, for example, "deep" structure of international politics.
12. In a critique of Waltzian Neorealism, Robert Cox (1986, 218) opines that structure comprises "three categories of forces (expressed as potentials) [that] interact in a structure." These forces are "material capabilities, ideas and institutions." Cox (217) asserts that unlike structure in Neorealism, the configuration of structure in Marxist analysis "does not determine actions in any direct, mechanical way but imposes pressures and constraints." While the composition of structure for Neorealism and Marxism may be different, from a metaphorical perspective the "mechanical determinism" of Neorealism and the "pressures" and "constraints" of Marxism sound very similar.
13. For other approaches to verticality and horizontality in international politics see, for example, Modelski (1987), (2004, 135–151).
14. Of course, the metaphorical notion of hierarchy as an ordering principle is much older than the contemporary study of international relations. See, for example, Arthur Lovejoy's elaboration on hierarchy in Medieval thought in the aptly metaphorically titled *The Great Chain of Being* (1953).
15. This emphasis on territorial space in theories of international relations is lessening in recent years. As Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach

(2004, 67) point out: "Political space refers to the ways in which identities and loyalties among adherents to various polities are distributed and related, and territorial space is only one of the possibilities."

16. Wight cites Collier (1989, 85) as his source for the distinction between "structure" and "structuratum."
17. "Structure" as a noun and a verb comes from the same Latin root *structūra,* "to build." The neologism "structuratum," made up as it is as a variation on "structure," entails the same metaphorical expression of the conceptual mapping of building, construction, and the spatial organizations and arrangements they imply.
18. Wight (218–219) disagrees, writing a "structuratum, we might say, emerges out of the various structures that make it up, and it has a *concrete existence,* whilst a structure, as a set of relations, is abstract" (emphasis added), and adds that even "structures" "are abstract only in the sense that they exist as relations between their relata. They still, however, possess causal power." Wight asserts this because, as a scientific realist, he accepts that "relations really exist, independently of our concept of them." As I will discuss at further length in the concluding chapter of this book, mind independence of social relations is a debatable proposition. Wight uses "structure" and "structuratum" to metaphorically express his conceptual mapping of social relations in terms of spatial organization and arrangement. Since there are other ways of physically experiencing, conceptually mapping, and metaphorically expressing social relations, "structure" and "structuratum" are just one way of metaphorically depicting physical experiences that are cognitively processed in one's head.
19. This concept is expressed subtly in the subtitle of William Schinkel's 2009 book *Globalization and the State,* which reads *Sociological Perspectives on the* ***State of the State*** (emphasis added) as well as Erik Ringmar's (1996) article "On the Ontological *Status* of the *State*" (emphasis added).
20. On the state envisioned in bodily terms see, for example, Luoma-aho (2009). Theories of "corporatism" also rest on the corporeal body metaphor.
21. This theme is expanded and elaborated on by Hindess (2006, 244) and Vaughan-Williams (2008, 325–326).
22. Spaces between borders also can be imagined metaphorically, e.g., a "no-man's land." See Bennington (1996).
23. For more on Hobbes' depiction of the polity as enclosed behind walls, see Campbell (1998, 60). In the practice of contemporary foreign policy, the "container" perhaps is most closely associated with the Cold War policy of "containment" (see Kennan, 1947). For a discussion of the evolution of containment policy and its relationship to metaphors, see Chilton (1996, 133–153, 190–202).
24. Anssi Paasi (1999, 73) states that "as a power container [a state] strives to preserve existing boundaries . . . As a wealth container, a

state will strive to enlarge its territory,while conversely, as a cultural container it will tend towards smaller territories, although it will concomitantly aim to maintain the national identity space and, linked with the economic space, this may again presuppose a larger territory."

25. Thus, for example, in his discussion of "domestic" forces in the formulation of foreign economic policy, Peter Katzenstein (1978, 22) observes that the "management and the analysis of interdependence must start at *home*" (emphasis added). For another discussion of the "home" metaphor implied by "domestic politics," see Fierke (1997, 226–227).
26. As Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little (1993, 205–206) point out, the metaphorical treatment of the state as an individual can be traced back to the writings of sociologists and anthropologists such as Marcel Mauss.
27. Some scholars use the terms "actor," "individual," and "person" interchangeably to characterize the state in international relations.
28. Wendt's effort to scientifically establish a personhood of the state answers previous criticisms of the state-as-actor thesis which argue that this thesis is based on untested assumptions. See, for example, Ashley (1984, 238–242).
29. Wendt (1999, 328) has also claimed that states have metaphorical "bodies" which are "a function of shared ideas supervening on biology."
30. It is worth noting that the voters of the Netherlands voted against the EU constitution the same year as the voters of France. However, since the constitution required unanimous approval by all EU states, a veto from a single state would render the constitution unratified. Thus, any single state acting alone could derail the ratification process.
31. It is worth remembering that "corporate entity" is itself a metaphor imputing human qualities to inanimate objects since "corporate" is rooted in the Latin *corpus* meaning "body."
32. As a footnote, it is interesting to note that the Indo-European *sek* also gives rise to the modern English word "sect." Hence "society" and "sect" are in many ways metaphorical derivations of the notion of "following" one or more individuals. Hence, in etymological terms, both sects and societies comprise "followers."
33. If one can talk metaphorically about international "society," then one can also theorize that metaphorical international "socialization" also takes place. Checkel (2007, 5) defines socialization as "a process of inducting actors into the norms and rules of a given community." On international socialization, see also Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990), Schimmelfennig, Engert, and Knobel (2006).
34. Buzan points out that there is some confusion over these terms, for example, in the works of Martin Wight (e.g., Wight 1977) "who

used the term 'systems of states' to mean what is now meant by international society" (Buzan 1993, 331).

