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what Beck sees as a contemporaneous feat of the consciousness in coming to an understanding of changing reality), metaphors are more often than not a part of the institutionalized body of language constructs. A further difficulty would be in determining how commonly used a particular expression is, even though we may have heard it in the speech of a number of individuals. Obviously, one has to guard against peculiarities of idiolect. We must make certain that the user is trustworthy as to his interpretative outlook upon the social scene. But in any case, by the time an expression is part of general communication, it is no longer "fresh," but already a point of reference constructed in the past. Do not the old guardians of tradition sit back and pronounce meaningful metaphors when confronted with the vigorous young world-movers busy around them? A metaphor is a figure of speech, then, which tests the perceived "reality" against the accumulated body of assumptions of a people, which is, in the final analysis, culture itself.

Congratulations are due to Beck for having provided a pointer to another aspect of the value of linguistic alertness in carrying out an anthropological study.

by STEPHEN C. LEVINSON
Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England. 15 IX 77

That metaphor is the key to an understanding of ritual I take to be uncontroversial. Yet the actual mechanisms of metaphor have received little analytical scrutiny from anthropologists (despite their ritual attention to ritual), who rather trade on our intuitive understanding of a universal property of human symbolic systems. In this context Beck's essay is very welcome indeed.

Perhaps the major thrust of Beck's comments is that the structuralist analysis of metaphor (à la Lévi-Strauss and Leach) stresses the cognitive at the expense of the affective elements that are also involved. (This is nicely exemplified by her discussion of the phrase "to be the apple of one's eye.") She goes on to criticize the structuralist dogmas that without contrast there is no semantic content and that in principle ritual expressions encode one single, central, unparadoxical message. In contrast, she suggests that there is a level of thought which operates in terms of affective associations, unstable and in part idiosyncratic, and that metaphor plunges through the rigid categories of verbal thought to tap riches at this other level.

In many ways I am sympathetic with this line (which, by the way, seems quite consonant with Victor Turner's style of analysis): loose things like emotions and associations get short shrift in structuralist analysis especially. One immediate response to this thesis, however, is that it may be true, but insofar as it is true, it is unstudyable: what we cannot catch in the rigid categories of verbal thought we cannot catch at all. Shouldn't we therefore stick to our analysis of the cognitive aspects of metaphor, where at least we can make relatively precise observations? The answer, I suppose, is only if we are sticklers for precision.

Beck's remarks seem to me weakened by a failure to make a number of distinctions. In the first place, it is useful to distinguish different kinds of analogical expressions, as indeed is done in traditional rhetoric. For instance, there seem to be a number of important differences between true metaphors like

(1) "Nixon is a fish."

and proverbs like

(2) "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

Both require inferential work on the part of the hearer, but serve the working assumption that the speaker is conveying something true is to presume that it is not the *defining* characteristics, but the *incidental* characteristics, that are being conveyed (see Grice 1975); so I infer that Nixon is slippery, slimy, scaly, or swims well. The mechanism in (2) is quite different and much more involved: to preserve the working assumption that speakers' utterances are relevant, I must assume that there is some analogy between the situation being talked about and the utterance—specifically, I must pair the subject of the proverb with the topic of the conversation (say, my laments over the size of my research grant) and then find a predicate that matches the predicate in the proverb (say, "is better than a large grant unobtained").

My point here is that the mechanisms in each case are quite precise, and rather different, and I suspect things may be more blurred than clarified by subsuming varied phenomena under the single rubric of metaphor.

Another important distinction that Beck does not emphasize is the distinction between the study of the mechanisms of metaphor (as above) and the study of the use to which metaphors are put. These seem to me to be independent enterprises, and it is the latter which is likely to bear the most anthropological fruit. Beck's remarks about the social functions of metaphor seem almost parenthetical, but provocative. She suggests, I think, that they are especially used to patch up rents in the social firmament, to aid the processes of "mystification" (as the jargon goes), or the masking of change. But this does not jibe well with the fact that only some cultures are full of proverbs, and those seem to be ones associated with traditional and relatively static societies. On the other hand, if one looks in recorded conversations for the motives behind the introduction of metaphors in speech, one finds that, like ironies, they are typically used to make critical remarks or points that contravene social decorum (see Brown and Levinson 1978). What are euphemisms, after all? And why do parables and heresies go together? One use, at least, of analogical allusion is not to patch up the social structure, but to tear it down right under the censor's eyes.

This raises a final but important point. Beck suggests that a way to study a culture's cosmology is to study its metaphors. But metaphors are not so easy to interpret, or perhaps too easy: there is always a great range of possible interpretations (hence the evasion of the censor). Take my example (1) above: was it Nixon's slipperiness, scaliness, or swimming that I had in mind? I'm not saying.

by FRANKLIN LOVELAND
Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa. 17325, U.S.A. 18 VIII 77

I thoroughly enjoyed Beck's paper on metaphor but question whether she has demonstrated all that she set out to. It seems to me that she attempts to integrate two major theoretical traditions in the anthropological analysis of metaphor: the structural school of Lévi-Strauss and Leach and the movement school of Fernandez. While she reconciles these two traditions theoretically, I am not convinced she has reconciled them methodologically. Granted that metaphors are mediators between "partial and abstract principles on a verbal plane and concrete, sensual holistic images that thrive on a nonverbal one," it is difficult to decide how to analyze them. Beck seems to come down clearly on the movement side of the question in her example of the "egg-to-bird" process by suggesting that metaphors go beyond the rational bounds of experience "by