

**What Matters:
Teaching and Metaphor**

by

Nadia Chaney

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Approval

Name: Nadia Chaney
Degree: Master of Arts (Education)
Title of Thesis: *What Matters: Teaching and Metaphor*
Examining Committee: **Chair:** Dr. Michael Ling
Senior Lecturer

Dr. Mark Fettes
Senior Supervisor
Assistant Professor

Dr. Sean Blenkinsop
Supervisor
Assistant Professor

Dr. Heesoon Bai
Internal Examiner
Professor
Philosophy of Education

Dr. Michelle Lebaron
External Examiner
Professor
Law
University of British Columbia

Date Defended: Dec 5, 2012

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Abstract

This work outlines an ecology of meaning in which metaphor plays a central role. Its purpose is to suggest how teachers, through ongoing reflection of meaning-making in the classroom, might come to a new understanding of a Freirean dialogical praxis. To support such reflection, the thesis develops a phenomenological theory of meaning that characterizes the various agents of meaning-making as interdependent. It is especially concerned with the following elements: being, meaning, subjectivity, language, and metaphor, where the latter is understood not as a literary trope but a fundamental mode of communication among entities of all kinds. Formally, the argument is developed using the tools of Lyric Philosophy, in which the writer's own voice is juxtaposed with others in such a way that meaning emerges through the tension between the two. A narrative literature review provides an alternative access route to some key concepts.

Keywords: phenomenology; metaphor; subjectivity; teaching; language; philosophy of meaning

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Prelude: Knowledge as fragrance

Again and again in my practice as an educator I have found that meaning emerges from a space that words help to create but not define.

In the main section of this thesis, *A Lyric Philosophy of Teaching*, words are deployed with a similar educational intent: to open up a space from which meaning can emerge. The form for accomplishing this is borrowed from the form of Jan Zwicky's *Wisdom and Metaphor* (2003), which she calls lyric philosophy, and which she first developed in an earlier work of that name (1992).

Zwicky's philosophical project was inspired both by the assertion by many mystics that their experience is profoundly meaningful, but can't be expressed in words (Lee, 2010, 19), and by the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), who was similarly concerned with the limits of what language can express. As André Furlani notes:

Zwicky argues that, despite its Euclidian mode of argumentation and logical premises, the *Tractatus* transcends the tenets of analytical philosophy in favour of "analysis by lyric." From its title onward, *Lyric Philosophy* springs from a celebrated entry in Wittgenstein's notebook "I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought really only to be written only as poetic composition" (Furlani, 2010, 55).

According to Zwicky, some of the perennial questions of philosophy — questions of being, meaning, causation and subjectivity — become more tangible when we are able to think polyphonically, resonantly, aphoristically, poetically or, as she terms it, *lyrically*. To think lyrically is not to oppose analytic thought, but to allow for another kind of philosophy to happen. This is not just a question of content, however, but also of form. Wittgenstein wrote in short, aphoristic paragraphs, making no effort to cite other thinkers. Zwicky, on the other hand, wanted to evoke the unsayable knowledge that brought together many writers; "but not in paraphrase; not with a barrage of footnotes; not...she didn't know what was needed" (Lee, 2010, 23).

Finally, however:

The catalyst came... when poet Robert Bringhurst told her about the tradition of palimpsestic commentary. A medieval scribe

would write a passage from the Bible in the centre of a page, and then surround it with commentaries by various authorities. And with that, Zwicky saw what she'd been reaching for. Not palimpsest, but parallel texts. On facing pages. Each page conversing with its partner, while simultaneously pushing forward on its own...With that, all the elements she'd been wrestling with seemed to fall into place. She threw out everything she'd written and started again. It came in a rush, and by 1988, she had completed *Lyric Philosophy*. (Lee 2010, 23)

In my investigation of the ecology of educational spaces (described in more detail in the second part of the thesis), I was led to ask how I might approach the ambiguity and simultaneity of metaphorical meaning without simply using metaphor to describe metaphor, in a kind of tautology. I was inspired by how Zwicky's book *Wisdom and Metaphor* makes the form itself metaphorical, allowing experiential access to the fundamental concepts, rather than relying on a linear account of how metaphor works. Lyric understanding of this kind connects with the way meanings emerge in the many constellations of educational relationships allowing for a shifting kind of meaning that is intimate rather than dominant. This places both philosophy and teaching in the emotional-sensual realm of song, story and poetry.

In her conversation with Tim Lilburn, Zwicky states:

I'm very taken with the idea of knowledge as fragrance. Even as the hand grasps and the eye stares, this also: the knowable, invisible, and ungraspable. I think this may be another reason so many of us associate its scent with failure. When metaphors of vision, possession and manipulation are no longer recognized as metaphors, it will seem wrong rather than striking to propose alternatives based on a different sense modality. Empty your hands, close your eyes: what do you know now? Cover your ears. —But if we stop breathing? (Lilburn and Zwicky, 2010, 146)

The form of Zwicky's lyric philosophy allows for silence, reflection, admission, loss, insight, and re-thinking. Instead of offering answers, then, the form lets questions linger and therefore lets answers shift and grow with the reader. By doing this, the form contains the nature of meaning-making itself. It invites the body of the reader, the way that poetry and music do, to be the primary instrument of meaning-making. Meaning is felt as the reader reads and that meaning should change and emerge as the piece continues, indeed, on each rereading. In addition to intellect, perseverance, rigour and focus, this approach asks the reader for presence, commitment, breath and illumination.

Understanding a metaphor is like understanding a geometrical

truth. Features of various geometrical figures or of various contexts are pulled into revealing alignment with one another by the demonstration of the metaphor.

What is 'revealed' is not that the alignment is possible; rather that the alignment is possible reveals the presence of already-existing shapes or correspondences that lay unnoticed (Zwicky, 2008, L36).

While *A Lyric Philosophy of Teaching* is a geometric philosophical work that can be parsed and mapped, it also sings, reminds and inspires. It is my sense that this approach to philosophy is more useful to an educator than typical educational philosophy, which requires an investment of time and effort that is often unavailable to the working professional. I believe that the opportunity to ponder, contemplate and philosophize is vital for transformation of educational practices. The offering of this work is that it can be used not only to learn *from* but also to learn *with*.

This offering comes with a challenge: it insists that the reader be willing to let go, to bring their own experiences to bear on the writing, to disagree with the writer, and to see the white spaces on the pages as if they were a kind of mirror. To read in this mode is an act of courage and self-awareness, a way of daring to say, "I belong to this discipline of educating, I have something to offer to this piece."

When they write about metaphor, Paul Ricoeur (2010) and I.A. Richards (1965) both ask for an acknowledgement of the ineffable, the unknowable. They claim, in their different ways, that language is organic, growing, and illimitable. Their seminal books (one a transcription of lectures, the other a series of interlinked and interlocked studies) harness form to the task of bringing one closer to understanding how metaphors mean, and the place of metaphor in an ecology of meaning. It is my sense that combining their work with the sensory geometry that lyric philosophy offers is the most effective way for me to present my research and findings.

The left hand page usually presents a meditative quote by "the" writer. The right hand page usually presents a quotation by the gathering of writers who support, question, contain and illuminate the meditation. As the work unfolds, these tensions become cumulative. So this exploration ends on the question it begins with, but by this time the reader has confronted the spirit of the piece and has built their own way to approach the meditations — one not defined by the words themselves. Hopefully, a second reading will take the reader to yet another illumination, and the third to another, and so forth. There is a slimness to this writing which allows the reader to slip in alongside it, and instead of witnessing the thought process of the writer, to become an intimate partner to it.

If approached as a symphony in four movements plus a coda, the various voices from the literature become instruments and the writer's voice the conductor of these. The reader could also approach the form of this thesis as a kind of five-act play with the writer as the main character: you see the stage set (with investigations of being, and meaning), complications arise (the impossibility of knowing in the context of shifting word meanings), the climax of action (where the character makes the most inmost realization about the nature of the self), the falling action (where the invisible becomes numinous) and the final catastrophe or illumination (the image of an impenetrable labyrinth).

When reading the following piece, allow yourself to read the empty space as much as the writing; to be with the *is/isnotness* of each page. Contemplate the pages rather than understand them: catch their scent. They suggest a meaning that will only appear in relationship to you: your work, your struggle and your worldview.

A Lyric Philosophy of Teaching and Meaning

The fascination of water
is the laughter of geometry.
Wind plunges down a hillside:
a longing to embrace.

The mountain drifts in twilight.
When we draw the blinds at dusk
is the moment we most want to open
them again.

