Metaphors of Social Order in Europe, China & Japan

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All political systems need some way of assuring social order. Order guarantees peace and physical security, but also hermeneutic stability. Only if some measure of social order is assured will it be possible to interpret the world coherently, to plan and to act rationally. For order to be established a way must be found of dealing with diversity, with the coexistence of potentially conflicting ideas, project and goals. Working out such conflicts, power will come to be distributed in a particular fashion. The problem of social order will thus presuppose certain ways of setting a public agenda, certain ways of determining rules and reaching decisions, and a certain distribution of legitimate authority.

Metaphors are usually considered as mere matters of stylistic decoration. This is not, however, all they are. Metaphors are also cognitive tools.[1] They help us organise the world in a particular manner. They help us make sense of the confusing multitude of things which surrounds us by telling us not what things are but rather what they <u>are like</u>. In this way the metaphors invoked or implied by a person or a society will necessarily come to reveal a certain outlook on life.

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[1] The classical study is Lakoff & Johnson 1980; a good collection of articles is Johnson, 1981.

This is not to deny that metaphors also have their rhetorical uses. Indeed in politics metaphors are often tools used by elites to stifle critique and to keep people in their places. Yet we cannot do without them and there is no true description of society hiding beyond or behind the metaphorical language we invoke. We all need a conception or another of what social life is like and some way of understanding of how things fit together. In order to arrive at such understandings metaphors are inevitable. Shared social meanings will for this reason always come to presuppose a prior metaphorical commitment.

What for example is a 'state'?[2] Much discussed as this question has been among historians and political scientists, it is quite impossible to say that it has a definitive answer; that the state must be one thing and that it cannot be something else. The state has no basic essence in terms of which it conclusively can be defined.[3] In order to deal with this unsatisfactory state of affairs what we end up doing is to compare the state to other things. Instead of talking about what the state is, we talk about it metaphorically; although we know nothing about 'being,' we know a lot about 'being as.'[4]

Metaphors have a way of simultaneously both highlighting and obscuring aspects of reality.[5] By seeing something as a certain kind of thing some argument and some actions become available to us whereas other arguments and actions become unavailable. In this way our use of metaphor will have profound implications for the way in which politics is organised and carried out. This is why critics of the existing social order often advocate alternative metaphors which allow new things to be seen and new courses of action to open up.

2 See for example Skinner, 1989, pp. 90-131.
3 Ringmar, 1996. Compare the contributions to Review of International Studies, 2004.
4 Compare Ricœur, 1975, pp. 323-399.

Another thing to note is how metaphors are grounded in a certain culture and a certain way of life.[6] As a result they tend to vary from one society to the next and vary also over the course of time. This is why a study of metaphors provides an excellent research tool for inter-societal comparisons, a fact already well understood by cultural anthropologists and some historians.[7] For political scientists the comparative study of metaphors provides a new and hitherto largely unexplored way of understanding the similarities and differences in the way political systems are conceptualised.[8]

The aim of this paper is to briefly compare the metaphors used to discuss the problem of social order in Europe, China and Japan. The ultimate goal is to understand the roles which the political systems of these two parts of the world have accorded to concepts like 'freedom,' 'power,' 'equality,' 'rights,' 'dissent' or 'virtue.' The comparative study of metaphors provides the best way of understanding the conditions under which such concepts become possible. To illustrate what is at stake consider the following short list of metaphorical uses.

the state as a 'body'

In the early modern era, the body was the predominant metaphor through which the European state was understood.[9] Originally the body metaphor had been applied to the Church. Or to be more precise, the Church had had two bodies — one temporal and one transcendental; one which human beings belonged to while still on earth and another

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5 Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 10-13; Ricœur, 1975, p. 105.
6 Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 22-24.
7 See an anthropological example see Fernandez, 1991; for a historical example see de Baecque, 1993/1997.
8 See however Lakoff, 1996.
9 Seminally treated in Kantorowitz,1951/1957, pp. 194-232; and Gierke, 1881/1996, pp. 9-30. Compare Ringmar, 2005, pp. 89-101.

which they belonged to eternally in heaven. It was Jesus Christ who was in charge of

the eternal church and the pope who took care of the temporal. With the rise of the state

as a sovereign entity in the course of the Renaissance this corporal language was

gradually secularised and given a political application. As a result also the state came to

be given two bodies — one temporal and one transcendental — and its subjects were

simultaneously members of both.[10] In its temporal capacity the state was made up of

various kinds of institutions staffed by officials, but the state clearly also had an

existence apart from these institutional manifestations; this was the Staat guided by the