35. Buzan (1993, 340–341) reinforces this formulation, averring that one can "imagine an anarchic international system before any societal development takes place: pure system, no society."
36. "We are choosing an approach when we choose to speak of world society and not international relations. The study of world society is a much wider study than the relations of units within it" (Burton 1972, 19).
37. Some treatments of "international," "global," and "world" society treat these concepts as involving all the world's people joined together in common purpose aside from, despite, or as an adjunct to whatever relations exist among states. Therefore, whether international society, global society, and world society are metaphors or literal expressions of discrete human individuals joined together with a common culture is a somewhat murky issue. For two related pieces that seemingly treat world or global "society" both as a literal joining of discrete individuals and a metaphor using systems theory, see Helmig and Kessler (2007) and Jaeger (2007).
38. There are, of course, many definitions of "society" in international relations. Christian Reus-Smit (1997, 584), who advances what he calls a "new Constructivist theory" of international relations, defines "society" in a way similar to Bull: "All historical societies of states have begun as gemeinschaft societies, as communities of states linked by common sentiment, experience, and identity."
39. Only the third definition of "community" in the *American Heritage Dictionary* (383) makes mention of a "group of people having common interests." The first two definitions are generic descriptions merely of a group of individuals living together.
40. This debate was raised in a special issue of *Foreign Policy* (no. 132, September-October 2002) with no resolution to the question.

## CHAPTER 4

1. It should be noted that the "unit-of-analysis" rubric does not avoid spatial metaphors either. In discussing units of analysis, Barry Buzan (1995, 204) notes that units of analysis are arrayed on a "spatial scale (small to large, individual to system)."
2. Linking the levels idea to Kant, Onuf (198–202) observes that in thinking about levels in other disciplines, the metaphor of "levels" to conceptually divide a subject in some cases was chosen with little reflection on its metaphorical significance relative to other conceptual systems for making analytical distinctions. For example, Onuf (201) points out that at different times Herbert Simon (1962, 1973)

suggests both the metaphors of "levels" and "nesting" to capture the meanings of hierarchy. See also Onuf (1995).

3. For Singer and Wolfers the two levels of analysis are the international system and the state. Waltz adds to this the level of the individual. Jervis' fourth level of analysis is bureaucratic processes. Rosenau's fifth level is achieved by dividing the state into society and intermediating institutions. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998, 5–6) also list five levels of analysis (at which military, environmental, economic, social, and political affairs take place), but specify them as international systems, international subsystems, units, subunits, and individuals. For another view, see Moravcsik (1993, 34–35, n. 3). Even more levels of analysis can be identified by carving out distinctions within the main three levels of analysis typically associated with Waltz's division of the international system, the state, and the individual. See, for example, Yalem (1977), Andriole (1978), Mouritzen (1980), Holis and Smith (1990), North (1990).
4. Although Singer does not address this directly, the "black box" metaphor of which he writes does more than simply treat the state as a unitary actor by concealing the preferences and actions of domestic actors. On a more fundamental level it enshrines state sovereignty in systemic theories of international relations by casting the state as an unproblematic political authority mediating between the presumed anarchy of international relations and the purported tranquility of domestic politics. For critiques of metaphorical images of states as "boxes" or "containers" see, for example, Walker (1990, 17–18), Ferguson and Mansbach (2004, 31–32, 84–85).
5. For a critique of spatial theorizing in international relations, see, for example, Rodgers (2003).
6. On the "bridge" metaphor between levels of analysis, see Caporaso (1997).
7. Although, as Colin Wight (2006, 109) points out, when Patomäki admits that there are levels that can be interpenetrated in the first place he "seems to be redesrcibing the problem rather than addressing it." Wight's (111–112) solution is to treat levels "as 'levels-of-being' that require further disaggregating into their component parts," which include content, setting, situated activity, and self-agent. Ironically, Wight (112) ultimately accepts Patomäki's metaphor, stressing that relationships sketched out in his diagram "shade and interweave with each other: Patomäki's interpenetration."
8. McCoy refers to Yanow (1993, 57).
9. See also Walker (1990, especially 14–20), Luke (1991, especially 316), and Manning (2000, especially 53).
10. In particular, I argue that prisons represent a distinct "level" of dangerous activity "below" the state, much as international relations is said to occupy a realm of danger "above" it.

11. *Scālae* itself is a metaphor with its etymological roots in the Indo-European *skand-,* meaning "to leap" or "climb" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 2124).
12. Lawson's micro-, meso-, and macro-level explanations should not be confused with James Rosenau's micro- and macro-level actors in which micro-level actors include citizens and members, officials and leaders, and private actors while macro-level actors include states, subgroups, transnational organizations, leaderless publics, and movements. See Rosenau (1990, 118–137). This typology leads Rosenau (152–153) to suggest replacing levels of analysis with what he calls "levels of aggregation," which "distinguishes between macro and micro levels by the form, structure, or scope of the aggregated entities: the least encompassing, and most concrete of them are treated as micro phenomena, while others are placed at the macro level. In other words, the macro – micro distinction is a dichotomy between the smallest units out of which world politics can emanate and larger units."
13. Obviously, examinations of the philosophical relationship between agent and structure (or other formulations stating the concept) did not begin with Wendt, as Wendt himself observes. However, for the purposes of tracking its development in international relations theory, Wendt's opening salvo is a logical starting point.
14. Echoing Wendt, Walter Carlsnaes (1992, 246) writes that the agent – structure problem in international relations coincides with the "historical development of seemingly intractable dichotomies between 'individual and society,' 'action and structure,' 'actor and system,' 'part and whole,' 'individualism and holism,' 'micro and macro,' 'voluntarism and determinism,' 'subjectivism and objectivism,' and so forth [that] has at present evolved into what is often claimed to constitute *the* central problem in social and political theory" (emphasis in the original). Colin Wight (2006, 105) disagrees with Wendt and Carlsnaes that "micro – macro" is simply different terminology from "agent – structure" writing, "the micro – macro distinction differs from the agent – structure problem in that the agent – structure problem is concerned with the character of social reality whereas the micro – macro problem is concerned with a particular aspect of the predefined social reality that is selected for consideration."
15. Ken Booth's definitions of "agent" in the agent – structure debate echoes the dictionary definition: "An agent is defined as a person or group capable of making things happen" (Booth 2007, 215).
16. Wight and I would appear to be in agreement here. Wight (222) writes that "the state appears as a complex ensemble of competing forces which offer unequal chances to groups within and outside the state to act for differing political purposes," hence, "agency is not agent-specific" (ibid., 293). However, while Wight refers to groups

and individuals that act as "agents," I would argue that since actors' actions, *pace* Enloe, are not necessarily always undertaken by groups and individuals who are witting in their actions, dispensing with the metaphor of "agent" eliminates the need to potentially erroneously infer their agential intent from their active behavior.