Jan Zwicky [Songs for Relinquishing the Earth]

Words move, music moves
Only in time; but that which is only living
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness

T. S. Eliot [Burnt Norton]

Being

classroom: a room in a school in which classes are conducted.

class: a group of students who are taught together; a set or category; the system of ordering a society.

constellation: a group of stars forming a recognizable pattern; a cluster of related things.

constell: a cluster or pattern of relationships, specific to a time and place, within which teaching and learning occur.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my 'symbolic' or 'objectifying' function.

[Phenomenology of Perception, 162]

Liberation

“Is” is not sufficient for an investigation into meaning.

Meaning emerges from difference; not just the *is* but the *is not*. *Is/is-not-ness* allows meaning to co-exist or co-arise with being.

The simultaneity of *is/is-not-ness* in metaphor softens the edges and intersections of meanings and their “proper” usages. As this happens language may be said to copulate; generate; innovate.

To embed a theory of meaning in metaphor allows language to shed its disguise as a code, and to appear in the world as a subject in its own right.

Paul Ricoeur

It could be said that everyday reference to the real must be abolished in order that another sort of reference to other dimensions of reality might be liberated. This, when the time comes, will be my thesis.

[The Rule of Metaphor, 145]

I. A. Richards

...our principal terms incessantly change their meanings with the sentences they go into and the content they derive from...but both the extent *and the plan* of these deluding shifts are hidden from us [by the Proper Meaning Superstition]... It leads us to think that a shift of meaning is a flaw in discourse, a regrettable accident, instead of a virtue. And therefore we neglect to study the plan of the shifts.

[The Philosophy of Rhetoric, 72]

Meaning

The *sensation* of separation comes from the perceiver's orientation in time and space. There is no such thing as an entity separate from its environment, for meanings interweave and overlap; at the moment of the perception of a given meaning there is a temporary discontinuity.

Simone de Beauvoir

Nature is truly language, a language that would teach itself, where signification would be secreted by the very structure of signs. With this, one understands that we could never be out of place in the world. The most savage desert, the most hidden cave, still secrete a human meaning. The universe is our domain.

However, at the same time as they offer this familial aspect, things offer another side: they also are silence and mystery, an Other who escapes us. They are never completely given but, on the contrary, always open. The world in the full sense of the word is not an object; it transcends all the perspective views I take of it.

[Philosophical Writings, 162]

Creation and destruction

Meaning and being bring objects to attention in an ever-unfolding dance. The etchings of meaning on the indeterminacy of being reflect an apparent otherness for perceivers, or subjects. This otherness sparks a simultaneous search for identity (distinction) and intimacy (merging) that is only ever partly achieved.

Metaphor is one of our greatest capacities in this search. It makes us aware of the shifting balance of being and meaning, and allows us to develop relational sea legs.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

The miracle of consciousness consists in its bringing to light through attention, phenomena which re-establish the unity of the object in a new dimension at the very moment when they destroy it. Thus attention is neither an association of images, nor the return to itself of thought already in control of its objects, but the active constitution of a new object which makes explicit and articulate what was until then presented as no more than an indeterminate horizon.

[Phenomenology of Perception, 35]

Wholeness

The constell is not only its parts, nor the sum of its parts, nor the synergy thereof; we cannot arrive at being from meaning.

As long as we understand education as simply a transmission of meaning, we miss what education can be: the power to imagine together *across divides of meaning*.

The being in the constell is the being of the world; the world is present in the constell, not as a representation but as an indivisible whole.

David Abram

These letters I print across the page, the scratches and scrawls you now focus upon, trailing off across the white surface, are hardly different from the footprints of prey left in the snow. We read these traces with organs honed over millenia by our tribal ancestors, moving instinctively from one track to the next, picking up the trail afresh whenever it leaves off, hunting the *meaning*, which would be the *meeting* with the Other.

[The Spell of the Sensuous, 96]

Merging

Perceiver and perceived are linked in the moment of reference. It is an intimate moment of recognition that is mutual and bonding, yet impermanent.

Michael Polanyi

...It is not by looking at things, but by dwelling in them, that we understand their joint meaning. We can now see how an unbridled lucidity can destroy our understanding of complex matters. Scrutinize closely the particulars of a comprehensive entity and their meaning is effaced, our conception of the entity is destroyed.

[The Tacit Dimension, 18]

Do the ends justify the meanings?

The act of perception gives the initial spark for meaning. This is not to say that meaning *has its origin* with perception (as a fire does not *have its origin* with the striking of a match, but with a constellation of mutually implicated factors like the growing of the tree, the aggregation of the air, the cultural discovery of fire, the manufacture of the match, the thought of building a fire...), but rather that perception is an intimacy of the perceiver and the perceived and a particular (or new) meaning can develop (as *this* fire *does* in a different sense begin with the striking of the match).

This is the essential tension: that entities are both separated (by meaning) and united (by being). If an educational moment does not take this tension into account, it risks a (sometimes) subtle violence exercised by an overly aggressive *is*.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Starting from the spectacle of the world, which is that of a nature open to a plurality of thinking subjects, it looks for the conditions which make possible this unique world presented to a number of empirical selves, and finds it in a transcendental ego in which they participate without dividing it up, because it is not a Being, but a Unity or Value.

[Phenomenology of Perception, 71]

Meaning is in connection

Words don't *have* meaning. Words (like any other living entity) have relationships (with other words, with other entities).

Meaning is in relationship; in the tension between is-ness (resonance) and is-not-ness (distinction). There are discernible patterns in this is/is- not-ness. These patterns connect in meta-patterns that generate orders of meaning from word to worldview.

Being is the necessary ground for all such patterns to emerge.

I. A. Richards

...the meaning we find for a word comes to it only with respect to the meanings of other words we take with it.... I extend this vein to include not only the other words uttered with it, but also *unuttered* words in various relations to it which may be backing it up though we never think of them.

[The Philosophy of Rhetoric, 70]

Looking and leaping

In the moment of seeing-as the perceiver is making a leap, another connection, which leads *away* from the perceived. We are reminded that this moment of perception is not self-contained. The domesticity of the word and the sovereignty of the *is* are interrupted.

Perception can be contrasted with seeing-as; both are ways of inscribing meaning, but perception is connected to reference, and seeing-as is connected to sense. Reference is definitional, a pointing-out; it is a domestic kind of meaning, contained within a stable relationship of the perceiver and the perceived. Meaning here seems to nestle in the word itself; to have a 'home.' Sense is metaphorical, an insight; it is a nomadic, mercurial kind of meaning, refusing settlement. Meaning here is lyric, often pairing word with tone, hue, or gesture.

The terms evening star and morning star have different senses but the same reference.

Edward S. Reed

Meanings and values are *external*, not internal. We seek values and meanings, although we do not always succeed in obtaining what we want. Information and affordances are available in the environments of all animals. This grounds meaning and value in the environment, but it also requires of individual animals that they undertake an effort to come into relationships with meanings and values.

[Encountering the World, 101]

Coherence

This is the heart of meaning-making: to make sense of the subjectivity of a body on a planet, enough sense that as the time seems to pass, the self knows what to do next, by listening to the language of the stomach, the heart, the lover, the enemy, the storm, the predator. These meanings are not static, but a wild equilibrium that accounts for daily miracles like birth, blossoming, and flashes of lightening. By our meaning-making, the passage of space through time or time through space—the weaving of these dimensions—is rendered coherent.

Robert Bringhurst

The wild is the real, and the real is where we go for form and meaning. Meaning doesn't originate with us. When we are actually speaking, what we say has form and meaning, and those, at roots, are not man-made.

[The Tree of Meaning, 264]

Agency

It seems that the tyranny of reference, particularly in formal education, is indicative of a deeper conformism that runs counter to Western society's ostensible valuation of new ideas and individual freedom.

Edward S. Reed

Here is an interesting paradox. Every particular object—even specifically designed tools—can have several affordances (e.g., a screwdriver can be used as a pry bar or a hole punch). Yet when we combine objects in a course of action or a task, we do not get a combinatoric explosion of possibilities—we do not find ourselves trying out all the different affordances of each object. On the contrary, the task tends to help one select what one does with a given object.

[Encountering the World, 123]

Accountability

If part of the role of the teacher is to pass on cultural traditions, another part is the willingness to be surprised. Meaning is inherently a) shifting and, b) context-dependent. The students, and the constell itself, may be unpredictable or even innovative. The teacher's sensitivity, intuition and balance will steward these innovations.

In this way the teacher is accountable to both being and meaning.

Robert Bringham

It seems to me that things have meaning before they are ever seen or touched by human beings, and that humans can *participate*, as trees can, in the meaning making process.... Some meanings—if that is the right name for them—are highly individual; some are peculiar to certain communities and cultures; but there is a rich fund of meanings shared by the whole species, and a fund of meanings richer yet that is the common property not of the species but of the planet. Those are among the meanings we draw on, and the meanings *language* draws on, whenever we tell stories, say hello, carve masks and totem poles, or read and write literary texts.

