

# On Discipline Stripping: Difficulties in the Application of Humanistic Metaphors to Educational Phenomena

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Despite the work that has been done in recent years by educational researchers using metaphors derived from the humanities rather than the social sciences, the body of criticism concerning their achievements is not large. In this paper, two major difficulties are identified. First, little recognition has been given to the great variety of metaphors that may be derived from a single discipline within the humanities (drama is used as an example), and, as a consequence, no criteria are available to assist in the selection of one metaphor rather than another. Second, little attention appears to have been paid to an inherent problem in transferring systems of discourse from a humanity to education in conditions in which the receiver is unfamiliar with the original source. Given these two difficulties, a note of caution is expressed on the direction being taken by contemporary researchers using such alternative metaphors.

Malgré l'effort fait depuis quelques années par les chercheurs en éducation pour établir un lexique de comparaisons issu du vocabulaire littéraire plutôt que des sciences sociales, ceci est loin d'être un fait accompli. Le présent article nous présente deux raisons à l'accueil peu favorable de ce projet. Premièrement, cette recherche semble faire peu de cas des comparaisons issues d'une branche spécifique à l'intérieur de l'ensemble des disciplines littéraires (le théâtre, par exemple), et par conséquent, n'apporte aucun critère valable dans le choix d'une comparaison plutôt qu'une autre. Deuxièmement, on ne semble pas considérer comme important, le problème de transférer un discours littéraire dans une discipline comme l'éducation alors que cette dernière est peu familière avec les lettres. Une fois ces deux difficultés établies, une mise en garde est adressée aux chercheurs sur la possibilité d'utiliser un tel lexique (ce genre de comparaison).

Over the last ten years, educational researchers have attempted to refocus commonly held perspectives on education by using humanistically derived metaphors. Although the body of theory to justify such an enterprise remains ill defined, and the number of studies relatively small, enough work has been done to provide at least the outline of what the principal arguments might be, and how these new metaphors might be implemented. In short, if we do not yet have the finished portrait, at least we have the author's introductory sketches. Additional detail may be found in those few published criticisms of the new approaches, which offer important clues as to the nature and purpose of the enterprise, even if they, too, are scattered and fragmentary.

The purpose of this article is two-fold. First, there will be a brief review of the selected claims made by advocates of humanistic metaphors with a summary account of criticisms of such proposals. Second, an attempt will

be made to outline two major difficulties that seem to trouble both advocates and critics of such metaphors. Rather than comment directly on the work currently undertaken in this field of educational research, my discussion focusses upon how the metaphors are appropriated. The first difficulty lies with the variety of images existing within humanistic disciplines, and the second with the difficulties in understanding metaphorical images. Both difficulties appear to have been underestimated (if not totally ignored) in current discussion of humanistic metaphors in educational research.

#### QUESTIONS RAISED IN A "STATE-OF-THE-ART" REVIEW

Interest in humanistic metaphors is found in three principal locations. First, numerous educational theorists – influenced no doubt by similar musings within related social sciences – have expressed disenchantment with what may be labelled the prevailing paradigm governing research methodology within their field. A decade ago, for example, the author of a major review-article expressed concern at what he called the "paucity of theory" in current approaches to research on teaching, and he recommended that his colleagues become "engaged more extensively and intensively in metaphor making" (Snow, 1973, pp. 89–90). Such comments have become much more common in the period since then (e.g., Bowers, 1980; Brown, 1977; Mann, 1975; Ortony, 1975; Reid, 1978; Rico, 1976; Willis, 1978). Second, the musings of one educational researcher in particular – Elliot Eisner – have attracted wide attention, and his publications (e.g., Eisner, n.d., 1975, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1983) have been extraordinarily influential. His arguments, for example, that researchers should start with an artistic rather than a scientific paradigm (Eisner, 1977, p. 346), seem to have served as the most important body of theory for investigators using alternative metaphors. Third, a group of researchers and graduate students (who often studied with Eisner) has published a few examples of such humanistic metaphors' application in educational situations (e.g., Barone, 1980; Donmoyer, 1979; Gehrke & Bravmann, 1981; Greene, 1977; Hamilton, Jenkins, King, MacDonald & Parlett, 1977; Jenkins, 1978; Kelly, 1975; MacDonald, 1976; Simon & Dippo, 1980; Stake, 1975; Vallance, 1975, 1976, 1978; Werner, 1980; Willis, 1975). It is from these three sources that the evidence for this article's critical comment has been derived.