<u>Weltgeist</u> of history, l<u>a</u> <u>France</u> <u>éternelle</u>, or the eternal principles enshrined in the

constitution of the United States.[11]

The body metaphor provides an easy and convincing solution to the problem of

social order. As the metaphor makes clear, social life and the political system are, just

like the various parts of the body, intimately related and organically unified. Each social

class corresponds to a bodily organ: the aristocracy is the 'arm,' the clergy the 'heart,'

and the peasants or merchants are the 'stomach.' And naturally the king ruling over

this 'body politic' becomes the 'head of state.'

The body metaphor is obviously hierarchical. The organs which make up the

state have entirely different functions, ranks and importance, yet hierarchy is at the

same time a requirement for social order to be established. It is precisely because groups

and classes have different functions that they depend on each other; the clergy needs the

peasants just as the heart needs the stomach. Diversity is thus not a problem but instead

a precondition for social solidarity and peace. If we all were the same after all there

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10 Kantorowitz,1951/1957, pp. 207-32.
11 Ringmar, 1996; compare Cassirer, 1946, pp. 248-76.

would be no reason for us to stay together; equality of status leads to isolation and eventually to indifference and to a break-up of social life.[12]

In a state understood as a body, conflicts are quite inconceivable. Social groups and classes cannot be at war with each other for the same reason that one hand cannot fight the other or the heart rebel against the stomach. Instead all groups and classes need and depend on one another for the proper functioning of the whole. The body metaphor in short provides little place for politics; there is nothing much for the various members to discuss; there is only one will and all decisions are taken by the head. Yet this is not quite the same as unlimited kingship since the king in practice might have to investigate the condition of the heart or stomach or feet before reaching a decision. If any body-part is in a poor state, he will naturally be forced to take this into consideration, not for the sake of the ailing member but for the sake of the body as a whole.

Although diversity is a requirement for social stability, divisions are an ever-present threat. Not surprisingly, political parties and factionalism have universally been condemned by the voices of the establishment. In 18th century England, Jonathan Swift defined a party as 'the madness of many, for the gain of the few,' and later in the same century George Washington devoted a large part of his farewell address of 1796 to solemnly warn his people against 'the baneful effects of the spirit of party.'[13] Come to think of it, 'bipartisanship' is still considered a great virtue in American politics. Yet anti-establishment groups were often equally critical of party politics. Even the most utopian of political tracts, such as those written by the Diggers, Levellers and other 17th

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12 Tocqueville, 1840/1945, pp. 104-05.
13 Quoted in Hofstadter, 1969, p. 2.

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century radicals, defined the good society as one without parties.[14] The aim of their particular party was to once and for all end all parties.

The viability of the body metaphor will thus depend on the degree to which it recognises the demands of various social groups while at the same time limiting the same demands to what is functionally required for the health of the body as a whole. This is a problem when new social cleavages arise together with new political demands. In the Middle Ages, new movements were relatively easily assimilated — 'incorporated' as it were — into established bodies, and eventually all of them formed integral parts of the universal body — the body of bodies — which was the Church.[15] In the 20th century a similar form of corporatism was tried both in national-socialist and socialist-nationalist states, but these attempts have now largely been abandoned.[16] Few groups are prepared to accept the hierarchical subordination which the metaphor imposes and few are prepared to define their interests in terms of the interests of society as a whole.

the state as a 'family'

The family is another popular metaphor through which the problem of social order has been addressed. This image seems to be more widely shared between Europe and East Asia, although the interpretations vary as a result of the considerable differences that exist in the definitions of the family in respective parts of the world. Again we are dealing with a metaphor which combines biological and hierarchical principles. Rulers have often found it expedient to define themselves as 'fathers' of the countries they rule and their subjects as 'children' of varying ages, genders and states of maturity. The

14 Ball, 1989, p. 163.
15 Cohn, 1970, pp. 158-59.

father in the state as in all traditional families is the one who makes decisions; fathers know best and other family members are not supposed to question their judgement. Order in the state is assured in the same way as order in the family.