[The Tree of Meaning, 212]

Edward S. Reed

An animal is always active, orienting itself to the environment and maintaining some state of vigilant awareness.

[Encountering the World, 71]

Intellect

Meaning-making doesn't take place inside the head. It is a relationship, a concordance between the beings in an environment.

By isolating learners from the world and meaning from experience, educational institutions defy this wisdom. As if we contain all our operating principles a priori, and reference can simply be fed in through words. But there are no such operating principles, and words do not substitute for relationship.

Only the environment and the affordances of that environment illuminate *who and what* is in the constell.

Robert Bringham

“The life of the mind” is not only a reassuring and comfortable metaphor; it is a plain though intangible fact. Yet the life of the mind, like the life of the forest, only exists in an interactive and polymorphous form. Your life may be yours alone, but unless a lot of other things are living, neither am I and neither are you. This is true for the individual, true for the species and true for the mind.

[Tree of Meaning, 67]

Gregory Bateson

Learning the contexts of life is a matter that has to be discussed, not internally, but as a matter of the external relationship between two creatures. And *relationship is always a product of double description...*

Only if you hold tight to the primacy and priority of relationship can you avoid dormitive explanations. The opium does not contain a dormitive principle, and the man does not contain an aggressive instinct.

[Mind and Nature, 124–5]

The balance of power

A teacher must be prepared not only to know but to sense; to release control but not responsibility. To acknowledge patterns that disturb her expectations. The implication is that there is a direct connection between vulnerability and generosity.

Gregory Bateson

The pattern which connects is a metapattern. It is a pattern of patterns. It is that metapattern which defines the vast generalization that, indeed, *it is patterns which connect.*

[Mind and Nature, 10]

Chris Abani

I know this hunger, this need
to make patterns, to build meaning
from detritus; also the light
and the wood floor bare but for the lone slipper
tossed carelessly to one side. I admit the lies I've told.
look, nothing has been true
since that picture of hell on the living room wall lost its
terror.

[Sanctificum, 7]

Where does fire come from?

Todd has a stick, a piece of thick rope and a board. He places these on the ground and pulls a ball of shredded bark from his pocket. He crouches on one knee. He places the stick on a notch in the board and uses the rope to spin the stick. A wisp of smoke rises. The circle is silent. Todd looks up. A girl volunteers without a word. He whispers to her. She takes up the ball of bark. He tips the flat board towards her and blows gently. The newborn ember lands on the tinder and the nest in her hands catches fire. He guides her to the pyramid of kindling and pine. As it goes up a cheer engulfs the group. Someone starts a song. The final evening has begun.

Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts
Not that only, but the co-existence,
Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end.
And all is always now.

T. S. Eliot [Burnt Norton]

Medicine

Apathy is a disease consuming the minds of millions of North American students. Its symptoms are dire and various: cutting, bullying, illiteracy...

What is the medicine? Wonder.

The ability to make and remake meaning for oneself can be modeled but not taught. This modeling comes from the teacher's own passion, and one way to express it is through the use of vivid metaphors.

Wonder cannot be generated or engendered; it dawns.

Jan Zwicky

“All that philosophy can do is destroy idols.” In a sense this is correct. Not in the sense that philosophy's function is essentially that of analytic jousting. But in the sense that we can come to see a philosophical problem *as* the result of a way of looking at the world—a way of looking that can be changed.

[Wisdom and Metaphor, L20]

What do we see them as?

A child who is bored, who is angry, who steals, who lies...or the child who smiles and competes and conforms; what are the affordances of their environment? And what do they afford others through their behaviour?

We can practice orienting the metaphor-making capacity of I/i in different directions. Do we see the children as bad, sad, good, smart or strong? The behaviours in the constellation are affordances. So are the ways we as teachers respond to them.

Think of an affordance as an invitation. What we see-as limits our invitations. There are no nutrients in an environment. There are elements that invite a certain set of behaviours that will lead to nourishment.

Jan Zwicky

Ontological attention is a form of love.

When we love a thing, we can experience our responsibility toward it as limitless (the size of the world). Responsibility is the trace, in us, of the pressure of the world that is focused in a *this*. That is *how much* it is possible to attend; that is how large complete attention would be.

[Wisdom and Metaphor, L57]

Mystery mastery

To connect her students emotionally to the material at hand, a teacher requires mastery of the subject matter.

She must also be able to invite and welcome mystery, the ineffable, into the constell.

Mary Oliver

Wild, Wild

This is what love is:

the dry rose bush the gardener, in his pruning, missed
suddenly bursts into bloom.

A madness of delight; an obsession.

A holy gift, certainly.

But often, alas, improbable.

Why couldn't Romeo have settled for someone else?

Why couldn't Tristan and Isolde have refused
the shining cup

which would have left peaceful the whole kingdom?

Wild sings the bird of the heart in the forests
of our lives.

Over and over Faust, standing in the garden, doesn't know
anything that's going to happen, he only sees
the face of Marguerite, which is irresistible.

And wild, wild sings the bird.

[New and Selected, 34]

I or I/i

Subjectivity is at the heart of teaching and learning. Rarely does anyone mention it other than to forbid its use in a formal essay. But at the same time, with everything we teach, the child receives a notion of what 'I' is. The very project of modern education is to define and shape that 'I.'

Simone de Beauvoir

One of the essential goals proposed by children's education is to make the child lose the sense of his presence in the world. Ethics teaches him to renounce his subjectivity, to give up the privilege of affirming himself as "I" when faced with others. He must consider himself as a human person among others, subjected, like the others, to universal laws written in an anonymous heaven... However, in spite of ethics, every man knows a mysterious intimacy with a unique existence that is precisely his own, and, in spite of science, every man sees with his eyes. From this is born a divorce that one so often notices between theory and practice, between opinions and hidden convictions, between learned precepts and the spontaneous movement of life. The world having been torn from the subject, and the subject pushed outside the world, it becomes impossible to possess the world and oneself at the same time.

[Philosophical Writings, 159–160]

Reciprocation

If what *we* know is all *they* need to know, we are using what Freire calls the banking method of education.

Whatever method the teacher chooses engages the metaphoric force. The question isn't which is a better choice, but how is the choice made, and why.

If a child is a container to be filled, a blank page to be written on, a seed to be nurtured, a savage to be tamed, or a tool to be honed, the affordances in the constellation change. In order to make this choice responsibly, the teacher needs to understand the implications of the choice.

Edward S. Reed

...nutrients do not exist as such in an environment: plants, animals, seeds, fruits and so on are what animals encounter. To get the nutrients it needs an animal has to act in highly specific ways...the utilization of affordances is not an abstract "resource usage" of the sort economists think about when tracking industrial inventories.

[Encountering the World, 38]

Gregory Bateson

The pattern which connects. Why do schools teach almost nothing of the pattern which connects? Is it that teachers know that they carry the kiss of death which will turn to tastelessness whatever they touch and therefore they are wisely unwilling to touch or teach anything of real-life importance? Or is it that they carry the kiss of death *because* they dare not teach anything of real-life importance? What's wrong with them?

[Mind and Nature, 7]

The pattern which connects

But don't we need to teach skills, too? Calculus, the scientific method, spelling? Of course. But without acknowledging the pattern that connects these we ask the child to accept our vision on faith. And the pattern that connects is not a fact, or a practical application. It is a feeling. An insight. A moment. Part of the tacit dimension. The ground for figures to move against. Losing sight of it, we risk meaninglessness, anxiety and boredom.

Sense making depends on this ability to see patterns. While we can teach this it is, at the same time, deeply personal. Each person sees only with their own eyes; they see the poetry of their own eyes. Metaphor is the medium in which we can communicate these patterns.

When we try to impose or ignore a student's patterns we encounter resistance. A teacher's response to this resistance is intrinsic to the being of the constell. From this relational friction (the tension between *is* and *is-not*), particular meanings enter the ecology of the constell.

Hidden truths

One of the joys of teaching: to witness the unleashing, the setting free of a hidden truth. When students are most deeply connected to the sense of wonder and illumination, the teacher disappears and the constellation itself becomes the teacher. To achieve this kind of spaciousness, the *is* must make room for the *is-not*.

Michael Polanyi

Any tradition fostering the progress of thought must have this intention: to teach its current ideas as stages leading on to unknown truths which, when discovered, might dissent from the very teachings which engendered them. Such a tradition assures the independence of its followers by transmitting the conviction that thought has intrinsic powers, to be evoked in men's minds by intimations of hidden truths.

