

# **Metaphors of Nature in Political Science**

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Different political metaphors have been used throughout history to imagine and perform in political discourses. Each historical period has brought different conceptions of main political concepts, often based on natural imagery. As the conceptions of nature by natural sciences changed, so have political metaphors. Revolutions in scientific knowledge of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought reflexivity and subjectivity into natural sciences, something social sciences have long been based on. Social sciences no longer 'borrowed' from natural sciences, but rather contributed its metaphors for describing and performing in natural sciences.

Metaphors of 'body', 'machine', 'market as a self-balancing mechanism', etc. have all been used in this context at various times in history. The aim of this paper is to explore relationship between natural sciences and political discourses via metaphor. What is the exact link between nature, natural sciences, political discourses and metaphors? How has this link been changed because of revolutions in science? What has been the role of metaphors of nature in political discourses? How do political metaphors function?

The first part of the paper will explore theoretical considerations about metaphor in political science, its uses and interpretations, and the second part will use these foundations to interpretatively focus on discovering and recovering the relationship between nature and political metaphors.

## **Political Metaphor: A Methodological Premier**

Political metaphors have a long history of various usages. Primarily they have been used for describing political processes, either as just rhetorical devices, mere figures of speech, or, as we have come to know and use them since the development of linguistic-based methodologies in social sciences, as something 'more' than just ornaments of language.

Research approaches to political metaphors have differed according to methodologies in use at various times. Methodologies have inevitably been connected to epistemological and ontological positions about metaphors, social world, and reality, very much in line with Marsh and Furlong's (2002) idea about ontology and epistemology being like a skin, not a sweater. It is the aim of this chapter to make a survey of various methodologies used for analysing political metaphors and to bring into fore some methodological questions that might have been left out.

One of the most persistent questions about the role and nature of political metaphors has been the distinction between metaphorical and literal meaning of political concepts. Encyclopedia Britannica in its 1771 edition states:

*Metaphor, in rhetoric, a trope, by which we put a strange word for a proper word, by reason of its resemblance to it; a simile or comparison intended to enforce or illustrate the thing we speak of, without the signs or forms of comparison (quoted in Miller, 2003:3).*

Seen in this way, a metaphor is just a rhetorical device, a figure of speech, a tool of language, a device of poetic imagination, a deviant linguistic expression, a matter of words rather than thought or action, which's primary role is the description of social reality with different, stand-in word than the one designated to be literal. Several questions appear instantaneously: What is literal and what is metaphorical? Is the distinction literal-metaphorical trans-cultural and trans-historical? Is literal supposed to have a privileged and direct access to the 'right' meaning of concept, and metaphorical indirect, only via literal? Who defines what is the 'right' meaning of the concept? And, last but not least, what is 'reality' words are so eager to describe? What sort of *Weltanschauung* is connected to this particular vision of a metaphor?

We could identify several views and methodologies together with their ontological and epistemological positions that see metaphors as deviant literal expressions. Let it suffice to mention just two: objectivist and positivist thinking. Objectivism according to Johnson (1987:x) takes following general pattern: "The world consists of objects that have properties and stand in various relationships independent of human understanding. The world is as it is, no matter what any person happens to believe about it, and there is one correct "God's-Eye-View" what the world really is like. In other words, there is a rational structure to reality, independent of beliefs of any people, and correct reason mirrors this rational structure." To express this reality, we need language that can connect objects, properties, and relations in

literal, univocal, context-independent fashion (cf. Shapiro 1985-86:199-200) Reasoning functions in linear way, by joining such concepts into propositions that describe reality, by connecting up the concepts according to the rules of logic. Words correspond directly to the things in the world; there is no place for human agency in making of meaning and rationality, because meaning is the direct relation between symbols and things in the world (Johnson, 1987:x). Because of such a view, a metaphor can hardly find its own place of existence. It is certainly barred from fundamental level of description of objective reality, because only literal terms and propositions can, according to objectivist assumptions about a metaphor, describe at this level. A metaphor is mainly deemed unfit for describing at this level because it crosses "categorical boundaries and therefore cannot properly map onto the world that has discrete and categorical boundaries" (Johnson, 1987:66-67). Since metaphors are not fundamental and cannot describe the world organised in discrete units, they also have no role in constituting that reality and cognitive processes, unless they are reducible to literal concepts and propositions (ibid.).