Yet relations within a state understood as a family are quite different from relations within a state understood as a body.[17] Family bonds are not primarily biological after all but rather social. A father is supposed to take a personal interest in the members of his family, their well-being and future, and he is supposed to include them in the decisions he makes. He is a <u>pater</u> and the state which has children as its subjects is necessarily paternalistic.[18] The paternalistic state thinks, plans and acts on behalf of the people subject to it; it disciplines and regulates people in order to protect them from the unexpected, the disastrous, as well as from themselves.

Understood as a family, the state becomes a social entity rather than merely a biological. Most obviously it comes to exist in a location which can be compared to a 'home.' Hence the Japanese <u>kokka</u>, the 'national home,' or the Swedish <u>Folkhem</u>, the 'home of the people.'[19] Understood as a home the state becomes an institution based on genealogical membership criteria and it becomes an institution which demands our loyalty and our sacrifices. Thus although examples of the family metaphor can be found already in the early modern era, it becomes particularly important as a way to describe a particularly hierarchical form of nationalism. The Japanese emperor, for example, was never understood as 'father' until the 1890s when military competition suddenly was seen to require a principle according to which soldiers could be required to make sacrifices.

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16 Schmitter, 1989, pp .54-73.
17 For an extensive discussion see Lakoff, 1996, pp. 44-161.
18 Schapiro, 1999, pp. 715-38.

The family metaphor is also less stifling than the body metaphor and it provides more room for discussions. Family members are separate individuals after all with individual wants and aspirations. In order to accommodate this diversity, families usually discuss things together and reach decisions through consensual methods. This may particularly be the case in contemporary families but to some extent it has surely always been the case, except perhaps in the most authoritarian of traditional families.[20] A society modelled on a family is for that reason likely to allow a measure of debate and even dissent. We may not like it, but we are certainly not unprepared for the fact that family members sometimes fight or fall out.

This rhetorical connection means that changes in the definition of the family are likely to feed back into the way the state is conceptualised. As a result the state can come to be quite differently understood for reasons which are unconnected to political action. This presents a hermeneutic opportunity which can be creatively explored by oppositional groups.[21] It is possible for example to see marriage as a contract freely entered into by two equal parties rather than as a union sanctioned by god. If so, the contract can be broken if one of the parties violates the terms of the agreement. The political implications of this reconceptualisation are obvious and they were quickly identified by 17th century Puritans who rebelled against the paternalistic English state.

The malleability of the family metaphor means that it can survive even dramatic political changes. Surprisingly it has survived even in some cases where the various family members begin killing each other. Together the brothers may for example decide to rebel against the hierarchical implications of the metaphor and against the tyranny

19 Trägårdh, 2002, pp. 80-85.
20 Lakoff, 1996, pp. 65-140.
21 Walzer, 1965, pp. 183-93.

imposed on them by the father. Killing him off may be labelled as 'patricide,' but it is

also the foundation of a new kind of 'fraternity' which guarantees both equality and

freedom while at the same time making sure that the political unit continues to be

closely united.[22] The idea of fraternity is a powerful way of expressing an egalitarian

form of nationalism. The father may have been beheaded, but the metaphor lived on.

the state as a 'musical director'

Although there are Japanese examples of the family metaphor dating from the 19th

century, and although the Confucian literati of imperial China certainly took a

paternalistic attitude toward ordinary people, kinship metaphors played quite a

different role in East Asia than in Europe. For one thing authority was typically

understood in personalised rather than in institutionalised terms.[23] For this reason the

first question was always how to conceptualise society as a whole rather than simply the

political system.

In imperial China, as well as in feudal Japan, people were typically seen as

connected to each other through long chains of hierarchical relationships stretching from

the bottom of society to its very top. These relationships were governed by

particularistic rather than by universalistic ties. In China the emperor ruled by virtue of

a 'mandate of heaven,' but this mandate did not give him a general right to interfere in

people's lives. Instead it was incumbent on all Chinese, the emperors included, to first

and foremost fulfil their obligations toward their families and friends. If everyone only

maintained their respective parts of the great network which was society, the country

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22 David, 1987.
23 Fei. 1947/1992, especially pp. 60-86.

would be at peace and everyone would prosper. Much the same is true in the case of
Japan where the social structure was held together by ties connecting vassals to their
lords. Instead of relying on legal abstractions, the Japanese state was governed by
mutual obligations and feudal codes of honour.