Given the frequently expressed dissatisfaction with the traditional paradigm in educational research, advocates of new approaches turned to the humanities for alternative systems of discourse. Since they wished to view educational phenomena with "sets-of-eyes" (Roberts, 1980) derived from non-scientific sources, they hoped to identify new ways to conduct educational research and to report their findings. The humanities were systematically examined for these new approaches, with methods of research and means of reporting identified, and those findings trans-

ferred metaphorically to educational situations. This search at first focussed almost exclusively on aesthetics and art criticism (largely inspired by Eisner), but it has now spread widely across the entire range of the humanities, for example, literary criticism (Kelly, 1975; Jenkins & O'Toole, 1978; Willis, 1975), journalism (Barone, 1980; MacDonald, 1976), music (Eisner, 1983), theatre (Grumet, 1978; Oram, 1978), and drama (Courtney, 1980; Gehrke & Bravmann, 1981; Milburn, 1982). Indeed, an open season seems declared on the humanities, with scholars looking either at broad areas within the field or at narrowly defined disciplines as sources from which to cull metaphors to apply to education. This search has gone so far as to lead to a serious consideration of the craft of fishing (Tom, 1980) as a possible source for an educational metaphor. To draw attention to its uncritical – if not reckless – nature, I have labelled this process, somewhat unkindly, “discipline stripping.”

The general process followed by these researchers is relevant to this discussion. First, the original source, either a broad field or specific discipline, is searched to locate key concepts useful in examining teaching. Thus from journalism, for example (MacDonald, 1976), such concepts as “scene-by-scene construction,” “use of dialogue,” “third-person perspective,” and the “symbolic detail of the subject’s life” are deliberately extracted. In my own work with a dramatic metaphor (Milburn, 1982, pp. 84–92), I borrowed such concepts as “created episodes,” “human presence,” “character,” “activity,” “segment,” “space,” and “convention.” Using such notions derived from humanistic sources, scholars intend to clothe the analysis of educational phenomena with descriptions and assessments unavailable in the prevailing methodology. Second, some researchers have attempted to locate particular prose styles characteristic of humanistic disciplines, to use them directly in reporting educational phenomena. Thus Vallance (1975, pp. 131–138), for example, identified a group of prose features, including “simile,” “implied technique,” “implied movement,” and “overlapping adjectives,” that she claimed were not only typical of art criticism but also appropriate for descriptions of educational situations.

While generalizations are extraordinarily dangerous (especially in view of the fact that not all current work has been reported), nevertheless a case will be made that many researchers involved in such discipline stripping have not understood clearly existing problems in the use of metaphors. While they have concentrated on generating new systems of discourse for transfer from the humanities to educational research situations, they may have neglected to fully consider the risks and dangers involved in the enterprise.<sup>2</sup> There is, to use a current buzz-word, a “taken-for-granted-ness” about their work. In short, using metaphors is a risky business, and those who do so should remind themselves, as Black did in parallel circumstances twenty years ago, of the adage, “whereof one can speak only metaphorically, thereof one ought not to speak at all” (1962, p. 25).

Nor has much attention been paid to such basic issues by critics of the

use of humanistic metaphors in education situations. Although a number of important critiques have appeared (e.g., Elbaz & Elbaz, 1981; Gibson, 1981; Pagano & Dolan, 1980; Pratte, 1981; Vallance, 1981), and even the rare response (e.g., Oram, 1983), the force of these comments seems directed elsewhere. One critic (Gibson, 1981), it is true, has challenged the authenticity of the very notion of "educational criticism" as Eisner and other scholars have defined the term, but his argument (to be considered later in this paper) seems largely to point to the contrast between works-of-art and curricula, not intrinsically a hindrance to metaphor making (Brown, 1977, p. 81). Other critics have focussed on the methodological appropriateness of the few empirical examples of humanistic research available for public scrutiny, but their comments often attempt to establish how results of the application of humanistic metaphors fail to meet the acid tests of quantitative research – note the attention paid to discussions of such psychometric topics as validity, reliability, and objectivity in reporting (e.g., Elbaz & Elbaz, 1981; Pagano & Dolan, 1980; Vallance, 1981). Others have expressed more than passing concern – and one that I share – about the type of written discourse characterizing recent research reports. "Bombastic" and "narcissistic" were two labels that Gibson (1981) attached to such writings. Finally, others have commented upon practising teachers' reactions to reviews written with alternative metaphors (e.g., Donmoyer, 1979; Milburn, 1982; Vallance, 1975). Again, however, few criticisms have been traced back to the nature of metaphoric transfer.