[The Tacit Dimension, 82]

The rational fetish

Rationality is the room where humanity shuts itself away from the rest of the world. If we only rely on rationality as a truth-maker, we lose touch with the feeling-sensing-insightful capabilities that connect us with all other beings. Metaphor, as a bridge between rationality and the felt-senses, allows both to be present simultaneously; it enables humans to re-access the wildness of meaning that rationality limits.

Rationality has become dogmatic in Western philosophy (and trickles down to schools). In its drive to control it has gone out of control, destroying the sensory world in its path, without the felt sense to limit it. Social (or even ecological) mores are a poor substitute for a felt sense of shared self-hood.

Edward S. Reed

Our current fragmentation includes the hyper-reductionism of some of the neurochemists, the hyper-post modernism of the hermeneuticists, and the hyper-modeling mania of some of the connectionists.

[Encountering the World, 4]

Jan Zwicky

I am interested in the phenomenon of 'seeing-as' because it encapsulates the mystery of meaning. The moment of recognition happens as if by magic; and yet, when we reflect on it, we see—its very name tells us this—that it is impossible without prior experience. What becomes puzzling then is the phenomenon of insight, the creation (apparently) of new meaning. Here, we forget that to recognize can mean to re-think, as in *think through differently*. It need not always signify mere repetitions of a former cognition. We say in such cases not only that we recognize X (as Y) but that we *realize X is Y*.

[Wisdom and Metaphor, L1]

Creativity

A metaphor requires creativity from both sender and receiver. When the responsibility for such creative meaning making is shared, the entire constellation (not just the individual humans) can become engaged.

A metaphor can plumb depths of sensorial and emotional relations; it can also be used as a shorthand or quick illustration. We may need to know more about the utterer and her state in order to understand the metaphor.

A casual metaphor should not be mistaken as one that is meaningless. The metaphors that are most casual are the ones that illuminate the “i” of the classroom. This invokes an ethical imperative. How do our students understand themselves under the light of our most casual metaphors? To be equal to this a teacher must become alert to the use of metaphor both in linguistic and gestural communication.

Max Black

The idea of a wolf is part of a system of ideas, not sharply delineated, and yet sufficiently definite to admit of detailed enumeration.

The effect, then, of (metaphorically) calling a man a ‘wolf’ is to evoke the wolf-system of related commonplaces.

...Nor must we neglect the shifts in attitude that regularly result from the use of metaphorical language. A wolf is (conventionally) a hateful and alarming object; so, to call a man a wolf is to imply that he too is hateful and alarming.

[‘Metaphor’ from Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 288-9]

Lakoff and Johnson

The most fundamental values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in a culture.

[Metaphors We Live By, 22]

The kind of conceptual system we have is a product of the kind of beings we are and the way we interact with our physical and cultural environments.

[Metaphors We Live By, 119]

The ground beneath her feet

Recognizing “what things mean” allows a student to interact with the affordances of her environment, to get what she wants and needs effectively. This continues throughout her life. The set of meanings is not actually stable, but constantly shifting as she learns. It seems stable because as it shifts she also shifts.

The earth is down, the sky is up. Then she learns the earth is round and spinning around the sun; but the set of meanings does not shift unless this new idea generates friction. She can avoid existential crisis by keeping it penned in its own self-contained world of school knowledge.

Complex, inarticulable notions, feelings, memories, hints are developed concomitantly with this stable set. (When she learns that there is sky below the earth and the solid earth is spinning, she also already knows that she will not fall through the sky or off the earth.) It is a sense of the essences of things; the unspeakable; the dreamyness of things. There is a doubleness to meaning here: one which dissects the world into discrete, articulable meanings, and one which simultaneously reunites that world into meaningful essences, beings and relationships.

Nurturing her creativity, her relationship with other beings, means helping her venture into the wild of her own shifting meanings.

Jan Zwicky

Quoting Robert Hass: Basho told a disciple that the trouble with most poems was that they were either subjective or objective, and when the disciple said, ‘You mean, too subjective or too objective?’ Basho said, ‘No.’

[Wisdom and Metaphor, R101]

The habit of me

In order to re-conceive of education and the role of the teacher, I'm trying to break the habit of subject-object, knower-known. I might even go so far as to call it an addiction. An addiction to me-ness. So habitual to think of "my" mind, "my" legs, "my" idea. My insides, my outsides. This addiction sustains and is sustained by the detached stance, the bodiless head, the isolated selfhood that many schools implicitly insist on.

If I can merge the subject-object into a moving I/i complex, I may find myself more able to read and interpret the metaphors of the world in which I dwell, and which dwells in me.

David Abram

A story that makes sense is one that stirs the senses from their slumber, one that opens the eyes and the ears to their real surroundings, tuning the tongue to the actual tastes in the air and sending chills of recognition along the surface of the skin. To *make sense* is to release the body from the constraints imposed by outworn ways of speaking, and hence to renew and rejuvenate one's felt awareness of the world.

[The Spell of the Sensuous, 265]

A subtle violence

Because we conflate *as-is* and *is*, the *is* becomes rigid...and can do violence. We will use this *is*, we cannot prevent this kind of violence, but it can be mitigated by the admission of *is-not-ness*.

When the *is* can run wild (hopefully with a conscientious steward to witness it) the violence is part of the ecological balance. Too severe an *is* or too permissive an *is-not* may lead to ecological disaster: runaway populations or the bulldozer of civilization.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

But when I contemplate an object with the sole intention of watching it exist and unfold its riches before my eyes, then it ceases to be an allusion to a general type, and I become aware that each perception...reenacts on its own account the birth of intelligence and has some element of creative genius about it.

[The Phenomenology of Perception, 50–1]

Listening

The quality of making sense of metaphor, or poetry, or music can be applied to the gestural being of the constell. By modeling attention to the metaphoric force, we cultivate the child's ability to listen in this way, to become attuned to *is/is-notness*.

Martin Heidegger

We believe we are at home in the immediate circle of beings. That which is, is familiar, reliable, ordinary. Nevertheless, the clearing is pervaded by a constant concealment in the double form of refusal and dissembling. At bottom, the ordinary is not ordinary; it is extra-ordinary, uncanny. The nature of truth, that is, unconcealedness, is dominated throughout by a denial. Yet this denial is not a defect or a fault, as though truth were an unalloyed unconcealedness that has rid itself of everything concealed. If truth could accomplish this, it would no longer be itself. *This denial, in the form of a double-concealment, belongs to the nature of truth as unconcealedness.* Truth, in nature, is untruth.

[Poetry Language Thought, 54]

A rose or...

What if the name were movable or flexible? What if it were seen as less important than the predicate—the relational context that gives the name meaning? Metaphor affords this flexibility of word meaning, which rather than prescribing values allows us to study “the plan of the shifts.” Instead of the pendulum of power we see an increase in imagination, agency and vitality.

Gregory Bateson

...Children in school are still taught nonsense. They are told that a “noun” is the “name of a person place or thing,” that a verb is “an action word” and so on. That is, they are taught at a tender age that the way to define something is by what is supposedly *in* itself, not by its relation to other things... Children could be told that a noun is a word having a certain relationship to a predicate. A verb has a certain relation to a noun, its subject. And so on. Relationship could be used as a basis for definition.

[Mind and Nature, 15]

Paul Ricoeur

...A purely rhetorical treatment of metaphor is the result of the excessive and damaging emphasis put initially on the word, or, more specifically, on the noun or name, and on naming, in the theory of meaning; whereas a properly semantic treatment of metaphor proceeds from the recognition of the sentence as the primary unit of meaning.

[The Rule of Metaphor, 44]

Teaching

We expect so much from teachers. But do we expect the right things? We expect them to prepare students...for what? The market? Fulfillment of individual potential? Making a contribution to society? Perhaps what we can or should expect from them is a deepening of understanding of what it means to become human.

In this case teaching is an act of inviting the ineffable. Teachers need to be prepared with the ability to speak poetically; to move students towards a place of thinking-with, and seeing-as. This way, the task of developing one's understanding is not burdensome but can be wonder-full.

Martin Heidegger

Poetry does not fly above and surmount the earth in order to escape it and hover over it. Poetry is what first brings man to earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling.

[Poetry Language Thought, 218]

Influence

Information is no longer the issue. We have access to more information than we could ever possess. What we need is ways to think and things to think with. Wisdom. Patterns. Tools. Sense. We must empower teachers to be able to provide this.

Edward S. Reed

From an ecological point of view, motivation is constituted by the kinds of efforts animals tend to make to obtain values and meaning from the environment. These efforts may be influenced by internal mechanisms, but not reduced to them. And, while the internal states of efforts after value and meaning are not ignored here, they are treated as they should be, as simply one among many factors influencing the direction of behaviour.