The political question is what role the state possibly can play in a network
society of this kind. Clearly European-style law-making is not going to be sufficient
since there officially is no universal and homogenous realm over which politics can
exercise a jurisdiction.[24] Instead the personal qualities — the virtue — of political leaders
and bureaucrats become crucial. Rule takes place by example rather than by decree. Or
differently put, politics becomes profoundly ritualistic. In China the most important
rituals were those concerned with the cult of the ancestors, above all the funeral rites,
but there were also rituals for marriage, baptism and the celebration of New Year, and a
long series of festive annual events. Rituals expressed the meaning of social obligations,
they provided people with concrete ways of fulfilling their obligations and assured the
filial piety of the sons, the faithfulness of the wives, and the loyalty of the subjects.
Rituals also helped define social classes and to maintain the hierarchical order of social
life.

The emperor was the person ultimately responsible for the maintenance of this
ceremonial system. It was the rituals the emperor performed that kept Earth in
correspondence with Heaven and yin and yang in balance. The metaphor which best
captures the logic of this ritualistic rule is a musical one. The emperor was like a
conductor directing a state bureaucracy made up of musicians and the people were like

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24 This ignores the strong Legalistic tradition in Chinese political thought. For an overview see
Ringmar, 2005, pp. 162-70.

dancers moving in unison to the beat of their tune.[25] The social ideal was harmony —

wa in Japanese, hé in Chinese.[26] Harmony required people to co-ordinate their actions;

no discordant voices should be heard and no awkward movements be displayed;

everyone should just lose themselves in the music:

> How do we know the meaning of dancing? The dancer's eyes do not
> look at himself; his ears do not listen to himself; yet he controls the
> lowering and raising of his head, the bending and straightening of his
> body, his advancing and retreating, his slow and rapid movements;
> everything is discriminated and regulated. He exerts to the utmost all
> the strength of his body to keep time to the measures of the sounds of the
> drum and bell, and has no rebellious heart. All his purposes are summed
> up and earnest.[27]

In a state organised as a musical performance adjustments will happen smoothly and by

themselves and for that reason overt repression is usually not required. Instead the

maintenance of social order is perfectly decentralised. It is above all other participants

who notice when someone sings out of tune or behaves gracelessly, and they are also the

ones best placed to apply sanctions. Usually some mild form of social disapproval is

sufficient to set the clumsy performer straight.

In a state organised in this manner politics is not something that you talk about

but instead something that you do. Politics is not about discussions and no

confrontations between opposing views are possible.[28] Although the emperor has the

power to determine which music that should be played this is usually left to tradition,

and it does not really matter which tune that is chosen as long as everyone is familiar

with it and knows which parts to play. People can certainly object to the music but this

is always going to be an æsthetic rather than a political judgement. Music, strikingly,

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25 Pocock, 1989, p. 46.
26 Itô, 1998.
27 Hsun Tzu quoted in Pocock, 1989, p. 46.

has no contraries — there is no way of contradicting a tune or a dance movement — and for that reason a state organised as a musical performance allows no space for criticism. In a society where harmony is the highest social goal, and where carefully integrated rituals are used to achieve it, there can be no dissent, only correct or incorrect performances.

At the same time the musical metaphor is highly tolerant of diverging opinions. Even if they mean entirely different things by the same notes or movements people can still get along with each other. As long as everyone only moves as they are supposed to, it does not really matter what they are thinking, if they are thinking anything at all, and there is no need to monitor or control their minds as the authorities always did in Europe.[29] Instead of orthodoxy it was orthopraxy that held imperial China together; what mattered was the right movement rather than the right belief.

the state as a 'machine'

Returning to Europe, another important metaphor — popular above all from the latter part of the 17th century onward — is the image of the state as a 'machine.'[30] The reason behind its popularity were the advances in technology made at the time and the subsequent fascination with mechanical gadgetry of all kinds, above all clockworks. The enlightened autocrats of 18th century Europe were particularly fond of this metaphor, but we still invoke it in our contemporary references to, say, 'bureaucratic machineries,' the 'wheels of administration,' or 'social engineering.'

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28 Jullien, 2000, pp. 117-40.
29 Fei, 1947/1992, pp. 94-100; Watson, 1993, p. 81.
30 For an overview see Mayr, 1986.

If the state is a machine then the various parts of society become the levers, springs and cogwheels of which the machine is constructed. As such this metaphor comes to resemble the body metaphor since it connects the functional differentiation of parts with the need for social cooperation. Since the components of society are radically different from each other it is only through cooperation that they can attain their purposes. As the machine metaphor makes clear, a refusal to put the collective interest above the individual interest is necessarily self-defeating. A cog-wheel alone is after all quite useless. And obviously also this metaphor is hierarchical. While some of the components of the machine are easily replaced, others are unique and utterly crucial to its operations.