Positivism shares many ontological and epistemological positions with objectivism, especially in the form of logical positivism as defined by thinkers belonging to the Vienna Circle. For logical positivism to achieve objectivity, every sentence and every statement must be a direct expression of observable things and all speculative ideas, including metaphors, must be removed. It places emphasis on sensorical perception and the role of observation as the foundation of knowledge (Smith, 1998:98; cf. Benton and Craib, 2001:13ff). Since scientific statements are perfect, mirror like reflections of things<sup>1</sup>, metaphors are seen as literary devices that corrupt the knowledge of the world.

Seeing metaphors as literary devices gives rise to the meta-metaphorical function of language. Language is taken as a tool for viewing the world, chiefly in instrumental fashion, with linear correspondence of words and the world, and with a radical separation between the world of things and structure of apprehension that brings that world to knowledge (cf. Shapiro, 1985-86:200). Meta-metaphor of language as a tool acts as a perfect translator and interlocutor of one with another, therefore making a metaphor a corrupting device of language.

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<sup>1</sup> The Vienna Circle adopted young Wittgenstein's mimetic approach of words as a simple mirror reflection of things (Smith, 1998:98). Main proponent of this approach was Rudolph Carnap, whose approach can best be described as physicalism, since he believed that an universal descriptive language could be developed to describe all possible situations, since there was only one set of physical things to study.

Metaphor as a corrupting device of language is, however, at odds with the Greek roots of the word 'metaphor', literary meaning 'to carry over'. The defining characteristic of metaphor in the Aristotelian tradition is that it is defined in terms of movement, change with respect to location, mainly movement "from ... to" (Ricoeur, 1981:17). Aristotle applies the word *metaphor* to every transposition in terms. We could, therefore, suppose that metaphor is borrowing, that the borrowed meaning is opposed to the 'proper' meaning, that one resorts to metaphors to fill a semantic void and that the borrowed word takes the place of the absent proper word where such a place exists (Ricoeur, 1981:17-18), but no such thing happens. Metaphors may disturb an already established logical order of language where transposition operates, but this does not mean that metaphors bring upon an already established order a new order, since the transposition operates within this established order. Aristotle's process of *epiphora* (movement from ... to) rests on the perception of resemblance, which semantic core is ontologically established prior to metaphor. A metaphor is, therefore, operating in the ontologically primarily set environment of transparent language.

Max Black's seminal study *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (1962) mounts an attack on the classical perception of metaphor as just having a substitutive function. Metaphors are according to Black's view more than just substitutes for literal meanings (cf. Ricoeur, 1981:83-90; Zashin and Champan, 1974:296-97; Maasen, 1995:14-15), where speaker chooses to replace literal meaning with another expression that is different from 'normal', 'proper' meaning. Such substitution introduces no new information and has therefore no cognitive function. Its only function according Black is that it may fill the gap in the dictionary, thereby acting as literal expression and disappearing as metaphor. Black proposes different view of a metaphor, something that has subsequently become known as the 'interaction view'. Metaphor in his opinion is rarely only something decorative<sup>2</sup>, it rather renders certain view prominent – by emphasising some details and forgetting about the others. "According to Black's interaction view, a metaphor functions almost like a pair of glasses through which the metaphoric object is observed, i.e. reorganised. Those metaphors which turn out to be successful establish a privileged perspective on an object or constitute "the" object and by doing so, disappear as metaphors" (Maasen, 1995:14-15). Metaphor ceases to be just a substitute for literal sense, since it is a result of the interaction of thought between two different things. Metaphors according to this view therefore add meanings, while they have no ontologically creative function of the world.

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<sup>2</sup> »When image becomes merely decorative, then it is 'better left to the muses' as Milton once wrote of the political father who lost its unitive potency« (Walzer, 1967:195).

Reality is in the interaction and classical view seen as ontologically objective. It is considered as something outside of the narrative of the world, beyond the reach of discursive structures and ontologically foundational. Although the interaction view of metaphor does enable emphasising of some details and forgetting about the others, this does not mean that thought is ontologically prior to reality, either in productive or descriptive form, but takes a posterior position and is dependent upon reality in that it reflects it. Reality is rather seen as an amorphous entity not susceptible to the creative power of thought. Hilary Putnam (1994:452) has at length criticised this position as a common philosophical error of supposing that reality is one, single super thing, instead of looking at the ways in which we endlessly renegotiate out the notion of reality as our language and life develops. This argument could be developed even further, since the question of reality is also a question of privileged position of those who define reality by speaking and acting, it is a question of relationships between these persons and things, etc. In short, it is a question of power, creative power of the world in ontological sense. Michael Shapiro, for example, echoing tradition of social theory after the linguistic turn, argues "that there are no "things" that have meaning apart from the human practices that are implicit in what we regard as things and that our discursive practices are vehicles for the production of subjects and objects that participate in what are generally regarded as forms of knowledge" (Shapiro, 1985-86:193-94).