[Encountering the World, 110]

Solidarity

I feel compelled to make an appeal to teachers: you are the stewards of meaning; you are the bastions of tradition, such as it is. You can, you must, allow your students to preserve and develop their ability to make meaning. To do this the meanings you share with them with must be alive.

Here we reach for art, sports, embodiment of any kind. These are wonderfully useful but they are not the heart of the matter. What truly matters is the ineffable qualities of the relationship between teacher and student, between teachers and students and the building, between the community and the school...etc. These are the interlocked issuings of meaning-makings and meaning-makers. These are the wellspring of meaning. They matter.

Edward S. Reed

...Affordances are features not of the environment or habitat as such but of the environment in relation to a given population of animals, or what has come to be called the econiche of a species. The surface of the pond, for example, is the source of divergent evolution between insects and vertebrates; for at least some population of the former, it affords walking, whereas for almost all populations of the latter, it affords a stoppage to walking.

[Encountering the World, 43]

There is no magic line above which animals become aware or intelligent. There is not even a slippery slope along which one might measure awareness or intelligence. (Remember, phylogeny is not a linear tree, but a highly complex branching bush.)

[Encountering the World, 99]

Literacy

She asks, "Are you reading?"

"Do you want to read?"

A shy nod. "I love reading."

I have *Lyric Ecology*, Father Bede Griffiths' *A New Vision of Reality*, and *Towards a Council of All Beings*, with some essays by Arne Naess and other ecologists. Not exactly entertaining for a fifteen year old.

"This one, I think," she says. It's a dialogue on ineffability between Jan Zwicky and Tim Lilburn.

We lie on the grass on our stomachs and take turns reading. She has questions like, "What is the difference between theology and philosophy? Isn't knowledge a belief?"

There's a bit: Press hard at something—a text you wish to understand, a line you are working on, something that's bothering you in your life, then stand back, tired, maybe giving up: the right way to go about it may unkink luminously before you. She says, "I know that feeling."

In the final paragraph we read: Again I'm struck by the importance of the metaphor of fragrance: is fragrance *fugitive*? She says, "Knowledge is like that. It's knowable, but it disappears."

When we've finished we sit in silence a minute. She sits up and says, "Thank you. I never would have read that on my own. I would have given up." I reply: "It was different for me to read it with you." She nods, "I know about the unsayable," she says. "It's like my life right now. People want me to know what I am, what I will be. I know, but I can't say."

Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still. Shrieking voices
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
Always assail them. The Word in the desert
Is most attacked by the voices of temptation,
The crying shadow in the funeral dance,
The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera.

T. S. Eliot [Burnt Norton]

Where is my self?

If I concentrate on my own being, using my sensory perceptions, and try to determine what is 'self,' I immediately get the shape of my skin, distinguished by any points of pain or tension, of course, but the ultimate boundary seems at first to be the skin.

After a moment's reflection, I realize that the skin is not a boundary at all. At the point of the lips, nostrils and any orifice the skin wraps around and continues into the body itself, making the boundary include the inside of the lips, the tongue, the throat, the stomach etc. Air, food and water, also cross the boundary, constantly rendering the skin not a boundary at all, but only an initial convenience of perception, no-thing in and of itself.

What, then, is the relationship of the body to the self? Can we connect it to the relationship between word and word meaning?

Simone de Beauvoir

The represented body is a secondary construction that is added on to the reality of the lived body, and which can, in certain cases, become disunited from it. Our body is not first posited in the world the way a tree or a rock is. It lives in the world; it is our general way of having a world. It expresses our existence, which signifies not that it is an exterior accompaniment of our existence, but that our existence realizes itself in it.

[Philosophical Writings, 161]

Hunches and solutions

Felt sense-making (seeing-as; metaphor) is as inherent to subjectivity as reference. That is, is/is-not-ness is present in my sense of self, 'I,' *which is itself a metaphor*. I will suggest that there is another aspect of 'I,' which is 'i,' and which is the part that creates, recognizes and interprets metaphor. Together these are the explicit and tacit aspects of subjectivity.

Michael Polanyi

Tacit knowing is shown to account (1) for a valid knowledge of a problem, (2) for the scientist's capacity to pursue it, guided by his sense of approaching its solution, and (3) for a valid anticipation of the yet indeterminate implications of the discovery arrived at in the end...

[The Tacit Dimension, 24]

Note that there is a widespread opinion that scientists hit on discoveries merely by trying everything as it happens to cross their minds. This opinion follows from an inability to recognize man's capacity for anticipating the approach of a hidden truth. The scientist's surmises or hunches are the spurs and pointers of his search.

[The Tacit Dimension, 76]

Obscurity

'i' is the aspect of the subject that extends through all possible worldly connectivities. This does not mean that 'i' has access to every aspect of the world. Rather, the world is the ground the figure of 'I' moves across in search of value and meaning.

There is always a part of being that is obscure to 'i' in any perception. But 'i' reaches far beyond 'I' and is not articulable or available like "I." 'i' has access to Being. 'I' manipulates meanings. Instead of 'I,' I like to think of a metaphor like 'I/i' to stand for subjectivity. This allows for an 'I' which is affected and qualified by predicates, which accumulates self-hood over a lifetime and which projects itself in its various forms into the world. But it doesn't disallow 'i.'

Michael Polanyi

The sight of a solid object indicates that it has both another side and a hidden interior, which we could explore; the sight of another person points at unlimited hidden workings of a mind and body. Perception has this unlimited profundity, because what we perceive *is* an aspect of reality, and aspects of reality are clues to boundless undisclosed, and perhaps yet unthinkable, experiences.

[The Tacit Dimension, 68]

'I' is a metaphor

Our sense of self develops with the use of language. This sense of self shifts depending on the type and intent of the language used. For example, if I say: 'I have a headache' there is an awareness of a bodily state that is the 'I.' If I say 'I saw a heron' there is sense of a self that has a temporal and spatial position and that has retained a visual memory attached to a body of prior knowledge. If I say 'Large trees are important for a city's air quality' my 'I' is not explicit, but exists for the listener as a felt sense, whether as a representative of a larger body, or an ideology, or a community.

We do not need a dictionary to define 'I.' Yet it is notoriously difficult to describe. I suggest this is because it is not constrained to either the body or certain lexical or grammatical structures. The self, instead, is an affordance of the environment, shifting as the latter shifts and as our ability to recognize and use affordances grows.

Tracking this 'sense of self' in a given utterance is the same kind of interpretation as a more traditional (read: literary) metaphoric trope. 'I' is a figurative utterance; it is recognized and interpreted as such by a listener. This interpretation is a constitutive aspect of human verbal communication.

'I' is also often used gesturally. Any pointing, for example, implicitly refers to a pointer; a self.

Paul Ricoeur

The inner structure of the sentence refers back to the speaker through grammatical procedures, which linguists call "shifters." The personal pronouns, for example, have no objective meaning. "I" is not a concept. It is impossible to substitute a universal expression for it such as "the one who is now speaking." Its only function is to refer the whole sentence to the subject of the speech event. It has a new meaning each time it is use and each time it refers to a singular subject. "I" is the one who in speaking who applies to himself the word "I" which appears in the sentence as a logical subject. There are other shifters, other grammatical bearers of the reference of the discourse to its speaker as well. They include the tenses of the verb to the extent that they are centered around the present and therefore refer to the "now" of the speech event and of the speaker. The same is true of adverbs of time and space and the demonstratives, which may be considered egocentric particulars. Discourse therefore has many substitutable ways of referring back to the speaker.

[Interpretation Theory, 13]

The language of is/is-not-ness

In order to work with this shifting in a practical way, we must first be willing to suggest that self is not confined to the human skull, or body, or even to the “animate” world of plants and animals. This allows the location (the being) and the relations (the meaning) of our gatherings (words, classrooms, homes, forests, deserts, oceans, dreams) to cohere. We begin to recognize (real-ize) the interconnectedness, and hear how it speaks in its language of analogy, synchronicity, resemblance, rhythm; pattern.

Edward S. Reed

...The cognitive ethologists... do not believe animals are aware of the environment at all—they are said to be aware only of their own mental representations of the environment... This effectively puts the mind outside of nature...which is why it becomes so difficult to study. There simply is no mind behind what animals (or people, for that matter) do. There are, however, actions that embody specific kinds of awareness and other actions that do not.

[Encountering the World, 98]

Neither the environment, nor the organism, nor any part of the organism (e.g., its central nervous system) causes behaviour or awareness under ordinary circumstances. Both animate activity and perception are emergent properties of an organism's encounters with its surroundings.