Given this context of comment and criticism within the entire field of humanistic metaphors in educational research, I wish to deal with two of the taken-for-granted aspects of metaphoric transfers, apparently not only neglected in contemporary debates on the subject, but also causing severe difficulties for the advocates of such approaches in implementing their declared task. The first relates to the effects of an oversimplistic view of the original humanistic sources; the second relates to the necessary conditions for understanding humanistic metaphors when they are used in educational situations. I will argue that both difficulties, while not necessarily insuperable, are now only faintly acknowledged, and they represent important barriers to further progress in this type of educational research.

#### THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

One difficulty in a scrutiny of recent work using new metaphors is the simplicity of interpretation with regard to original humanistic sources. In the first place, some of the research findings are based on the notion that humanistic criticism has a widely accepted unity of form applicable to various disciplines. Thus Vallance (1981, p. 2) talks in general terms of "the art critic – the critic of painting, photography, dance, theatre, music" who "serves as a bridge" between the art objects and the public. Similarly,

when Barone (1983, p. 21) speaks of “certain similarities in the kinds of experiences promoted through good teaching and those encountered through good art,” he seems to view “art” in a very global sense. In the second place, many researchers who recommend that investigators turn to humanistic disciplines take little overt measure of various forms existing within those disciplines – indeed, they leave the impression, perhaps unintended, that those disciplines have a single, widely accepted, set of understandings about the nature of epistemology and methodology. Harris (1976, p. 91), for example, speaks of borrowing a wide range of “concepts” from such disciplines as music, drama, architecture and painting, as though each of them were a single entity.

Such views of the humanities seem highly simplistic and misleading. If there is any single characteristic of the humanities, ignored only at the researcher’s peril, it is the variety of their forms. There is not one way of viewing dance, but many; not one way of explaining art, but many; not one way of examining literature, but many; and so on. Gibson (1981, p. 197) is one of the few critics who has pointed to what he called the “competing schools” existing in literary criticism – “marxism, structuralism, new criticism, hermeneutics, deconstruction, formalism, archetypalism, receptionism, transactionism ....” A similar range – what Gibson (1981, p. 197) calls a “near-endless” list – may be noted in every other discipline. In other words, the metaphor of building a bridge (with its connotations of firm embankments, and easy access from one side to the other) between an educational situation and a humanistic discipline may be highly misleading.

The point I want to stress, however, is not just that the humanistic disciplines present a great number of sources for metaphors, but that each metaphor so derived from a single discipline may be *distinctly different in form*. Thus, it is not just the number of metaphors that must be considered (in itself, a possible point of confusion) but also the nature of the differences between each one. To talk only about the variety of potential metaphors that exists, for example, within literary criticism is not sufficient; the nature of those differences needs to be examined. This point is worth exploring in detail since it seems to have been ignored thus far within the critical literature on metaphor making in educational situations.

Take, for example, the case of drama, a humanity with a rich and diverse background, stretching back to classical times in written terms, and probably much further in terms of performance.<sup>3</sup> Not only is there an enormous and controversial literature on the nature of drama itself, but also its relationship with “theatre” and “performance” has been subject to extensive debates. Some observers have denied a separate existence to drama, others see it as a mixed enterprise, and still others view it as a distinct discipline in its own right. From earliest historical times to the present, the variety of forms taken by drama is well known. (For these discussions see, for example, Bentley, 1956, 1965, 1967; Crane, 1964;

Dawson, 1970; Esslin, 1976; Styan, 1963, 1965, 1975.) What seems to emerge from all of these debates is a great range of interpretations of drama providing distinctly different views of its nature on the one hand, and its methods of criticism on the other. These alternatives within the discipline provide markedly different images or “sets-of-eyes” for viewing drama. Accordingly, when educational researchers go metaphor hunting within drama, they ignore these differences at their peril.