17. Wight (198) forcefully rejects the "personification theory" of the state since such a theory "accords human *agency* no role, because the state now takes on the properties of human agency and the real human agents that act in the world are theoretically redundant" (emphasis in the original). Like Enloe, Wight focuses attention on individuals who act, and then opens a discussion of their agency. As I mention previously, a reflection on human agency is a welcome endeavor. However, as a metaphor in the agent – structure debate it shifts the focus to purposefulness of action, including the actions of the state, thus needlessly opening up a dialogue Wight himself sees as misleading in its focus. Wight (ibid.) writes: "If the agent – structure problem is resolved by acceding agential status to the state, then the concern to navigate between individualism and structuralism is not addressed but simply displaced." I would argue that the metaphor of "agency" itself does just that, despite the best of intentions of scholars who use the term.
18. A version of evolutionary theorizing about international politics is offered by Ferguson and Mansbach (2004, 107) who, although preferring "becoming" over "evolving" paint a picture based on evolutionary metaphors: "All polities are evolving ('becoming' in our terminology) and, while some endure, none lasts anything like 'forever.' Yet both individual polities and polity types rarely disappear completely; rather, they remain as a part of the world's 'living museum,' sometimes as an historical oddity or an exhibit that sooner or later may go back on show or be reconstructed in one fashion or another."
19. Modelski (331) writes that conscious "socialization" and "training" are also part of this conscious process of evolution.
20. Furthermore, norms can enter a system not as biological genetic change does by means of random mutation but "through the efforts of a 'norm entrepreneur,' an individual or organization that sets out to change the behavior of others" (Florini, 375). For an additional statement on the evolution metaphor and norms, see Axelrod (1986).
21. This is not necessarily surprising since Wendt has been influenced by Nicholas Onuf's *World of Our Making* (1989), the title of which suggests that political realities can be "made" much in the way that natural selection brings about the re-"production" of states and other political entities and practices.
22. To highlight the way metaphors generate understandings about international relations, one could engage in a thought experiment to imagine how one would view the "structure" of international relations as opposed to how one would view the "nature" of international

relations. The former metaphor suggests that international relations is "constructed" of something ("structures"), while the latter invites organic metaphors that characterize international relations (its "nature"). The contrast between organic and mechanistic metaphors in international relations theory is explored in greater depth in Chapter 8.

23. Constructivism's metaphorical label makes sense given Constructivists' preoccupation with language as a source of understanding. As the Constructivists Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas Onuf, and Paul Kowert (1998, 19) observe: "We use language to represent the world to ourselves, just as we have always thought, and we use language quite deliberately to bring our representations of the world—as we think it is and as we want it to be—to bear upon that world. Language is the most powerful tool available to us for social construction as an ongoing, largely unpremeditated activity in which everyone is inevitably and perpetually engaged." Indeed, Kubálková, Onuf, and Kowert put their money where there mouth is, devoting much of the introductory chapter to their coedited book to a discussion of the "forest" metaphor of international relations and what it implies about the ontological, epistemological, and methodological choices of Constructivism and the other main paradigms in the study of international relations. See also Onuf (1998a).

## CHAPTER 5

1. This account is summarized in Little (2007, 43). See more on the early history of the language of the balance of power on pages 43–45 in Little. While origins of the balance of power concept in Renaissance Italy are traced out by Little and others, Daniel Deudney (2007) observes that the contemporary theory of the balance of power also has roots in republican political philosophy.
2. Sheehan refers to Savigear (1978, 41).
3. See also Alker, Biersteker, and Inoguchi (1989, 139), Anderson (1993, 168), Sheehan (1996, 82).
4. Vagts cites a *New York Times* article of April 20, 1948 in his quotes from the medical expert in question.
5. Dimitrios Akrivoulis (2008, 21) disputes the suggestion that Morgenthau articulates a "scales" metaphor of the balance of power, writing "as the old system of European power politics has given way to Cold War bipolarity, the old metaphor of a fragile, uncertain equilibrium produced by the wavering balance of scales has been replaced by the Newtonian metaphor of a bipolar and gravitational international system . . . In this system, state-politics are fixed like planetary movements and regulated by measurable state-interests, as if they followed calculable orbits in a *cosmos* (international system)" (Akrivoulis cites pages 343–345 and 351 of the fifth edition of Morgenthau's *Politics*

*Among Nations*). While it is true that Morgenthau invokes planetary metaphors, it is also the case, as has been demonstrated, that his theory of the balance of power relies on a variety of mixed metaphors, and thus accommodates both the "scales" and Newtonian metaphors referenced in Akrivoulis' essay.

6. For more on the incomplete nature of Morgenthau's thesis, see Little (2007, Chapter 4).
7. For example, in formulating what he calls a "new Constructivist theory" of international society, Christian Reus-Smit (1997, 555) asserts that "fundamental institutions" are what shape international society and "transcend changes in the balance of power," which is a tacit admission that there *is* a balance of power even though, apparently, it is subordinate to other elementary forces.
8. The "balance of power" metaphor has also been contrasted with other metaphorical states of international relations, for instance, metaphorical "concerts." See, for example, Jervis (1986). On the relationship of the balance metaphor with concepts of peace, see Schäffner (1995).
9. Walt (1987, 17) says that he has borrowed the term "bandwagoning" from Kenneth Waltz (1979, 126) who credits the term to Stephen Van Evera. Walt also refers to Arnold Wolfers (1962, 122–124) who uses a similar terminology. However, as Randall Schweller points out, the origins of the term "bandwagoning" have been confused over the years. It is Schweller (1997, 928, n. 1) who reveals that the term originated with Quincy Wright's *A Study of War* (1942) and that the term was later used in Arnold Wolfers' *Discord and Collaboration* (1962) before Waltz erroneously credited Van Evera with coining the term.
10. What qualifies as a "threat" is subject to debate, of course, so to clarify the concept Walt employs additional metaphors, including the metaphor of "birds of a feather flocking together (and flying apart)" as a means of illustrating ideological aspects of alliance formation (Walt, 33).
11. Among notable works focusing on bandwagoning are Larson (1991), Snyder (1991), Kaufman (1992), and Schroeder (1994).
12. That most of these definitions involve two ends of an axis is accounted for etymologically given the origin of the word "pole" in the Greek *polos,* meaning "axis" or "sky." The definition of "polarity" is similar to the definition of "pole" given their common etymological origins: "1. Intrinsic polar separation, alignment, or orientation, especially of a physical property. 2. An indicated polar extreme. 3. The possession or manifestation of two opposing attributes, tendencies, or principles" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1400).
13. The term "bloc" itself obviously is a metaphor, derived as it is from the old French *block* (before that, Old High German *bloh*) which produced the modern English word of the same spelling. Metaphorically,

"block" meaning a "set of like items" (which gives rise to the political meaning contained in the word spelled "bloc"—a "group of nations, parties, or persons united for common action") has its origins in meanings of "block" as a physical object (such as a "solid piece of hard substance, such as wood, having one or more flat sides") that is characterized by intact physical integrity (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 203).