[Encountering the World, 111]

Fields of view

I am not talking about the difference between “conscious” and “unconscious.” We can be equally conscious or unconscious of both of these parts, but in different ways. It is the different quality or nature of the two “I’s” that interests me now. The “I” that is sensed and sensing is aware of itself (and much else) as a part of the physical world of perceivable matter. The “i” that is non-sensed is the observer of that ongoing activity of perception. The “I” and “i” are not separate. They are intermingled in a manner that might itself be called a kind of inter-subjectivity. This duality-within-singularity allows there to be a perception and an observation of perception simultaneously, without requiring a separate cognition, or “realm of ideas.” Both “I” and “i” are perceiving, but with different and shifting “lenses.”

John A. Livingston

It just might be that what we call the bird’s ‘territory’ is in fact the bird’s seasonally adjusted *self*. Or it could be seen as its seasonally adjusted ‘personal distance.’ The words do not matter; the images do. Neil Evernden has attractively illustrated this through reference to the much-studied ‘territoriality’ of the stickleback:

It is as if the boundary of what the fish considers himself has expanded to the dimensions of the territory. He regards himself as being the size of the territory, no longer an organism bounded by skin but an organism-plus-environment bounded by an invisible integument.... It is as if there were a kind of field in the territory, with the self present throughout but more concentrated at the core.

[Rogue Primate, 93–4]

Edward S. Reed

There are two persistent invisibilities in the visual world... what is concealed in our heads and on the other side of the sky is always and persistently invisible to us terrestrial creatures. Perhaps that is why so many stories have been put forth to fill these absences.

[Encountering the World, 63]

The missing link

The missing aspect of most teaching is the willingness of the school and the teacher and especially the curriculum to acknowledge and appreciate and even encourage the agency of a) the child, b) the teacher, and c) the child-teacher relationship. Surprise, wonder and miracles are possible when the affordances of reality are available. Not as if the mind was mechanical or, like Freire warns, not as if it were a container to fill; but as if it were a living being seeking information in the environment and availing itself of it.

This will develop in the student the ability to orient herself in more and more subtle environments.

Edward S. Reed

...All known automata are not active in the way that animals are. Despite this alarming disparity, psychologists have persisted in modeling animal and human behaviour on mechanical principles, thus neglecting perhaps the most fundamental problem in their field—autonomous agency.

[Encountering the World, 10]

The basic orientation system is both the fundamental action system and the fundamental perceptual system... without orientation to gravity and to the local surfaces of the environment, no organism could engage successfully in any form of movement or posture.

[Encountering the World, 84]

Ecological psychology offers a new, naturalistic definition of behaviour. *Behaviour* is defined as an animal's ability to change its relationship to its surroundings.

[Encountering the World, 97]

Watch yourself

There is contiguity between the self and the world. There is also hiddenness. 'i' is the interaction between these two, the shifting of the known and the unknown that creates a kind of dynamic movement in the present. This is the generative force I want to call metaphor, which is mirrored at a different order by the literary trope.

I had to know to whom this kind of metaphor matters: metaphor that is not contained in language, or in the mind, or in the mind's eye, but in the world. That constant change: who is experiencing it? 'I' is not sufficient. I propose 'I/i' in order that 'I' be reminded to watch itself. This latent ability of the 'I' allows it to be both in and of the world, to possess both the world and the self, to have no 'both' but to be aware of Self as World.

Simone de Beauvoir

One of the great merits of phenomenology is to have given back to man the right to an authentic existence by eliminating the opposition of the subject and the object. It is impossible to define an object in cutting it off from the subject through which and for which it is object; and the subject reveals itself only through the objects in which it is engaged.

[Philosophical Writings, 160]

Paul Ricoeur

Self-knowledge is a striving for truth by means of this inner contest between reductive and recollective interpretations.

[Rule of Metaphor, 376 (2010 edition)]

Nonsense

The non-sensed “i” is the part of the self that is not apparent to itself. So, this includes, some parts of the “inside” of the body (I am unaware, for instance, of a sense of my pancreas), unrecalled dreams, unrecalled memories, the future, the back, the downward looking eyes. You see how this shifts? If I look at the bottom of my foot, I have no way of seeing my eyes. If I look in a mirror and see my eyes, I cannot see any part of my back. And even with the trickiest work of mirrors and suspension, I will not “see” my beating heart. I can perceive the beating heart, but generally if I am feeling the heart, I am no longer aware of seeing, say, my hair. Even to perceive the breath and the heart simultaneously is an immense act of concentration. This is to say that is always some non-sensed part of the self as the attention shifts.

The sensed part of the self might be pain, thought, the feeling of “me” or “mine,” the backs of the hands, the tops of the legs, the tops of the feet, the outline of the eyes and nose and the edge of the visual field, the edge of the sonic field, the skin where it is touched, and so on.

Gregory Bateson

Is there a line or a sort of bag of which we can say that “inside” that line or interface is “me” and “outside” is the environment or some other person? By what right do we make these distinctions? It is clear (though usually ignored) that the language of any answer to that question is *not*, in the end, a language of space or time. “Inside” and “outside” are not appropriate metaphors when speaking of the self.

[Mind and Nature, 123]

Gaps

To take this notion even further I will say that both “I” and “i” are not confined to the physical body. They move where attention moves, together. If I look across the room at a violin case, the part I perceive with my eyes is “I,” and the other side, the invisible part, the non-sensed part, *is* “i.” The back of the violin case is the observing that perception by/with an inter-subjective being is happening to the front. The back is known, by the observation of perception, not being perceived itself, but of course being perceived by another sense, and that is non-sense, or “i.” It is not a ‘mental model’ that tells me the violin case has a back. It is ‘i’ that knows the world I cannot see or speak of yet that I access constantly in order for ‘I’ to perform its functions. ‘I’ requires a kind of consistency. ‘i’ is the arising meanings that make this consistency possible.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

The world, in the full sense of the word, is not an object, for though it has an envelope of objective and determinate attributes, it also has fissures and gaps into which subjectivities slip and lodge themselves, or rather which are those subjectivities themselves.

[Phenomenology of Perception, 389]

Friction

The friction and intermingling between figure and ground is what generates a sense of existence, and this is what we call self, and use a figure for, which is "I." *The "objective" "I" is contiguous with the world, the "subjective" "i" is investigating the affordances, opportunities, and languages of the world.* One can therefore find affordances within "I" by the use of "i."

Simone de Beauvoir

There is one existence in particular that science claims to annex to the universe of objects, from which phenomenology returns it to man's possession: it is the existence of his own body. In pages that are perhaps the most definitive of the entire book, Merleau-Ponty demonstrates... that it is impossible to consider our body as an object, even as a privileged object.

[Philosophical Writings, 160]

Meaning makers

Both “I” and “i” are in constant contact with each other and with the world, through “I,” and with the non-world (unperceived) through “i.” The connection between these two is frictive and therefore generative. What is generated is meaning. As “I” perceives and “i” perceives that perception, meaning is achieved and recycled as language into the environment.

Meaning is not housed in the body, but exists in the friction between the two aspects of “I” that appear wherever the attention goes. And what attracts attention? It is the meaning that has been generated by “I.” The dance between the two aspects of self is no more or less than the reality that it encounters. There is no ownership of meaning. A word doesn’t own a meaning, the movement of I/i through and with the world generates a temporary meaning.

In dream, it is “i,” the non-sensed part, that guides the attention, and what it gains in meaning making through non-sensibility, it loses in the contiguity or continuity of “reality” that “I” affords.

Gregory Bateson

Ostensive communication is peculiarly important in language learning. Imagine a situation in which a speaker of a given language must teach that language to some other individual... over the telephone and that they have no other language in common. “A” will, perhaps, be able to communicate to “B” some characteristics of voice, of cadence, even of grammar; but it is quite impossible for “A” to tell “B” what any word “means” in the ordinary sense.

[Mind and Nature, 105]

Bodies and names

The self can indicate, can predicate, and can imagine, and all of this is information that is expressed in language using, initially, names (that is, any indications of a being, not necessarily words). These names are also part of I/i and can generate meaning, and incur complexity in and of themselves as beings (since they have bodies, which are figures and utterances or, more generally, gestures).

David Abram

The experiencing body is not a self-enclosed object, but an open, incomplete entity. This openness is evident in the arrangement of the sense: I have these multiple ways of encountering and exploring the world—listening with my ears, touching with my skin, seeing with my eyes, tasting with my tongue, smelling with my nose—and all of these various powers or pathways continually open outward from the perceiving body, like paths diverging from a forest.

[The Spell of the Sensuous, 125]

I am

Language confronts us with the need to generate meaning and self-consideration without detaching that experience from the world. This leads me to say (prematurely) that metaphor lies at the origin of language and that the first metaphor is “I am my sense of self.” Which is not to say “I feel therefore I am,” but rather that “I both am and am not my sense of self,” or “I am the invisible sense that observes the world and I am simultaneously part of the world, and that these are married illimitably and becoming and unbecoming each other in time.”