Functions that metaphors perform can therefore be different from just corrupting language. They may also be creative of both the world (and reality, for that matter) and language. This does not, however, mean that there must be equivocal and linear connection between the language and the world. Social theory and various social science methodologies of the last century have offered numerous insights and solutions for this question, most of the post-positivist theories rejecting notion that writing and thinking is transparent activity<sup>3</sup> based on historically and socially 'cleansed' subject. Non-empirical and non-positivist political studies rely heavily on the narrative form of explanation, thereby rejecting literally, static and intersubjectively and transhistorically uniform perception of language, arguing for a multifaced perception that includes paradoxes and antitheses as constructive elements of creative process (cf. Zashin, Chapman, 1974:294). Incoherencies may lead to coherences, if establishing coherence in the form of the 'objective' explanation can be a function of post-positivist methodologies.

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<sup>3</sup> Thinking as transparent activity is based on the metaphor of language as a machine, as something that directly translates inputs coming in the form of senses from the world into outputs uttered in the form of language to the world.

The way we organise our perception of the world is very much dependent upon the ways of forming knowledge about the world. These may be called traditions, cultures or epistemic realities, the bottom line being that knowledge is dependent upon structures governing the production of knowledge. Metaphors are dependent upon the same structures in the production of knowledge, functioning in this respect as myths, rendering unintelligible about this world intelligible, unempirical empirical. It is through metaphors that the abstract field of political becomes empirical in the form of abstract reality.

If we look upon metaphors in the classical sense of 'carrying over' with new methodological insights – isn't then metaphor the very bridge, the concept that connects the unconnected, the concept whose mission is bridging the unbridgeable gap between words and reality in non-equivocal and non-objective, albeit mutually creative sense? Isn't the liberating potential of metaphor in the fact that it frees political (and not just political) science from thinking of the relationship between words and reality in positivist linear terms, but at the same does just that by rendering abstract reality empirical? Doesn't then, in meta terms, metaphor in its innermost core defy identity with itself, being another name for the impossibility of non-metaphorical thinking?

To my view (and I share this view with Johnson, 1987:69), thought processes that create the world are irreducibly metaphorical in their structure, making world intelligible only through metaphors. Political metaphors are then manifestations of these metaphoric thought processes, making political world and its processes intelligible.

### **Individuals as Social Atoms, States as Mass Particles: Newtonian Mechanics meets Descartes in Political Science**

Political metaphors are always products of their time. The knowledge about political that they produce and the production of knowledge about them are deeply embedded in epistemic frame of a certain era. Prevailing metaphor for an individual in modern politics is still that of social atom, despite the fact that there have been numerous theories and methodologies that have argued contrary to this position. Narratives, images, symbolism and thinking in day-to-day politics still revolves around individual as a social atom, something that could not be said for political science, especially in the post-positivist and post-empiricist era. States are in politics still metaphorically thought to be mass particles, acting and reacting according to the Newtonian laws. Politics largely still imagines and creates within epistemic frame of

mechanism, thereby limiting and obstructing multidimensionality of the political. Although physics has seen introduction of reflectivity into its theories, and social and political theory have introduced a number of self-reflective theories, is the prevailing thinking in politics still based on classical Newtonian mechanics of mass bodies, developed in the 17th century.

The 16th century saw Nicolas Copernicus published his treatise *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (The Revolution of Celestial Spheres, 1543) where a new view of the world is presented: the heliocentric model. The work challenged the age long views of the way the universe worked and the over exaggerated importance of the Earth and, by extension, of human beings. The realization that we, our planet, and indeed our solar system (and even our galaxy) are quite common in the heavens and reproduced by myriads of planetary systems provided a sobering (though unsettling) view of the universe. All the reassurances of the cosmology of the Middle Ages were gone, and a new view of the world, less secure and comfortable, came into being. Despite these "problems" and many critics, the system was soon accepted by the best minds of the time such as Galileo.