To show the effect of these differences within drama, I shall ask the educational researcher to rely upon the dramatic concepts of three different theorists, Aristotle, Shank and Beckerman, each one of whom has been influential in contemporary discussions of the discipline. My purpose here, in other words, is to illustrate the differences in systems of discourse and methods of reporting that may emerge in the metaphors derived from the different theoretical notions about drama. If such a researcher, for example, relies upon Aristotle’s conception of drama (Fyfe, 1940), he may demonstrate an interest in reproducing what he perceived as the essentials of life in an educational situation, and the corresponding emotions that these essentials aroused. Such a researcher, following Aristotle, may attempt to hold up a mirror to nature, selecting important sections of universal rather than particular concern, and attempting to illustrate some permanent aspects of human nature within the situation under review. In the method of reporting, the researcher may follow Aristotle in attempting to define the structural elements of the situation, and recounting those elements in such constituent terms as character, thought, and, in particular, plot. In short, Aristotle’s central concepts of “imitation” and “striation” may provide the essential organizing concepts for applying the metaphor to educational situations.

The image may change significantly, however, if the researcher turns to Shank’s (1969) views of drama, which are themselves greatly influenced by those of Langer (1953). Here the central search may focus, not on imitation, but on the “image of feeling,” or the “objectification of feeling,” within the educational situation under study. He may be particularly interested in the type of illusion that is created, the “semblance of life” that is presented as an “immediate audible or visible presence” (Shank, 1969, p. 55). In other words, he may be interested in ways in which the movement and speech of participants give access to invisible and inaudible acts of the mind. Immediacy is vital; reading a script of a situation may put in the past something that can only be understood in the present (Shank, 1969, p. 43). From the point of view of reporting, such an investigator may pay particular attention to the series of choices made by all participants in the situation, and, especially, to how those choices contribute to the central purpose of the enterprise. The order in which choices are made may be important, as may be the type of collaboration among the participants. The craft aspect is also significant; the way that setting, light and materials are employed within the situation may be subject to comment. The dramatic act – Shank argues in a phrase that

illustrates how useful drama is as the basis for a possible metaphor for assessing educational situations – “must be designed to interest the percipient, to focus his attention upon the work, to occupy his mind and empty it of extraneous matters so that it can be impregnated with the import which has been objectified in the work” (Shank, 1969, p. 54).

Using the work of the third theorist, Beckerman (1970), the educational researcher may turn his attention, not to “imitation” nor to “objectification of feeling,” but to the “imagined act” that is offered when one or more human beings, isolated in time or space, present themselves to another or others (Beckerman, 1970, p. 18). He may observe the type of conscious self-presentation that occurs as the participants attempt to be surrogates for a particular activity. From this point of view, it is crucial to focus on the activity that takes place, since all presentation occurs in a sequence of motion. In doing so, the researcher may be concerned with a type of analysis that differs markedly from that of Aristotle; where the latter used horizontal “striation” in a biological sense to break a dramatic event into its constituent parts, a researcher using Beckerman’s notions may examine the same situation “vertically,” a process in which the progression of the units of the action are scrutinized over time. “Units of time,” he writes, “are, in fact, the contextual frames within which drama evolves, and the first step in our dramaturgical analysis is to discern them in a dramatic work” (Beckerman, 1970, p. 37). Through these units, therefore, an educational researcher may note the purpose of each participant within the action, and the patterns of contact, tension and climax. Not that such structures are fixed formulae; on the contrary, they merely guide the actual interplay producing the action. In making his observations, an educational researcher may be interested in the description of events as they occur, in his response to those events at the moment of creation, in the comparisons made between perceptions and real-life experience, and finally, in any imaginative abstractions aroused by the act in progress. In short, what is needed is not “objectivity” but “disciplined subjectivity” in which “trained intelligence is focussed upon the examination of internal, elusive processes” (Beckerman, 1970, p. 254).

Given the significant differences in definitions of drama on the one hand, and methods of analysis on the other, among Aristotle, Shank and Beckerman (to select only three out of many such alternative views of drama), an educational researcher is thus faced with three distinct images in metaphor making. In the same educational situation, each metaphor would produce a different image and a different type of assessment. Despite their origins within a single humanity, these differences in systems of discourse and methods of reporting may lead to quite distinct images. In other words, there is not one metaphor that may be derived from dramatic sources, nor even groups of similar metaphors, but a range of distinct metaphors that lead to multiple images of educational situations.