Just as the body metaphor, the machine metaphor has no place for dissent. All components should fit neatly with each other and any wheel that squeaks must quickly be oiled or replaced. The implications are thoroughly repressive, and not surprisingly the metaphor is closely associated with the attempts to restore peace after the upheavals and civil wars of the 16th and early 17th centuries. Jean Bodin's understanding of the state was mechanical and Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan is a kind of humanoid robot.[31] With the help of these machines society was pacified as diversity was suppressed.[32] Intermediary groups of all kinds — feudal estates, corporations, brotherhoods and religious sects — were broken up and society was divided into individual units. These atomic parts were then reunited in and through the machinery of the state.

There are nevertheless quite clear limits to the power of a machine-based absolutism. In a political system understood through in this way the ruler becomes a clockmaker or perhaps an engineer who oversees the operations of the machine. As

31 <u>ibid</u>, pp. 104-05.

such the machine comes to work quite independently of the ruler's personal will and whims. There are laws of statecraft, similar to laws of mechanics, which also the king has to follow in order to maintain the state in a good working order and himself in power. As the theorists of enlightened absolutism made clear, the state and the king are both governed by reason, and this raison d'état can at least in principle be objectively defined and calculated.[33] In this way the machine metaphor served as a check on absolutist power. Not surprisingly the regimes where the metaphor was most popular — Prussia and Austria in particular — were also the states which first granted rights to their subjects. Fredric the Great of Prussia could even be sued by his own people. Constitutional documents, pioneered in these Rechtstaaten, were taken as the blueprints for the construction of the machineries of state.

the state as a 'cybernetic device'

A shortcoming of the state understood as a machine is that it is prohibitively costly to operate. Repressing diversity — oiling squeaking wheels and replacing uncooperative parts — takes a lot of time and effort. It would be far better if people somehow could be convinced to oil and replace themselves. A solution of this kind was chanced upon in England in the course of the 18th century as society increasingly came to be regarded as a 'self-balancing mechanism' or a 'cybernetic device,' from kubernetes, the Greek for 'governor.'[34]

Again the origin of this metaphor is best explained by the historical context. In England, from the end of the 17th century onward, a number of seminal discoveries and

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32 Ringmar, 2005, pp. 105-08.
33 Hirschman, 1977, pp. 43-44.
34 Mayr, 1986, p. 195.

inventions were made which all demonstrated the viability of the principle of self-regulation.[35] There was Newton's description of the mathematics of the planetary system where every planet was held in place by the sun and by the actions of the other planets, but also the governor which automatically controlled the pressure in a steam engine through automatic feed-back mechanisms and, say, the thermostat used for regulating the temperature in chicken incubators. What these systems have in common is the interaction of contradictory forces. In all of them a push in one direction automatically triggers a pull in the other direction and as a result overall balance is restored.

This is the model famously adopted by Adam Smith in his description of the economic system as governed by an 'invisible hand,' a metaphor he initially applied to Newtonian cosmology — 'the invisible hand of Jupiter' — in an early essay.[36] The economic system, Smith explained, maintains itself in balance as the self-serving actions of one party are counteracted through the self-serving actions of another party.[37] The outcome is beneficial to society as a whole since it mobilises resources and maximises efficiency.

In the course of the 19th century the same metaphor came to be extended also to politics.[38] Also political parties can serve the public interest if they only first serve their own interests. Competition in the 'market-place of ideas' is beneficial for all and dissent is not a problem as long as it is counteracted by contradictory opinions and as long as people are given a chance to freely make up their minds. Instead of overthrowing the

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35 ibid, pp. 190-93.
36 On the 'invisible hand of Jupiter,' see Adam Smith, 1758/1982, p. 49; on the 'invisible hand' of the market see Smith, 1776/1981,IV:2, p. 456.
37 Hirschman, 1977, pp. 100-12.
38 Hofstadter, 1969. Ringmar, 2005, pp. 120-24.

government in some bloody coup and replacing it with a new one, the dissenters will come to form an opposition in parliament and bide their time. The job of the opposition is to oppose, but only loyally so, that is, within the generally accepted rules of the political game.