For late seventeenth century writers of social and political thought Copernican revolution brought many challenges and opportunities. Suddenly previously central categories of social and political thought seemed empty and useless, and meaning of authority and subjection had to be worked anew. No longer was the Earth the centre of the universe, planets did not move in perfect circles, and the world less secure and central was being born, all this with impact on the political and social thinking at the time. Disharmonies in body politic were easier to explore and new individualism was coming of age and so Hobbes, Locke and their fellow thinkers had to forge new political theories and doctrines based on new scientific discoveries. Walzer (1967:192) argues that new cosmology and theology were of great influence to political writers, but there was no straightforward translation of cosmological and theological ideas into political and social ones. "Hooke might write that it was 'expedient' to understand the angelic hierarchy for the 'more perfect direction' of mankind, but he did not mean that the best social order could be deduced from the structure of evangelic squadrons" (Walzer, 1967:192). In other words, Copernican revolution provided a new world-view, new epistemic reality according to which knowledge about the world was being forged. It provided new principles, new metaphors to orient and create (political) knowledge that would later evolve into individualism and eventually liberalism (cf. Wolin, 1960:282; Walzer, 1967:203).

Sir Isaac Newton was an heir of the Copernican revolution. In what has been many times designated as the most important book in the history of science, the *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy, 1687) he spelled out

his theory containing laws of motion and gravitation and explaining motions in the sky and on Earth with the same laws. Newton realized that the moon's circular path around the Earth could be caused by the same gravitational force that holds a cannonball in low orbit, the same force that causes bodies to fall – gravitational force towards the Earth. With this theory Newton explained a wide range of previously unrelated phenomena: the eccentric orbits of comets, the tides and their variations, the precession of the Earth's axis, and motion of the Moon as perturbed by the gravity of the Sun. Gravitational force is the one that prevents various components and parts of the world (persons, planets) from flying apart or be sucked into space.

Newtonian physics is about fixed systems. Although it includes some kind of change, especially due to a well-defined notion of cause and effect, Newton's laws (including the mass and velocity of bodies) are highly deterministic and predictable (Becker and Slaton, 2000:29), and are therefore very limited in explaining political phenomena. Narrating political through the metaphor of atoms and mass bodies acting according to the laws of Newtonian mechanics reduces political phenomena to one-dimensional explanations structured around cause and effect. It also renders objects and processes of political as ontologically foundational, as having *Ding an sich*. Newton primarily developed his mechanistic vision for the movement of planets, stars, comets, moons, etc. and this vision was only later adopted as the general world-view.<sup>4</sup> He used the metaphor of a cannonball to describe and imagine paths of the planets. While it is highly probable that planets do travel in their orbits in highly deterministic and predictable fashion, this does not apply entirely for political (and human in general) behaviour. Imagine if a planet would suddenly jump out of its orbit around the sun and settled somewhere else in an orbit. This sort of behaviour happens all the time with our cells<sup>5</sup> – the very stuff we are made of. Planets do not act like this, but people, including the ones I know, do it all too often.

So how did this Newtonian mechanistic view of the universe come to influence politics and political science? Capra (1982:68) claims that

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<sup>4</sup> When Newton died in 1727, Alexander Pope (1688-1744), one of the greatest poets of English Enlightenment wrote: Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night;

God said, Let Newton be! and all was light. (Tenn, 2003)

Newton's thought was so highly regarded that it was seen as bringing light (wisdom) to all natural phenomena.

<sup>5</sup> There is a prevailing conviction in modern biology that cells act according to the rational programme. Only when an external influence in the form of environmental impulse makes an impact on them, deviations to the rational programme occur. It is then that another »machine« takes over, the machine of immune system and tries to eliminate and minimise the impact.