14. "Uni-" is from the Latin "ūnus," meaning "one;" "pole" is from the Greek "polos," meaning "axis" or "sky."
15. Almost by definition a metaphor must rest on a simple concept the meaning of which is extended to something potentially more complex. Thus, for example, many metaphors in the English language start with parts of the human body (things that are innately evident and simple for people to understand) that are then used to express something more complicated and abstract. For instance, the abstract concept of the position of the leader of a country is expressed metaphorically as the "head" of state.
16. See, for example, Little (2007, 216) who appears to use these terms interchangeably.
17. The *Oxford English Dictionary* give's Nye's 1990 book *Bound to Lead* (Nye 1990a) as the first written reference to "hard power" and "soft power," on pages 33 and 188, respectively. However, in these references the terms are used without being specifically defined. Nye explicitly defines "hard power" and "soft power" in his 1990 article in *Foreign Policy* (Nye 1990b).
18. Later in the discussion Nye (1990b, 167) uses "soft" and "hard" as modifiers, referring to the terms "soft co-optive power" and "hard command power." On the same page Nye also refers to what he calls "co-optive power . . . and soft power *resources*" (emphasis added). Other metaphors also enter into Nye's discussion, for example, "power," presumably of both the "soft" and "hard" variety is referred to metaphorically as "leverage" (ibid., 156).
19. For recent examples of studies of "soft power," see, for example, Datta (2009), Miller (2009).
20. Nye (166) also relies on secondary metaphors to illustrate the components of "soft power," for example, treating states' ability to spread their ideology or engage in agenda setting metaphorically as the influence parents have over their children.
21. Paul (ibid.) adds that "soft balancing is often based on a limited arms buildup, ad hoc cooperative exercises, or collaboration in regional or international institutions; these policies may be converted to open, hard-balancing strategies if and when security competition becomes intense and the powerful state becomes threatening." For more on soft balancing see, for example, Brooks and Wohlforth (2005), Pape (2005), and Paul (2005).

22. "They, who are eager, on every Occasion, to prostitute her [Great Britain's] Dignity, to pawn her Purse, and to sacrifice her Commerce, by entangling Her not only too much with the other great Powers of Europe, from whom she may sometimes want reciprocal Engagements, but even with those diminutive Powers, from whom it would be ridiculous to expect any" (Bolingbroke 1735, 11).
23. In the title of his book, Fox (1944) lists the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union as "Super-Powers," although in most contemporary usages only the United States and the USSR are identified with the term.

## CHAPTER 6

1. Determining what needs to be "secured" is a matter for both scholars and policymakers alike. As this book is concerned with metaphors in international relations theory and not the practice of international security itself, this chapter will concern itself with the former instead of the latter. As far as the latter is concerned, scholars working within the "Copenhagen School" in international relations theory have detailed the ways in which "speech-acts" on the part of state representatives can "securitize" an issue. See, for example, Wæver et al. (1993), Wæver (1995), Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998), Williams (2003).
2. Chilton (61) also sees a relationship between "securing" something and keeping it "stable," as well as a connection between "security" and the metaphor of "containers," which is common in conceptualizations of state sovereignty in which states are "contained" within "secure" territorial borders. Likewise, Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998, 26) write that the process of "securitization" involves a "rhetorical structure" focusing on, among other things, "survival" and "priority of action." For Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, "securitzation" can thus involve matters beyond military affairs. For additional critical analyses of the meanings of "security," see the chapters in Krause and Williams (1997).
3. The categorization of international security as "high" politics and international economic relations as "low" politics has been challenged by scholars of international relations. See, for example, Ripsman (2005).
4. It is probably not accidental that the founders of the "League" of Nations envisioned the organization as a form of *alliance* in which member states were *obliged* to come to the defense of fellow member states the sovereignty of which was under attack.
5. Christensen and Snyder's image of allies chained together should not be confused with Thomas Schelling's similar, although theoretically distinct, metaphorical image of mountain climbers chained together who may be tempted to intimidate each other by playing a metaphorical game of "brinkmanship." See Schelling (1966, 99–105).

6. It is indicative of the historical context of words that among the synonyms listed for satellite state in *Roget's Thesaurus* (87) are terms from earlier historical eras including "free city," "territory," "possession," "colony," "settlement," "protectorate," "mandate," and "buffer state."
7. The Latin *cliēns* itself comes from the Indo-European root prefix *klei-*, which means "to lean" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 2109). Thus, a follower or dependent individual is one who metaphorically leans on another.
8. Orwell used the term "cold war" to describe relations between a hypothetical state resembling the Soviet Union and other countries. A 1938 headline in *The Nation* referred to "Hitler's Cold War." On the use of the term *la guerra fría* to describe relations between the Christian and Islamic words, see García Arias (1956).
9. Baruch declared: "Let us not be deceived—we are today in the midst of a cold war. Our enemies are to be found abroad and at home. Let us never forget this: Our unrest is the heart of their success. The peace of the world is the hope and the goal of our political system; it is the despair and defeat of those who stand against us" (quoted in Platt 1989, 48).
10. The term "war on" produces 133,000,000 hits in a Google search including such wars as the "war on want," the "war on greed," the "war on Christmas," the "war on ALS" (Lou Gehrig's disease), the "war on fat," and the "war on religion," among other things against which people have metaphorically declared war. The phrase "war against" turns up a similarly large number of Google hits (55,500,000) including a *Time* magazine article about efforts by university administrators to crack down on drinking games on campus entitled "The War Against Beer Pong" (*Time,* July 31, 2008).
11. What is left out of the phrase "war on terrorism" is any sense of the political or other aims for which war or terrorism is waged, but this is a conversation left for other inquiries since war or terrorism waged one against another has no meaning unless Clausewitz is completely wrong and humans enter into organized and prolonged armed conflict for no reason whatsoever.
12. For a critique of the "war on terrorism" metaphor, see Sarbin (2003).
13. The desirability of "stability" itself engages a metaphorical question. In international relations theory "stability" is often considered something desirable (see Chilton 1996, 61) since "instability" implies the potential for erratic behavior among international actors or systemic violence. In fact, "stability" and "stable" are defined by the dictionary primarily to mean in one way or another "resistant to change" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 1748–1749). Uses of the terms "stable," "stability," and "instability" in international relations theory are thus to a certain extent metaphorical. What is seen as desirable, systemic "stability," is in fact an expression of the benefits that accrue

when the system is resistant to change understood as a the absence of anything that would disrupt the status quo. Whether this would have benefits for certain actors versus others is relatively unexamined in light of this metaphorical construction of the concept.