This brief excursion into dramatic theory is designed to highlight a

major problem arising in recent comment concerning the use of humanities for new metaphors in educational situations. Within the field of drama, the range of sources for such metaphors is large, and the images provided for examining educational phenomena differ distinctly. So, too, it is argued, with architecture, dance, literary criticism, and fine arts. Not one exists, but many; the list is extensive. We face the prospect of scores, perhaps hundreds, of metaphors.

An observer may approach this problem from several points of view. If one were merely interested in throwing present practices into some kind of relief, then any metaphor from any source would suffice. If one were to provide an academic pastime for researchers, then the relentless pursuit of new metaphors would need little additional justification. Let the humanities be stripped away, rather like open-face mining, until the resources are exhausted. If, however, some more important purpose may be perceived in the enterprise – if, for example, the intention is to provide practitioners with new ways of viewing their craft – then some choice may have to be exercised. Some selective procedure, a set of criteria, may have to be devised for preferring this rather than that set of metaphors in a particular situation.

In summary, then, two issues do not appear to have been sufficiently addressed in the literature advocating or criticizing alternative metaphors. First, the wide diversity within possible metaphors derived from a single discipline has been given little recognition. Second, few attempts have yet been made to establish reasons for preferring particular metaphors or groups of metaphors in educational research. Both issues demand clarification.

#### THE PROBLEM OF TRANSFER

The second difficulty is of a different sort, concerned not with the source from which systems of discourse are stripped, but with the nature of the transfer itself from one person to another. Given the nature of the metaphor, it will be argued, the opportunity for *any* clear understanding in such a transfer may be much more limited than many observers have assumed. In discussing this point I will examine first a number of theoretical arguments, then consider the small quantity of empirical research results so far available.

The theoretical difficulties of understanding any other than a familiar metaphor ought not be underestimated. In this connection, Black's comment of twenty years ago is worth recalling: "understanding a metaphor is like deciphering a code or unraveling a riddle" (Black, 1962, p. 32). What is at issue in statements of this type is the question of the barriers that exist between the intention of the metaphor's originator and the recipient's understanding (Stewart, 1967, p. 19). When an originator posits, for example, the notion of "man" as "wolf," Black has argued (1962, pp. 40–43), he calls upon a set of familiar knowledge – what Black

calls, in a luminous word, the “commonplaces” – that are common possession of both the originator and the recipient, if not indeed, of “all members of the same speech community.” In using the “wolf” metaphor for “man,” therefore, the originator evokes information that is shared by the recipient; in fact, he relies upon that sharing in order to transfer the image of the metaphor. The point is not, it should be noted, that the information is necessarily accurate (and in this case the accepted commonplaces about “wolf” probably slander the qualities of the feral creature), but that it is shared. For such metaphoric transfer to take place, such a system of associated commonplaces should be, in Black’s words, “readily and freely evoked.” Stewart (1967, p. 19) puts the same message in another form: “when a metaphor is said to function as an explanatory device it must bring the subject under discussion into the range of comprehension of the reader; and this presupposes the use of fairly common terms of the image.”

In the case of new metaphors stripped from humanistic sources, this “free evocation” cannot be taken for granted. The difficulties in transferring such understandings may be so great that perception of the new metaphors is at risk. These obstacles may be located in two sources: the powerful belief systems (or existing metaphors) that govern education, and the difficulties that exist within the humanistic sources themselves. Although this difficulty in transfer has not yet been given adequate theoretical treatment within the literature, some evidence of its power has appeared even within the very fragmentary empirical research resulting from the application of humanistic metaphors to educational situations.