*Descartes himself had sketched the outlines of the mechanistic approach to physics<sup>6</sup>, astronomy, biology, psychology, and medicine. The thinkers of the eighteenth century carried the program further by applying the principles of Newtonian mechanics to the sciences of human nature and human society. The newly created social sciences generated great enthusiasm, and some of their proponents even claimed to have discovered a "social physics"<sup>7</sup>. The Newtonian theory of the universe and the belief in the rational approach to human problems spread so rapidly among the middle classes of the eighteenth century that the whole era became the "Age of Enlightenment." The dominant figure in the development was the philosopher John Locke, whose most important writings were published late in the seventeenth century. Strongly influenced by Descartes and his personal friend Newton, Locke's work had a decisive impact on the eighteenth century thought.*

There are numerous examples in the history of politics and political science where metaphors that follow Newton's logic of the universe are being applied. Becker and Slaton (2000:25-26) report that the American Founding Fathers were entrenched in the Newtonian worldview of their time by thinking in mechanistic terms, seeing individuals as independent units, accepting the supremacy of reason over emotion and being guided by cause-and-effect determinism. Thomas Paine (1966:161) declared in his essay on common sense that, "All great laws of society are laws of nature". He was one of many political scientists under influence of Newtonian physics. His acceptance of Newtonian vision of universe played an important role in shaping his political theories, and served, through means such as metaphor and analogy, for supporting his social and governmental ideas. He, together with many other political philosophers and scientists, stated that politics is understandable through metaphor of mechanics, "The Revolution of America presented in politics what was only *theory in mechanics*." (Paine 1966:154). William Bennett Munro, professor of government at Harvard University and president of the American Political Science Association in 1920s was one of the first to realise that American political science in the early 20th century was deeply

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<sup>6</sup> Descartes approach to physics differs from Newton's in the idea of action at the distance. While Newton argued for the workings and consequences of gravitational force, Descartes argued for forces that work only through contact.

<sup>7</sup> August Comte labelled his approach to social sciences "social physics". He accepted the assumptions of naturalism and saw natural sciences as an example how to set up a new foundation for objective reasoning. He believed that it is possible to discover natural laws of social life that would have the same validity as scientific laws of natural sciences. Life in a society is supposed to be governed by the same laws as Newtonian mechanics (Smith, 1998:79).

entrenched in the Newtonian thinking. In his “Presidential Address” to the American Political Science Association on December 28, 1927 he claimed that “Both science and art of government still rest on what may be called atomic theory of politics – upon the postulate that all able-bodied citizens are of equal weight, volume and value, endowed with various absolute and unalienable rights; vested with equally absolute duties; and clothed with the attribute of an individual sovereignty” (quoted in Becker, Slaton, 2000:39).

Fast-forwarding to the end of the 20th century and our knowledge about the relations between states is still influenced by metaphor of atoms and mass bodies acting according to mechanistic laws. Metaphor of atoms is nowhere better to be shown than in neorealists’ claim of the autonomous equality of states (cf. Waltz, 1979:93, 95) and consequent vision of states as units. Many have argued against this vision, Sorensen (1998:79-80) *inter alia* stresses that states are highly unlike units, not just in terms of their relative power capabilities, but also in that they are qualitatively different. If there is something to be learned from the cases of developmental states in East Asia, it is that the path towards development is not the same for all states - even within East Asia there are substantive differences, different paths towards development, regardless of the fact that all of these states are labelled as cases of so called “late development”. This unit-like view also presupposes that there is just single world capitalist mode of production and that differences among various units are insignificant or reducible to a temporary uneven development (cf. Jessop, 1999a:11). What is more, the whole first wave literature (cf. Hay and Marsh, 2000:4-7) on the relationship between globalisation and the state is thought through by the metaphor of the laws governing behaviour of mass particles. The state is usually narrated as a natural fact, with its weight and volume.<sup>8</sup> Processes of globalisation are imagined as coming from outside of the state, therefore threatening particle’s place and existence. Claim of the first wave literature that the state is withering away is based physical postulate stating that two mass bodies cannot be at the same place at the same time. In such a view informed by this metaphor there is no place for the state’s capacity to reinvent itself, to reinvent its institutional forms, to be polyvalent and polycontextual phenomenon. The example of the first wave literature and metaphors it uses also shows the creative potential of metaphors, since many states in reality started acting according patterns that can be logically derived from metaphor.

Epistemic reality that we have tried to outline can hardly be designated as just Newtonian. From the epistemological point of view it is also Cartesian. At the heart of this

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<sup>8</sup> There are two types of metaphors present here, main point of both being that nonphysical things can become entities in ontological sense (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980/2003:30, 25-27).

epistemological frame there is an idea that politics and political theory should not be understood and portrayed in political terms, but should rather be based on nonpolitical foundations. Subject matter of politics should not be infected with political concepts and should be defined with reference to the world outside of political realm. For explaining political metaphors from other disciplines should be used. Descartes wrote, »I was convinced that I must once for all seriously undertake to rid myself of all opinions which I have formerly accepted, and commence to build anew from the foundation, if I wanted to establish firm and permanent structure in the sciences” (quoted in Barber, 1984:48). Hobbes and his successors took this idea too seriously and tried to erect theories of political life solely on nonpolitical foundations, *inter alia* using metaphors from other disciplines. But metaphors, as we’ve already seen, are rarely just descriptive or decorative.