14. As noted, thirteenth-century Spanish thinkers coined the term *la guerra fría* to describe the uneasy coexistence between Christianity and Islam.
15. See also Chilton (1996, 124).
16. A Google search of the terms "world's policeman United States" turns up 65,500,000 references.
17. Haass' Hollywood western imagery of the sheriff extends to chapters in his book with titles such as "Foreign Policy by Posse."
18. The Fund for Peace Failed State Index comprises twelve indicators: Demographic Pressures, Refugees/IDPs, Group Grievance, Human Flight, Uneven Development, Economic Decline, Delegitimization of the State, Public Services, Human Rights, Security Apparatus, Factionalized Elites, and External Intervention. See http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/ (last modified, September 26, 2010). Robert Rotberg (2004) also offers a list of indicators of failed states.
19. An example of this is found in Robert Bates' *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa* (2008), in which the term "state failure" is at no point defined.
20. There is an interesting discussion (which space does not permit here) that could be had of the metaphorical language scholars use of states that "lose" sovereignty, which begs the question of whether losing sovereignty is comparable to, say, "losing" one's keys, "losing" one's spouse, or "losing" one's virginity, just to mention three forms of loss.
21. To extend this metaphor, there have been many successful individuals throughout human history who have not experienced academic success. Had their teachers not seen them as "failures," perhaps their paths to success would have been even more noteworthy than they already are.
22. It probably doesn't help matters that state "strength," "weakness," and "failure" are supplemented by measures of metaphorical state "fragility" and state "collapse." But inasmuch as very little in the study of international relations does not combine some set of metaphorical images this is simply par for the course (metaphorically speaking). On state "fragility," see for example, USAID (2006). On state "collapse," see, for example, Zartman (1995), Menkhaus (2004), Rotberg (2004).
23. I would like to thank Jonneke Koomen for alerting me to the ways that violence can be used as a metaphor in the study of international relations.
24. Galtung (1969, 171) writes, "when one husband beats his wife there is a clear case of personal violence, but when one million husbands keep one million wives in ignorance there is structural violence."

25. On the other hand, there is also a certain logic to having words that apply to all sorts of violence including war, terrorism, and the harm that is caused by economic and structural violence. Adriana Cavarero (2009) suggests "horrorism" as an overarching expression for multiple forms of violence that have existed throughout human history.
26. Specifically, the metaphors "hawk" and dove" were used in an article in the December 8, 1962, issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* in which it was mentioned that, with regard to the Kennedy administration's reaction to the Cuban Missile Crisis, "the hawks favored an air strike to eliminate the Cuban missile bases . . . The doves opposed the air strikes and favored a blockade" (*Oxford English Dictionary*).
27. Additionally, "hawk" and "dove" are later made synonymous with two other metaphors, "hard-liner" and "soft-liner," respectively (Schultz, 9).
28. Vultures and buzzards are scavengers while hawks are bird of prey. Both scavenging and predation could be said to be related metaphorical qualities of certain types of states, and sometimes making the distinction between the two is precisely a process of allowing metaphorical concepts to dictate theoretical propositions.
29. So common are animal metaphors that Robert Palmatier (1995) has compiled an entire dictionary of animal metaphors, any number of which could be used to theorize about states and other international actors and their qualities in the realm of international security.
30. Likewise, Thomas Preston's book on world security and biological and nuclear weapons is entitled *From Lambs to Lions* (2007).
31. Lawrence (BR22) instead argues that "better labels would be 'realist' and 'liberal internationalist,' which, though hardly the stuff of a catchy title, capture the core distinction between Kennan's insistence on the limits of American capabilities and Nitze's more optimistic view."
32. Meyer (56) lists the following countries as qualifying as "pariah states" according to his criteria: Cuba (1970–), Israel (1955–), South Africa (1965–), South Korea (1955–1959), and Taiwan (1975–).
33. The same three states are the focus of the chapters in Lennon and Eiss (2004). See also Tanter (1998), Caprioli and Trumbore (2003), Lebovic (2009).
34. Seemingly synonymous in the literature (though less frequently used) to "rogue states" is "outlaw states," although the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of "outlaw"—"a person declared to be outside the law and deprived of its benefits and protection"—is distinct from that given for "rogue." For a work that uses the "outlaw state" terminology, see Simpson (2004).
35. The dichotomy between "guns" and "butter" has been challenged by scholars of international relations. See, for example, the chapters in Dombrowski (2005), especially Ripsman (2005).

36. The etymology of the word "clash" is one of onomatopoeia, that is, to "collide with a loud, harsh, usually metallic noise" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 352). The use of the word to describe conflict or opposition thus represents a metaphorical transference of the idea of loud sounds to the aural manifestations of energetic conflict.
37. Brecher uses "international political earthquake" as a metaphor for international crisis. Comparing international political earthquakes to their geological counterparts, Brecher seeks to develop a severity scale, similar to the Richter Scale, that measures the severity of international political earthquakes as well as "the impact of political earthquakes on the *landscape* of international politics" (Brecher 2008, 2, emphasis added). A similar tectonic metaphor is contained in the title of Hilary Charlesworth and Jean-Marc Coicaud's *Fault Lines of International Legitimacy* (2009).
38. On turbulence, see also Rosenau (1997, 55–77).
39. Rosenau's initial image of "turbulence" relies on a climatological metaphor, although later in the book (page 53) he observes that metaphorical turbulence can also refer to stock markets, life stages (e.g., adolescence), and economic planning.
40. The correspondence between atmospheric turbulence and global political turbulence is laid out in a table on page 57 of Rosenau's book.
41. Eight pages later Bull (16) offers a somewhat revised definition of international order: "By international order is meant a pattern or disposition of international activity that sustains those goals of the society of states that are elementary, primary or universal."
42. The *American Heritage Dictionary* (1810) gives several definitions for "sustain" including the following: "To keep in existence; maintain; To supply with necessities or nourishment; provide for; To support from below; keep from falling; prop; To support the spirits, vitality, or resolution of; encourage."
43. The English word "order" itself is etymologically a metaphor that derives from the Latin *ōrdō,* which comes from the Indo-European *ar-,* meaning "to fit together" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 2095.)
44. Onuf (158) adds: "The metaphor 'order' suggests a stable arrangement comparable to stable arrangements of the physical world, or nature."