As the cybernetic metaphor makes clear, people are able to settle their differences by themselves as long as only the forces of the economic and the political system are allowed to operate freely. Diversity is not a threat to the stability of the social order but instead as a precondition for it; the mutual antagonism of opposing interests and groups is what keeps society in balance and at peace. Outside intervention by a 'balancer' such as the state risks jeopardising this self-organisation. In a society which regulates itself, the king can be abolished and the state scaled back. This is the liberal idea of 'freedom,' the freedom to pursue one's own interests constrained only by other actors who pursue theirs.

The beauty and simplicity of this metaphor obscures its demanding requirements. Self-organisation is not spontaneous after all but is only likely to work in an environment which already is thoroughly organised.[39] Order is created only thanks to the coercive means through which the boundaries of the system are policed and its operations regulated. The egalitarian ethos of the metaphor is also violated by the very different capabilities of the actors involved. One's freedom depends on which resources one has at one's disposal, but resource endowments are likely vary considerably from one person to the next. And as it turns out, cybernetic systems can quite easily be manipulated by actors with disproportionate resources. Groups who control media

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39 Polanyi, 1944.

outlets can for example distort the interaction between political parties, and groups with a monopoly position in a market can distort the interaction between economic parties.

conclusion

This discussion has a large number of implications, too many to be properly summarised here. One obvious point is that the metaphors invoked to describe the political system have varied considerably over time and between societies. Another point, perhaps less obvious, is that this variation presents a challenge to our ability to compare political phenomena. Without understanding the metaphorical differences and the transformations that have occurred, no proper inter-cultural or inter-temporal comparisons are possible.[40] After all, what is similar and what is different depends not on what things are as much as on what they mean, and meanings are always organised through and around metaphors. Thus basic political notions such as 'freedom,' 'power,' 'equality,' 'rights,' 'dissent' or 'virtue' will come to mean quite different things depending on the metaphorical context in which we find them. And in some contexts the notions cannot even be identified.

As far as Europe is concerned, there is historically speaking a transition from organic and hierarchical metaphors to cybernetic and egalitarian ones. This is the metaphorical groundwork required by the spread of laissez-faire capitalism and liberal political thought. Inter-culturally speaking the same transition takes place as the metaphor of self-governance gradually has come to replace other ways of understanding social order. And yet the cybernetic metaphor is neither entirely dominant nor unchallenged. Compare the European welfare state which still relies heavily on family

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40 Compare MacIntyre, 1984, pp. 260-79.

metaphors, or nationalist discourses which often insist on seeing the state as a body, and there are still plenty of 'social scientists' around whose work often presupposes a mechanical understanding of the state.

There are good reasons why these metaphors have not disappeared. The cybernetic metaphor is unable to capture many aspects of social life which we generally see as important, including a notion of community, the value of togetherness and a sense of a common purpose. In the end most of us are content to mix our metaphors; we see some aspects of society with the help of one metaphor and other aspects with the help of another metaphor. Those who refuse to do this — those who hold on to only one metaphor and seek to impose it on all spheres of social life — come across as simple-minded fundamentalists.

In recent years the fundamentalist adherents of self-organisation have often come to resemble a quasi-religious movement, and much current political debate concerns the relevance of the cybernetic metaphor to various aspects of social life. That the metaphor sometimes applies seems beyond doubt but it is an urgent political task to investigate what the limits are of this applicability. We need to know where the metaphor is used inappropriately; where it is 'stretched' and where it eventually 'breaks down' and 'dies.' Political dissenters need to investigate what the alternatives are to this dominant language. Such an investigation of 'mere words' is likely to have some pretty tangible political consequences.

There is a persistent tendency to underestimate the cultural specificity of the cybernetic metaphor. For self-regulation to work there must be a willingness on the part of all political or economic actors to play by a common set of rules; above all everyone must accept the legitimacy of the self-balancing device. As a result individuals and groups must develop a set of double loyalties, they must simultaneously be loyal to their

own point of view and to the system in which their interaction with others takes place.[41]

For such an outcome to become a realistic possibility the various social groups must feel

that they have a stake in the system; that it sometimes at least works to their advantage.

Whenever this is not the case self-regulation will lose legitimacy. An economic or a

political system which constantly favours certain groups will eventually come to be seen

as unjust. If such a double loyalty does not exist on its own, it takes a strong state that

can provide the preconditions for it. Self-regulation in the end is only possible in a

system which itself is formed through political action; selves must be constituted before

they can be autonomously organised.

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