### **Metaphor of body politic: between body and joint stock company**

Sixteenth and seventeenth century England experienced political transformations that were directly linked to the new reference worlds of Copernican revolution. No longer was harmony of various parts the most powerful metaphor, the decay of the old cosmology and theology opening up a space for new experience of a man.

*The body-in-motion upon which he [Hobbes] builds his system is a symbolic figure. It represents the individual human being, but in a very special way: no longer he is a member of the body politic; no longer does he have a place in a hierarchical system of deference and authority; no longer do his movements conduce to universal harmony. Instead, the individual is alone, separated from his fellows, without a master or a secure social place; his movements, determined by no one but himself, clash with the movements of the other, identical individuals; he acts out chaos. (Walzer, 1967:201)*

Newtonian world of mechanical motion became the reference-world for new political thought, a new source of metaphors, analogies, and images. Metaphor of mechanical motion, clockwork mechanism was appropriate for the time when people were due to political and social transformations literally set in motion. Metaphor of clockwork mechanism not also described, but also prescribed, not just of man but also of the state. Hobbes took the metaphor very seriously and applied it to various political concepts. But nowhere is this better expressed as in the opening chapter of Leviathan:

*For what is the Heart, but a Spring; and the Nerves, but so many Strings; and the Joynts, but so many Wheelles, giving motion to the whole Body, such as was intended by the Artificer?* (Hobbes, 1651/1996:9)

As medieval conception of body politic as an living organism was coming to its end, new metaphors were being introduced. Locke insisted upon a new metaphor for society, a body politic as a joint stock company instead of living organism, where free individuals have their stakes (Hale, 1971:13).

The origins of the idea of body politic as a living organism can to be found in ancient Greece, especially in the age of Pericles and when Athenian polis achieved an extraordinary amount of political unity and developed organic analogy to express this unity (Hale, 1971:18)<sup>9</sup>. The Athenian citizen was only fulfilling himself as a member of polis, as someone who takes part in the public affairs of polis. This basically meant discussion, debate, deliberating, election, holding office - participating actively in public life in general.

First examples of human body as an analogy to express unity of the state could be traced back to *Areopagiticus* (355 BC) of Isocrates: "For the soul of a state is nothing else than its polity, having as much power over it as it does the mind over body; for it is this which deliberates upon all questions, seeking to preserve what is good and to ward off what is disastrous; and it is this which of necessity assimilates to its own nature the laws, the public orators and the private citizens; and all the members of the state must fare well or ill according to the kind of polity under which they live" (quoted in Hale, 1971:19). Isocrates emphasized the participation of all citizens in the political life of polis and the dependence of their welfare on the proper functioning of the constitution of the city

Plato in *Republic* speaks of the "healthy state" and "fevered state" (Book III)<sup>10</sup>, while Aristotle (1996:13) in *Politics* (Book I, 1253a, I, 4-5) says that "... it is evident that the state is a creature of nature and that man is by nature a political animal". This reaffirms two basic principles of the idea of body politic: that society is natural, not the creation of man and that man's highest nature is to be part of society, not an individual (Hale, 1971:21). Metaphorically wise we can speak of personification, when nonhuman becomes human (cf. Lakoff, Johnson, 1980/2003:33).

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<sup>9</sup> In this section of the paper I rely heavily on Hale's (1971) research on body politic. More recent studies include *inter alia* Antoine de Baecque's (1997) study on the corporeal metaphor in revolutionary France from 1770-1800.

<sup>10</sup> Plato in the *Republic* also speaks of a metaphor of "fashioning" a happy city and he makes comparison to painting a statute (Zashin, Chapman, 1974:303).