Robert Bringham

The mechanics of metaphor are excruciatingly simple, like binary math, and can nevertheless give wonderfully subtle and complex results.

[The Tree of Meaning, 117]

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Bodily space can be distinguished from external space and envelop its parts instead of spreading them out, because it is the darkness needed in the theatre to show up the performance, the background of somnolence or reserve of vague power against which the gesture and its aim stand out, the zone of not being *in front of which* precise beings, figures and points can come to light.

[Phenomenology of Perception, 115]

Desire

The meaningful subject is simultaneously contiguous with being, utterly merged with it along all axes, *and* unable to re-cognize being where it is non-sensed. The body dissolves into the world, in all directions, pulling in breath, absorbing sunlight, ingesting food, and listening to sound and merging with all these things...in millions of ways it is constantly and utterly nestled in reality. At the same time, the posited self, which is called *by itself* 'I,' is not aware of this contiguity and interconnectedness. This friction generates desire.

The work of the teacher is to turn this desire towards a sense of wonder, so that the 'I' can seek to know 'i' and in doing so encounter the relational self-development *and* scientific/linguistic investigations we generally call education.

Michael Polanyi

Our own body is the only thing in the world which we normally never experience as an object, but experience always in terms of the world to which we are attending from our body. It is by making this intelligent use of our body that we feel it to be our body, and not a thing outside.

[The Tacit Dimension, 16]

Invitations

We're in the gym of a high school doing a hip hop show for about 600 young people in small-town northern BC. Sara is standing on the bass bin.

"Everyone put your middle fingers up. Just hold 'em up."

I look around the room at the rows of teachers leaning on the wall beside the bleachers on both sides. They all have their middle fingers up. I threw mine up, too.

"Sometimes things get hard, right? Sometimes you don't know what to say or do, and all you can do is..." – she jabs her finger in the air again. Then puts it down. Everyone else still has their fuck-you fingers up. No one is smiling. "But here's what you can do. You can point out what's wrong. You can use your voice." She's gesturing with her index finger now. And when you put those together, what do you get?" Calmly, she puts her middle finger back up, dramatically raises the index finger, and turns her hand around. Peace signs. I shake my head. Everyone in the room has a peace sign in the air. Sara begins her song.

We don't know what made all those teachers and students want to say "fuck you." We're on tour, enmeshed in our own drama. Sara just felt something and responded to it. That's teaching; responsibility, flexibility and a little dose of the absurd.

The detail of the pattern is movement,
As the figure of the ten stairs.
Desire itself is movement
Not in itself desirable;
Love is itself unmoving,
Only the cause and the end of movement,
Timeless, and undesiring
Except in the aspect of time
Caught in the form of limitation
Between un-being and being.

T. S. Eliot [Burnt Norton]

Form and limitation

Language is a living subject; words grow and change like plants. Literacy is not a list of vocabulary and a facility with syntax but an ever-deepening intimacy with this living being.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Speech is the surplus of our existence over natural being... Hence the spoken word, which enjoys available significances as one might enjoy an acquired fortune... such is the function which we intuit through language, which reiterates itself, which is its own foundation, or which, like a wave, gathers and poises itself to hurtle beyond its own limits.

[Phenomenology of Perception, 229]

Robert Bringham

...human language is no more unnatural than antlers, hair, or teeth, and... phenomena we encounter in the languages we speak—phenomena with names such as grammar and syntax—may have roots that run much deeper than most of us have looked.

If elemental biological mechanisms really are linguistic, then there are languages in which we are spoken as well as languages we speak.

[The Tree of Meaning, 317]

All is language

Language is a system of patterns (of signs, words, syllables, gestures, but also other things) for enabling the exchange of information. But it is also a part of the world that such exchange is concerned with. Metaphor connects different language systems, different orders of meaning. We might say that metaphor ensures that language does not become a mere code but remains a living thing. The semiotic system of language is then not a system of signs outside of the living world, but a resonant part of it.

A wolf hunting an elk will communicate his desire to mingle with the elk (in this case, to eat it) in a certain way. Through gesture, of voice, body, hormone, the wolf's actions draw on ecological information and at the same time produce ecological information. Thus the transformations of matter show us that the information itself is alive.

A low dark rain cloud communicates with a gardener. Can the gardener speak back? I suggest this is the realm of the metaphoric force.

David Abram

Only by overlooking the sensuous, evocative dimension of human discourse, and attending solely to the denotative and conventional aspect of verbal communication can we hold ourselves apart from, and outside of, the rest of animate nature.

[The Spell of the Sensuous, 79]

Gregory Bateson

Anatomy must contain an analogue of grammar because all anatomy is a transformation of message material, which must be contextually shaped. And finally, *contextual shaping* is only another term for *grammar*.

[Mind and Nature, 16]

Rules of the games

Definition is like the chalk lines on a hopscotch course. Anything is possible while hopping, both within and without the lines, but the lines allow the game itself to be played. There are games without lines, but some games require the lines. There's always a chance that the rain will wash them off.

This is a simile, not a metaphor. In teaching metaphor there is sometimes an arbitrariness suggested about the difference between the two. ("A metaphor is a simile without *like* or *as*.") In fact they serve very different functions. Metaphor is a force of semantic transformation. Simile is an opportunity for signs to be shared between meanings, a semiotic act. Definition *isn't* a hopscotch course. Semantic innovation doesn't happen when I state this. But it is *like* one, and it enhances the explanation/understanding that is possible when speaking of a new idea.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

It is true that communication presupposes a system of correspondences such as the dictionary provides, but it goes beyond these, and what gives its meaning to each word is the sentence. It is because it has been used in various contexts that the word gradually accumulates a significance which it is impossible to establish absolutely.

[Phenomenology of Perception, 452]

Orthodoxy

In so far as a word functions with this shifting force of perception and seeing-as, it is metaphorical. But it can be “housed” in non-metaphorical ways. So now we have a problem of orders of being. It relates to the levels of meaning that we are given in linguistics. A letter has a meaning, in a syllable it has another, in a word another still, in a phrase, in a book and in a memory, that letter has so many uses and functions. In a similar way, while a word on its own is always metaphorical, it can be placed into domestic situations where its meaning is no longer metaphorical.

Jan Zwicky

To say that all understanding has the character of seeing-as is not to say that all language is metaphorical. Thinking that aims at understanding is, in fact, always a form of resistance to linguistic orthodoxy. Not merely to some particular linguistic orthodoxy (though it may be that, too), but to the orthodoxy that is, for all humans, the inevitable perceptual-epistemic consequence of learning to refer.

[Wisdom and Metaphor, L46]

Light and shadow

Metaphor creates new meaning. The tension of resemblance and difference when words are used in *intentional category mistakes* allows a kind of meaning-making that is not possible with definitional utterances. This happens by placing side-by-side, as if equal, referential elements from diverse categories. The power of this equivalence is in the highlighting of some qualities of the referential signs while obscuring others. Over time, these innovations may become definitional. At this point the metaphor is said to be 'dead' but they are more than dead; they are fossilized.

From these dead metaphors we may be able to re-member ontological narratives in languages. Therein is the possibility of tracing what it has meant to become human. These dead metaphors are the places in language through which we can glimpse the wholeness of being.

Jan Zwicky

How does a metaphor die? It dies when it enters a language-game; when its components no longer belong only to two distinct language-games.... Nothing is rescued from familiarity by its gesture; we are not *struck* by a similarity of aspects. ('The eye's lid.')

[Wisdom and Metaphor, L22]

The ancestors of concepts

Understanding or interpreting a metaphor is itself an act of creativity. Instead of passively receiving information, the moment of metaphoric understanding is charged with potential. Even in the most utilitarian metaphor something of this energy is present. It is not, however, present in a dead metaphor. A dead metaphor is like a trail of crumbs left where such passions once had been. This is the work that Lakoff and Johnson are doing, following the dead metaphors and looking for the history of passion therein.

A dead metaphor eventually becomes a word. This is the history of the life of language, written in images that have mattered.

Lakoff and Johnson

Our conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of. In most of the little things we do every day, we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines. Just what these lines are is by no means obvious. One way to find out is by looking at language. Since communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting, language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like.

[Metaphors We Live By, 3]

Paul Ricoeur

The variability of semantic values, their sensitivity to contexts, the irreducibly polysemic character of lexical terms in ordinary language, these are not provisory defects or diseases which a reformulation of language could eliminate, rather they are the permanent and fruitful conditions of the functioning of ordinary language...ordinary language now appears to me, following the work of Wittgenstein and Austin, to be a kind of conservatory for expressions which have preserved the highest descriptive power as regards human experience, particularly in the realms of action and feelings.