The force of existing metaphors in educational research is so well documented that it does not require lengthy comment here. For purposes of this discussion, I take it for granted that current educational research is largely scientific in origin. It is concerned with objectifying reality, reducing phenomena to manageable generalizations, and generating theory. Its tests are objectivity and replicability, and its method of reporting usually numerical. The power of this prevailing metaphor (Brown, 1977) is encapsulated in Gage’s forecast (in his book with the significant title of *The Scientific Basis of the Art of Teaching*) of the immediate future of one aspect of educational research, the study of teaching:

At least for the foreseeable future, research on teaching will proceed as “normal science” (Kuhn, 1962); that is, investigators will follow the elaborated process-product paradigm and work on cleaning up an enormous number of details in the unfinished business of the field. New variables will be identified, invented, and measured. More ingenious ways of relating the variables, especially in complex causal patterns, will be devised and exploited. Better qualitative investigations, more comprehensive correlational studies, more intensive and single-case experiments, and more comprehensive path analyses will be performed. (Gage, 1978, pp. 93–94)

The question of how appropriate are these approaches to educational research is not at issue here; what matters is their effect upon expectations

at all levels of education. Since the prevailing metaphor takes for granted non-humanistic methodologies, researchers and practitioners alike are familiar with social scientific approaches and unfamiliar with the counterparts in the humanities. Consciously or unconsciously (McPeck, 1981, p. 18), the research models and methods of validation drawn from the natural sciences are accepted as givens, with the result that approaches from the humanities tend to be more easily dismissed. In such circumstances, "free evocation" of new images is severely restricted.

Leaving on one side the powerful effect of the prevailing metaphor in educational research, additional barriers to "free evocation" of intended commonplaces have already been mentioned or alluded to in previous sections of this article. If logical grounds exist for noting confusion in the minds of researchers using new metaphors, then that same confusion may be present in the minds of readers and practitioners. If the implications of viewing a piece of curriculum as a "work of art" or considering teaching as a "dramatic event" are not clear to a practitioner, his confusion is more than excusable. If the same practitioner turns to the literature for guidance, he may be baffled by the relative obscurity of some of the sources (e.g., Rico, 1976), annoyed by the hortatory tone of some of the writing (e.g., Eisner, 1979), or foiled by the paucity of examples of research data on which he can draw. In short, current approaches to elucidating and explaining alternative metaphors in educational research do not seem directed to solving a key problem in the use of metaphors: the "free evocation" of intended commonplaces. That does not mean that solutions cannot be devised, just that the difficulties do not appear to have been recognized.

Yet signs of stress connected with the problem of evoking intended commonplaces already are appearing. At the critical level, for example, at least one observer clearly reveals more than a reluctance to accept a humanistic metaphor. What is interesting about Gibson's criticisms of the work of a group of researchers using new approaches (Gibson, 1981) is not the detail of his arguments – however useful they may be in other circumstances – but the fact that he seems to reject the notion of a metaphoric image. In short, there is no "evocation" at all. "The assumption," he observes, "that a curriculum is a work of art or can be treated as one" is one of the "major defects" to which he points in the work under review; furthermore, the reasons offered to him for treating curriculum as such seem to him "pretty strange" (Gibson, 1981, p. 192). Yet Gibson's argument may have been improved by considering the point that Brown (1977, p. 81) makes about the nature of metaphor: namely, that if taken literally, a metaphor must be absurd. Metaphoric thinking requires a type of double vision, a capacity to "hold an object in attention simultaneously from two (or more) points of view" (Brown, 1977, p. 83). In Gibson's case, however, it may be argued that his criticism of new approaches is blind to essential considerations of the nature of metaphor. This same failure to recognize the nature of metaphoric transfer may lie

behind some attempts to counter elitism in humanistic reviews (e.g., Elbaz & Elbaz, 1981, p. 117) or to attach rigour to so-called “soft” research (e.g., Guba & Lincoln, 1981, pp. 85–127).

Although the evidence is extraordinarily limited and flimsy, there is more than a hint that practitioners also are reluctant to welcome accounts of educational phenomena based on humanistic metaphors. After outlining the principles upon which her artistic reviews of curriculum materials were based, Vallance reported that a group of secondary-school teachers

could identify no situations in which they [the reviews] would be particularly helpful, strongly resented being given a third party's interpretation of the curriculum materials [and] highly disliked the colorful language and interpretive adjectives. (Vallance, 1975, p. 204)

It should be stressed, however, that she had more success with elementary-school teachers (1975, pp. 202–204). In my own work with the derivation of a particular form of dramatic metaphor, teachers who responded to written reviews were interviewed for their reactions.

The conclusion that is inescapable ... is that comprehension, understanding and use of alternative notions of the assessment of teaching acts may be inhibited severely unless ground is prepared carefully. Given the existence (and power) of prevailing conceptions of teaching, a different vision especially one that draws upon unusual sources, may be neither welcomed nor understood. (Milburn, 1982, pp. 204–205)

Although more intensive study of this particular empirical question is required, the possibility clearly exists that new metaphors based on humanistic sources run an impressive gauntlet in the world of teaching.