## CHAPTER 7

1. Game theory was originated by John Von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern in their 1944 classic text *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior.* As pioneering game theorist Anatol Rapoport (1960, 226) observes: "[Game] theory can be viewed as a self-contained branch of pure mathematics—a system of theorems built up from a set of postulates."

2. In the discussion below I will follow this convention: The names of game theoretic models will be capitalized as in the game of "Stag Hunt," while the metaphors on which these games are based will be in lower case as in "stag hunt" unless otherwise indicated in quoted passages from authors who have employed a different naming practice.
3. For examples of the types of metaphors that are employed liberally throughout game theory in the field of international relations, see Stein (1990). In his book, Stein discusses a variety of games that are based on extended metaphors: Deadlock, Prisoners' Dilemma, Called Bluff, Protector, Bully, Big Bully, Chicken, Hero, Leader, Chain Store Paradox, and Critical Risk. Books devoted exclusively to game theory include many more examples. One such book analyzes over 50 such games, ranging from The Dr. Strangelove Game and The Samaritan's Dilemma to The Little Miss Muffet Game. See Gintis (2000).
4. Portions of this section are adapted from my earlier book *The Prison as Metaphor* (2004).
5. Stated succinctly, the classic dilemma posed by traditional interpretations of Prisoner's Dilemma is as follows: "There is a special malignancy associated with prisoner's dilemma because the choice of dominant strategies leads to outcomes that are undesirable for all the participants and because efforts to improve the situation through cooperation are always vulnerable to cheating or defection on the part of individual actors seeking to exploit the goodwill of others for their own benefit" (Young 1999, 59).
6. Flood, Dresher, and Tucker were thus working in the tradition of formal theory, in which abstract ideas find expression in mathematical models that are illustrated with a convenient vocabulary or set of analogies. See O'Neill (1989, 135), Walt (2000, 5).
7. See also a review of Axelrod's book in Beer (1986).
8. Prisoner's Dilemma is occasionally presented as a scientific principle that has been discovered. See Poundstone (1992, 8–9).
9. For examples of theories that posit cooperation under Prisoner's Dilemma, see Axelrod (1984), Lipson (1984), and Oye (1986).
10. For works that question the presumptions of Prisoner's Dilemma game, see Jervis (1978), Marks (2004).
11. According to Steven Brams (2000), among the problems that are endemic to game theory are misspecification of rules, confusing goals, arbitrary reduction of the multiplicity of equilibria, and a forsaking of backward induction. See also McGillivray and Smith (2000, especially 815, notes 18 and 19).
12. See, for example, Marks (2004, 56).
13. Even critical interpretations of Prisoner's Dilemma leave the empirical assumptions of the game unexamined. See, for example, Kratochwil (1989, especially 71).
14. A good example of this is provided by Duncan Snidal (1986). In an effort to tighten up the application of game theory to international

relations, Snidal explicitly sets out to formulate a consistent game *theory* rather than rely on games "merely" as metaphors. In order to do this, however, the various metaphors within game theory must embody prior assumptions about international relations. Yet these assumptions too often are derived from the metaphors themselves, rather than the *experiential bases* of these metaphors.

15. Similarly, William Poundstone (1992, 247) uses the metaphor of predator and prey to describe the nature of the tit for tat strategy. Another strategy—the so-called grim trigger strategy—generates its own bellicose metaphors for interaction among agents charged with cooperation. See McGillivray and Smith (2000).
16. See, for example, Schelling (1958), as well as Rapoport's (1960, 227–228) discussion of Schelling.
17. Alker (1996, 310) observes:

> "Whereas Hobbesian conservatives are likely to identify with the coercive state apparatus wielded by the district attorney [in the Prisoner's Dilemma story], or lament its absence in an 'anarchic' world of power politics, liberals will try to paint such 'anarchy' in a better light, and leftists will typically emphasize anti-statist, or anti-exploitation solidarity themes. In either case, choice-linked narrative protocols greatly facilitate such deliberative constructions, deconstructions or reconstructions of the options faced by states or players in analogously structured situations."

18. Conclusions about Prisoner's Dilemma are frequently drawn not from real prisoners, but from paid volunteers. See Gintis (2000, 103ff.).
19. As Paul Chilton and George Lakoff (1995, 47) observe: "The game metaphor, taken seriously, makes it seem natural to use the mathematical theory of games in theorizing about international relations . . . However, the mathematics does not model real, culturally embedded games, played with the interaction of calculation and passion."
20. Examining the real world of prisoners follows through on Hayward Alker's suggestion that games like Prisoner's Dilemma be told from alternative points of view than those typically suggested by game theorists. Alker (1996, 311) suggests: "If game play is understood as more or less skilled, meaning revealing, creative and always play-like performances by socialized, responsible and self-monitoring human beings, then conflicting performative interpretations—with 'plots' and casts of passionately motivated characters should be found in appropriately represented action descriptions."
21. Skyrms cites Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature*.
22. Grant's gendered retelling of the stag hunt is supported by research on the hunting patterns of certain groups of Aboriginal people in Australia who engage in a division of labor whereby men typically hunt large animals such as kangaroos that have a low catch rate while

women typically hunt smaller animals that are more easily caught. See Eastwood (2010).