The idea of body politic is made possible by Greek science, whose view of nature was generally accepted in Western thought until the Renaissance. In this view, the universe was created according to the most perfect model, Living Creature. The life and the psychological order that an individual possesses is identical with the life and order of polis and the Cosmos (Hale, 1971:23) It is important to note that ancient Greek, like other modern languages (including English), has two important meanings for the word "nature" (*physis*). In one sense it is a sum of all created things, and in the other, it is also a defining principle of a thing, like quality of a thing. This has an important consequence for the discussion about the idea of body politic. The state in this respect is seen as a human organism: each member of the state has an important function which is natural and appropriate for both the part and the whole of which it is a part (Hale, 1971:23). Aristotle (quoted in Hale, 1971:23) even says that the constitution of an animal resembles that of well-governed city-state. According to him there is no need for special ruler with arbitrary powers in an ordered city, as there is no need for soul in each part of the animal body, because the nature has taken care of the functioning of the body, so that it performs functions in natural way (Hale, 1971:23-24).

In Hellenic and Roman times close ties (including close family ties) of polis were replaced by other modes of inclusion into society. Political morality based on membership of a polis as a natural relation of the whole and its parts no longer seemed an appropriate mode of inclusion for larger territories and empires. Political thinking went along with new political conditions and Roman Stoics conceived political morality in terms of one's relations with other individuals and not with a polis. Seneca writes in the 95th Epistle to Lucilius (quoted in Hale, 1971:26): "I can lay down for mankind a rule... for our duties in human relationships: all that you behold, that which comprises both god and man, is one - we are all parts of one great body. Nature produced us related to one another, since she created us from the same source and to the same end." Despite the shift in the source of political morality, idea of body politic as a natural body is preserved.

The idea of organic society from the later Stoics was passed into early Christian tradition. St. Paul in his First Epistle to Corinthians makes a number of points which are familiar with that of Stoics. He "assumes of hierarchiacal order, established by God (or nature), of differentiated parts, all of which are necessary to the body and which ought not, therefore, to regard themselves as either independent of the body or as superior to other members" (Hale, 1971:29). This organic metaphor is frequently repeated as an admonition against disagreement and dissention among the Churches.

St. Augustine in *The City of God* brought organic metaphor further and developed the idea of a mystical body (*corpus mysticum*) (Hale, 1971:31-32). This body has, in contrast to Athenian polis or Stoics universe, no real meaning in this world, but is rather community of the saved. The story is about the spiritual body, Christ being the head and members of the Church the body. The unity of the body and the head is achieved through sacraments, for those who have eaten the body of Christ in the form of eucharistia are incorporated in his body.

Throughout the Middle Ages the debate about mystical and real body of Christ continued. In the early Christian era both bodies were being kept apart, but at about the eighth century, the concepts began to fuse (Hale, 1971:35). Body of the Church also ceases to be just a community of believers, but becomes a supreme ecclesiastical hierarchy whose head is Pope. Papal supremacy is in ever stronger conflict with emerging national monarchies, whose response to the was the appropriation of the language of political theology and use of body politic metaphor influenced by the recent rediscovery of Aristotle's *Politics*. Hale (1971:38-39) talks of three possible answers to Papal supremacy: either rulers acknowledged Papal claims and identified king or emperor as a heart and stressed the importance of this organ to the head. Or they could define distinct *corpus naturale* (secular body) with its own head, thus making things schizophrenic. Or, most radically, they could maintain that only Christ, and not the Pope, is the head.

### **Metaphor: A Prose of the World**

In this paper I wanted to briefly sketch the relationship between nature and political metaphors. I've limited my research in scope to the discipline of physics and to the time around seventeenth century, when changes occurred that are still having decisional impact on the way we perceive political. Although natural sciences have seen introduction of self-reflective theories, especially in the form of quantum physics and relative theory, and that social sciences have introduced various post-positivist and post-empiricist methodologies, political is predominantly still thought and imagined in relation to mechanical tradition. Technological advances might have brought new metaphors that differ from classical ones like machine or body (today we think, imagine in create in terms of metaphors like networks or flows), but the prevailing metaphor of political thought is still predominantly structured around axis of Newtonian world experience (e.g. state-globalisation relationship).

Metaphors allow language to free itself from the function of direct description and to set up a contingent relationship between words and reality. With this imagination is freed from the constraints of objectivism and new creations of the world can occur. Relationship between metaphors and metaphorised objects is then reciprocal reconstruction of concepts and methods between various disciplines in the disciplinary division of labour of modern sciences. Or to say it with metaphor, metaphor is actually prose of the world.

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