An important element in the use of metaphors – that of “free evocation” of commonplaces – appears neglected by those searching for alternatives within the humanities. The difficulties that lie in the path of such “free evocation” are great: the variety of images, the power of the prevailing paradigm, and the unfamiliarity of both the researchers and practitioners with the nature of the enterprise. Evidence is appearing to show outright rejection of alternative metaphors owing to the participants' inability to freely evoke necessary commonplaces. The task of correcting that neglect may lead researchers back to review their own conception of the role of metaphor in their work.

In short, educational researchers using humanistic metaphors face at least two persistent problems in their work. Given the wide variety of metaphors that may be drawn from a single humanity (and the very large number that may be drawn from all those disciplines), a set of criteria may be needed to assist in identifying metaphors for use in educational research. What is it, we may ask, that makes one metaphor more productive than others in characterizing educational phenomena? At the same

time, the difficulties that block the successful transfer of metaphoric commonplaces from originator to recipient must be solved for successful transfer to take place. Both problems, it may be noted, point in the same direction – a more thorough analysis of the nature of metaphor in educational investigations than has yet appeared in the literature.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Sections of this paper are derived from Milburn (1982). A previous version was presented at a meeting of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, Vancouver, June 1983. I have benefited from the comments of Richard Butt, Richard Courtney, Robert Gidney, Skip Hills, Roger Simon and Joel Weiss. I am grateful also for the assistance of Mrs. H. Henderson in typing this paper.
- <sup>2</sup> Some work, of course, has been done on the theoretical difficulties of the use of metaphors in educational research (e.g., Bowers, 1980; Pratte, 1981). The point is that many researchers involved in the deliberate design of new metaphors do not seem in their published work to have taken sufficient note of these difficulties.
- <sup>3</sup> No reference is made in this paper to the various important studies using dramatic or theatrical concepts in the social scientific sense (e.g., Berne, 1964; Burns, 1972; Goffman, 1959; Lessinger & Gillis, 1976; Lyman & Scott, 1975; Turner, 1974).

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Trotz der vielen Arbeiten, die in den letzten Jahren von Erziehungswissenschaftlern, die richtungsgebende Metaphoren eher den Geisteswissenschaften als den Sozialwissenschaften entlehnten, geschrieben wurden, ist die Bewertung ihrer Leistungen nicht nennenswert. Diese Abhandlung soll zwei Grundschwierigkeiten der Forschung näher kennzeichnen: Erstens: Die Möglichkeiten der Entlehnung aus einem einzigen an Metaphoren reichen Wissenszweig innerhalb der Geisteswissenschaften, z.B. der Dramatik, sind bisher kaum erkannt worden, und folglich bestehen keine Anhaltspunkte für die Wahl zwischen zwei denkbaren Metaphoren. Zweitens: ein Problem, das in der Übertragung der charakteristischen Wortführung der geisteswissenschaftlichen auf die pädagogische Abhandlung liegt, ist bisher wenig berücksichtigt worden, besonders da wo der Pädagoge die Originalquelle nicht kennt. Die beiden genannten Schwierigkeiten geben Anlaß dazu, vor der Forschungsrichtung, die heutige Forscher durch die Anwendung mehrdeutiger Metaphoren einschlagen, zu warnen.

A pesar del trabajo llevado a cabo en los últimos años por los investigadores en educación usando metáforas derivadas de las humanidades más bien que de las ciencias sociales, los estudios críticos de sus resultados no son muchos. En este estudio se identifican dos dificultades mayores. Primero, parece haber poco reconocimiento de la gran variedad de metáforas que pueden derivarse de una disciplina única dentro de las humanidades (se usa drama como ejemplo) y, en consecuencia, no existen criterios para ayudar a elegir una metáfora más bien que otra. Segundo, parece haberse dado poca atención a un problema inherente al transferir sistemas de discurso de las humanidades a la educación, en condiciones en que el receptor no conoce la fuente original. Dadas estas dos dificultades, debe de haber una nota de cautela en la dirección en que los investigadores contemporáneos se están encaminando al usar tales metáforas alternativas.

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