23. "Two-level" games are a subset of "multilevel" games. On multilevel games, see for example, Axelrod and Keohane (1986, 239–243), Pahre and Papayoanou (1997). Multi-level games can be found in other areas of political science theory. See, for example, O'Donnell and Schmitter's discussion of "multilayered chess" as a metaphor for democratic transitions (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986).
24. Likewise, in the first two headings in the essay Putnam refers to the metaphorical "entanglements" of domestic and international politics.
25. The concept of "two-level" games within game theoretic approaches to the study of international relations also opens up other considerations inasmuch as the metaphors of the games themselves are supplemented by the metaphor of spatial "levels," which follows from the classic division of international relations theory according to metaphorical "levels of analysis." For an expanded discussion of the levels of analysis metaphor, see Chapter 4.
26. McCoy refers to Yanow (1993, 57).
27. As Snidal (35) writes: "For game theory to be a theory of international politics (rather than a general theory of strategic behavior), specific empirical assumptions (correspondences) are required." Snidal's admonition notwithstanding, game theorists routinely use game theoretic scenarios with little or no reference to the analogical correspondences contained within them.
28. As Donald McCloskey (1985, 75) points out, even in scientific models, metaphorical allusions are at the source of assumptions about how the world works: "The world is said to be 'like' a complex model, and its measurements are said to be like the easily measured proxy variable to hand. The complex model is said to be like a simpler model for actual thinking, which is in turn like an even simpler model for calculation."
29. Ernst Haas observes that the concept of international regimes itself is fraught with metaphorical implications, for example, spawning debates between those who subscribe to an organic metaphor of international regimes and those who follow a mechanical metaphor of regimes (Haas 1983, 30–52).
30. The word "game" originates in the Old English *gamen,* meaning "fun" (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 744).
31. For a related discussion of how the language of sports and games enters into the discourse of international relations in practice, see Shapiro (1989a).
32. In some episodes the pairing took place on stage and was aired during the show while on other episodes the pairing took place offstage and did not air as part of the program.

33. Statistical data on how contestants behaved at the Trust Box has been collected and analyzed in a scholarly paper. See Olberholzer-Gee, Waldfogel, and White (2003).

## CHAPTER 8

1. I use the term "international relations" loosely here since it is a contemporary expression that should applied only informally when referring to political, economic, and cultural interactions in the era predating the emergence of the modern state.
2. For additional observations on medieval conceptions of geography, see Grant (1994), Bartelson (2010, especially 222–227).
3. The debate over mechanistic versus biological metaphors for the social sciences can be found in economics as well as international relations theory. See, for example, Gilpin (1996).
4. A good example of a biological metaphor in contemporary international relations theory is Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink's (1998) treatment of international norms in terms of norm "life cycles."
5. Rosenau supplements the "worlds" metaphor with additional metaphorical images, for example, the spatial metaphor of the two worlds being either state-"centric" or multi-"centric." By 2003 Rosenau had expanded his "two worlds of world politics" to 12 worlds, consisting of four local worlds, four global worlds, and four private worlds. See Rosenau (2003, especially chapters 4–7).
6. The word "world," like many words in the English language, itself is a metaphor. In this case the word is derived metaphorically from the Old High German *weralt,* meaning "life or age of man," itself derived from the Germanic compound of *wer-* (man) and *-ald-* (age) (*American Heritage Dictionary,* 2133). Thus, the world in the English language is that place that metaphorically encompasses the life or age of man.
7. By typing the words "world of" into a Google search one discovers that there are thousands of "worlds" devoted to any number of endeavors that comprise a shared set of understandings, from the "world of mathematics," to the "world of learning," to the "world of radio," to the "world of prevention," just to name a few. All of these represent some set of shared understandings that, collectively, comprise a self-contained, yet metaphorical, "world."
8. In international relations theory Mathias Albert and Lothar Brock (1996, 94) use the term "world of states" as a synonym for "international relations."
9. The "levels of analysis" metaphor is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

10. Rosenau's "governance ladder" should not be confused with what he deems the "ladder of abstraction," a metaphorical conceptualization of theories, the higher rungs of which explain categories of phenomena and the lower rungs of which explain concrete manifestations of those phenomena. See Rosenau (2003, 411–412).
11. Rosenau's governance ladder is similar to the metaphor of "multi-level governance" used to study European integration. See, for example, Marks (1992, 1993), Marks, Hooghe, and Blank (1996), Hooghe and Marks (2001), Bache and Flinders (2004), Marks and Hooghe (2004), Piattoni (2010).
12. On the Mobius Strip metaphor, see also Agamben (1998, 31), Vaughan-Williams (2008, 332–333).
13. In developing this definition Stanislawski relies on descriptions of transnational criminal organizations as elaborated by Bunker and Sullivan (2003, 48). For more on "Black Spots" see Pełczyńska-Nałęcz, Strachota, and Falkowski (2008).
14. Ferguson and Mansbach (78–79) are quick to caution that the neomedievalism metaphor, as useful as it is, can be misleading in two respects: It suggests that the medieval era was historically unique (many historical eras, including the Westphalian one, have been marked by multiple forms of political authority), and it unduly stresses the distinctions between the medieval era and the Westphalian era that followed. For more on neomedieval theory see, for example, Anderson (1996).
15. Contained in this vision is the idea that changed circumstances, which assert that the concept of hard-shelled states that keep the outside out and the inside in, no longer make sense in a world of multiple types of international actors (Hill 2000, 168). See also Strange (1997).
16. The neomedieval metaphor sheds light on the increasingly false distinction between "high" and "low" politics in an age in which globalizing trends entail linkages between issues pertaining to state sovereignty and global economic flows. See Deibert (1997, especially 184–187).
17. See, for example, Rosenau (1999, 295). Rosenau's suggestion of a "spheres of authority" ontology is similar to Anthony Jarvis and Albert Paolini's argument (1995, 4) that international relations has given way to what they call "world politics," which they define as "the multilevel interaction of all actors and groups, characterized by multiple forms of association, both patterned and unpatterned." It also resembles the so-called complex conglomerate system, an image formulated by Richard Mansbach, Yale Ferguson, and Donald Lampert (1976) to describe an international system comprising a variety of global actors interacting in the metaphorical "web" of world politics. See also Haas (1970), Camilleri (1995), Hall and Biersteker (2002).

18. Albert and Brock (1996, 70) describe a process of "debordering," by which there emerges "new political spaces that transcend territorially defined spaces without leading to new territorial demarcations."
19. Thus, globalizing trends put a squeeze on the state's ability to regulate areas as far-ranging as economic exchange, environmental protection, and the creation of ethnic communities (see Linklater 1998, 30–31). See also Weller (2000, 67).
20. It should be noted that within political science it is not uncommon for scholars to speak of a subfield of international "politics." Yet most political scientists concede that the practice of international politics takes place within the wider realm of international "relations," which comprises a range of political as well as economic, cultural, social, artistic and literary, and commercial dealings among international actors. Thus, it is fair to say that international politics is embedded within a larger concept of international relations and that political scientists study international politics within this wider realm.
21. The synonymous nature of the terms "relations" and "sexual intercourse" was famously and humorously illustrated during a speech by United States President Jimmy Carter in Poland in which a translator's fumble miscommunicated Carter's desire for positive relations between the United States and Poland as a wish for sexual intercourse with the Polish people.
22. Agathangelou and Ling cite Gandhi (1990, 348).
23. The six "global actors" in Mansbach, Ferguson, and Lampert's model of the "complex conglomerate system" are interstate governmental actors, interstate nongovernmental actors, nation-state actors, governmental noncentral actors, intrastate nongovernmental actors, and individuals. The four "global tasks" engaged in by these actors are physical protection, economic development and regulation, residual public interest tasks, and the fostering of group status. See Mansbach, Ferguson, and Lampert (1976, 37–45).

## CHAPTER 9

1. As Wendt (1999, 64) puts it, "what scientific realists claim is that the behavior of things is influenced by self-organizing, mind-independent structures that constitute those things with certain intrinsic powers and dispositions." However, one could argue that, epistemologically, "scientific realism" itself is a metaphor inasmuch as it is *like* science, not literally as such, given that it does not conduct scientific experiments in a way that would be *identical* to or the *equivalent* of science.
2. It is possible to formulate a theory that builds on a series of hypotheses stated metaphorically. For example, Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) propose a theory of metaphorical "evolution" of

metaphorical norm "life cycles" that traces out a chain of metaphorical norm "emergence," "tipping points" or "thresholds" (involving metaphorical organizational "platforms"), and "cascades," before norms are metaphorically "internalized." At each stage of the theory a metaphor is the gauge for measuring the progress of disseminating international standards of behavior. The proposition that metaphors are integral to hypothesis testing and theory generation is supported by Brown (2003).

3. Equating metaphor with "perspective," Kenneth Burke (1969, 504) writes that metaphors can form the basis for "experimental or heuristic purposes."
4. As Guilhot (300) points out, the early Realist effort to enshrine the view of international relations as an "art" as opposed to a "science" ultimately failed in favor of "systemic-structural notions" of IR that are the legacy of Kenneth Waltz in particular.
5. Brooks (449) points out that Waltz's view of human nature as motivated by wariness and anxiety is different from Hans Morgenthau's view, which sees human nature rooted in aggression. Nonetheless, both rely on some assumption of human nature as the starting point for theorizing.
6. As Donald Polkinghorne (1988, 50) points out, in narrative explanation it is the observer, not actors themselves, who attributes significance to actions. This significance can be represented via metaphor, as Wendt himself readily admits. On the significance of the location of the observer for formulating theory, see also Mannheim (1984, 205), Behr (2010, 223).
7. There are theoretical implications of metaphors, which is an important reason to take them seriously. When metaphors are used casually, they then beg questions about what assumptions have informed theoretical projects and empirical research. To take one example, in her review of an edited volume on the impact of international organizations in Central and Eastern Europe, Nina Wichmann (2004) points out that none of the authors in the book undertake an examination of the book's metaphorical title, *Norms and Nannies* (Linden 2002). If a different metaphor had been used, for example, Wichmann suggests "educators of adults" rather than "nannies," a different set of assumptions would be indicated and a different research agenda might have been suggested.
8. As George Lakoff and Mark Turner (1989, 59) observe, even when "conceptualizations are non-metaphoric this does not mean that they are mind-free."
9. To his credit, Rosenau is the rare scholar who confesses up front that his theoretical analyses are shaped by his personal perspectives. Rosenau (2003, 405) writes frankly: "It is self-deceptive to believe that one can be fully objective about the materials one probes. In the

absence of perfect information . . . we can never tell the whole story about a situation, country, political system, or any other phenomena we seek to explain. Perforce we must select some of their aspects as important and dismiss others as trivial, and our bases for making these selections stem from our values and prior experiences, as well as our expertise. The only way distortions derived from these built-in biases, premises, or understandings can be minimized is by making them as explicit as possible."

10. In fact, "scientific realists" in the social sciences might be disappointed to find out what physical and natural scientists think about them. Brown (180) writes: "In dealing with problems characterized by complexity and uncertainties, the physical and natural sciences are not fundamentally different in character from the social sciences in their approach to model building and interpretation. The models in each case are formed from metaphors that reflect embodied and social experiences, as appropriate."
11. One way to engage in critical reflection of the ideas IR scholars bring to the field is to identify the empirical universe that comprises international relations apart from the metaphors used to conceptualize it. The work of feminist scholars is particularly useful here, for example, the work of Cynthia Enloe (1989), who focuses on the everyday acts of everyday people and encourages scholars to consider that these acts and individuals are or should be the main focus of study in international relations. See also Grant and Newland (1991), Peterson (1992), Tickner (1992, 2001), Sylvester (1994, 2002), Whitworth (1994).
12. As Jens Bartelson (2010, 223) observes: "Conceptualizing the world as a spherical object was a precondition of the subsequent division of that globe into distinct portions by means of geometrical methods, but also for the subjection of these to exclusive sovereignty claims." Today, as Bartelson (232) notes, the territorial claims of sovereignty have been challenged as new ways of experiencing a spherical planet lead to new understandings of the location of political authority.
13. For an opposing perspective, see Ghemawat (2007).
14. Among the different ways of visualizing global trends is Richard Florida's vision of the world as "spiky," that is, characterized by certain geographic regions that represent spikes of economic, scientific, and technological activity. See Florida (2005).
15. For example, Alexander Wendt (1999, 112) argues in favor of making a distinction between the material world and ideas because "they are constituted as different kinds of independently existing *stuff*" (emphasis added). Wendt goes on to say that the world is separated into "two kinds of phenomena—in effect, mind and body—and [scientific realism] may be criticized for that reason" but Wendt does "not see any other way to think about the problem if we are to be scientific realists about social life." However, as we have seen through the

works of scholars of metaphors such as Lakoff and Johnson, the body and the mind are linked through the metaphorical processing of material experiences, and thus there is no getting around the connection between the material world and ideas.

16. McCloskey (75) also cites Richard Rorty (1979, 12), who claimed that it "is pictures rather than propositions, metaphors rather than statements, which determine most of our philosophical convictions."

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