[The Rule of Metaphor, (2010 reprint), 380]

Shapeliness

Is/is-not-ness is connected to a class of tropes called figures. Figure is another word for body. In fact there isn't in English another way to refer to this class of tropes. They create bodies, sensible images, making the subtle matter of ideas somewhat more dense, animating the symbols and code, and inspiring relationship.

Paul Ricoeur

Figure occurs only if, through the change of meaning, a tension endures, a distance, between the two sememes, of which the first remains present, even if implicitly.

[The Rule of Metaphor, 161]

The droplet finds the granite's fault

A figure is an embodiment of meaning. As the perceiving subject travels across the field of being, the figure is the meaningful entity that it perceives (by merging with it), and the ground is the informing background into which the figure is nestled. The figure is defined by the contours, features and exterior forms of the entity, which in language are often tonal or imagistic; and by the aspects of the context with which it is apparently not identical. The content of the figure and the context of the ground are in absolute contiguity, and the distinction is the province of the perceiving subject who temporarily pulls the figure from the ground with attention, by a sensory merging with that object.

Paul Ricoeur

The efficacy of dead metaphor takes on its full meaning only when one establishes the connection between the *wearing away* that affects metaphor and the ascending movement that constitutes the formation of the concept. The wearing away of metaphor is dissimulated in the 'raising' of the concept...to revive metaphor is to unmask the concept.

[The Rule of Metaphor, 285–6]

Language is gesture

All language is gesture (of the vocal chords, the stroke of a pen), and I would venture to say that all gesture is language (I tap my chest, a tree bends in the wind). Which suggests that perhaps all movement is language. That to act, or move, is to communicate with the world is to change the available information in a system. All the subtle movements of blood, organs, skin, and then in the world, of wind, currents, leaves, and even in the built world, of traffic, of construction; all of this is telling. It is language.

In great moments of teaching we bring all of this to bear. The classroom is unbound from textbooks and standardized tests, and released into the living, breathing, illimitable world (becoming a constell). In order to achieve these moments consistently the teacher must be a master of this language: the language of gesture. The constell is constantly speaking. When we tune into it, it tells us exactly what to do next.

Robert Bringhurst

Most of the words we use to talk about language -- including the word *language* itself -- seem to rest on the assumption that language comes out of the mouth.... Speech is just a special case of *gesture*: a half-hidden kind of gesture, producing an audible trace. Language begins when the mind hitches a ride on signals transmitted by the body and another mind receives (through the aid of the body, as a rule) at least some of what is sent.

[Tree of Meaning, 128]

David Abram

In the absence of writing, we find ourselves situated in the field of discourse as we are embedded in the natural landscape; indeed the two matrices are not separable.

[Spell of the Sensuous, 140]

Other

Language is a pattern connecting not only our selves with the world, but the different parts or aspects of ourselves with each other. So, there are languages that connect organs (like tastebuds and stomachs); there is also a language that connects I and i.

The movement of breath is perhaps the simplest expression and understanding of I/i that the human body experiences. We are both control it (I) and do not control it (i). It is “ours” (I), yet belongs to the world we perceive as “not-ours” (i). When we focus on breath, for instance, we begin to be aware of the relationship of I to i.

Remember that “i” is everything that is non-sensed, but that is within the realm of awareness. For instance, the perceptions that others have of us, in so far as we are aware of them, are part of “i.” So I/i allows us to include the Other, and when I and i are shifting against each other, self-concept emerges from that friction.

Paul Ricoeur

Already constituted meaning is raised from its anchorage in an initial field of reference and cast into the new referential field which it will then work to delineate. But this transfer from one referential field to the other supposes that the latter field is already in some way present in a still unarticulated manner, and that it exerts an attraction on the already constituted sense in order to tear it away from its haven.

[The Rule of Metaphor, 299]

David Abram

By affirming that the other animals have their own languages, and that even the rustling of leaves in an oak tree or an aspen grove is itself a kind of voice, oral peoples bind their senses to the shifting sounds and gestures of the local earth, and thus ensure that their own ways of speaking remain informed by the life of the land. Still, the membrane enacted by their language is felt, and is acknowledged as a margin of danger and magic, a place where the relations between the human and the more-than-human worlds must be continually negotiated.

[Spell of the Sensuous, 256]

Life

If words in an utterance shift their meanings depending on their context, which includes all words uttered and not uttered, then each utterance, or maybe each instance of discourse, has its own arrangement of the system of signs in a language.

This is how language means, then: through the particular arrangement of an entire system of signs at any given moment. That is to say, when meaning-making happens, the entire world of relationships shifts and rearranges to create that meaning. It is actually that movement that is meaning.

A word's meaning is the arrangement of the entire universe around it. Not only of the system of signs, but of all... including stars.

I. A. Richards

As the movement of my hand uses nearly the whole skeletal system of the muscles and is supported by them, so a phrase may take its powers from an immense system of supporting uses of other words in other contexts.

[Philosophy of Rhetoric, 65]

...a word is always a cooperative member of an organism, the utterance, and there cannot be properly, in ordinary free, fluid and non-technical discourse, thought to have a meaning of its own, a fixed correct usage, or even a small limited number of correct usages, unless by 'usage' we mean the whole *how* of its successful co-operations with other words, the entire range of the varied powers which, with their aid, it can exert.

[The Philosophy of Rhetoric, 69]

The heart

This points to the heart of the matter. Language is not *like* a living being. Language is life itself, a joyous, sensuous dimension of life in all its transformations, from DNA to pinecones to lightening to constellations, to poetry. Language. Alive. Unpredictable, vulnerable, aware.

Paulo Freire

There is no true word which is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world.

[Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 87]

Robert Bringhurst

It appears to me that *wild* actually means the opposite of undisciplined and crude. It means *extremely sophisticated*. It means capable of living under the most demanding conditions, with minimal tools and housing and clothing. It means self-sufficient in a high degree, and yet part of the fabric, a full working member of the ecology. Could language live up to that standard? Survive at that level? If so, what kind of language would it be? Poetry, maybe? I don't mean polite Neoclassical verse, or florid Romantic verse either, but how about poetry?

[The Tree of Meaning, 262]

Teaching Tools

A game to help six and seven years olds learn to freestyle (improvise) rhyming poetry: I pull an invisible monster out of my pocket. One at a time they add characteristics to him (a thousand hairy teeth, bad breath, overalls...). I do the last one: "He can jump into your mouth and make you talk!"

Afterwards, a boy who says he loves to freestyle, he does it all day in his room, everyone is always telling him to stop, is trailing behind me while I clean up the music room. We chat a little, then he's just looking at me.

"Would you like to take the monster home?" He is so grateful that I don't laugh. He walks away carrying the monster who waves back at me over the little boy's shoulder.

Sudden in a shaft of sunlight
Even while the dust moves
There rises the hidden laughter
Of children in the foliage
Quick now, here, now, always—
Ridiculous the waste sad time
Stretching before and after.

T. S. Eliot [Burnt Norton]

Jan Zwicky

...our frustration is born of the idea that a thing is only real if it can be *apprehended*, if we can get out linguistic *mitts* on it. This, of course, is a mistake. Fragrances are entirely real – can be sensed, known, appreciated, even thought about. It's merely the smoke and mirrors of traditional Western European metaphysics that makes us think otherwise.

[Lyric Ecology, 150]

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

...Ambiguity is of the essence of human existence, and everything we live or think always has several meanings.

[Phenomenology of Perception, 196]

Michael Polanyi

Meticulous detailing may obscure beyond recall a subject like history, literature, or philosophy. Speaking more generally, the belief that, since particulars are more tangible, their knowledge offers a true conception of things is fundamentally mistaken.

[The Tacit Dimension, 19]

Abandon

How do we recognize a metaphor, especially if we are breaking with the idea that a metaphor is always linguistic? How often do we miss the metaphor? And if we do, is it taken strictly literally?

The metaphoric force can be fleeting, like a memory or fragrance. 'I' may miss it, but 'i' is vaster and subtler and will receive even the most delicate metaphoric hints.

Simone de Beauvoir

Sensation is neither a quality nor the consciousness of a quality; it is a vital communication with the world, and intentional network [*tissu intentionnel*]... "And in order for the sensible to be sensed, it must be subtended by my gaze or by the movement of my hand. To perceive the blue sky is not a matter of positioning myself in front of it. I must abandon myself to it, so that it "thinks itself within me." At the moment I perceive it, "I am the very sky that pulls itself together, collects itself and begins to exist for itself." "... Thus perception is not a relationship between a subject and an object foreign to one another; it ties us to the world as to our homeland, it is communication and communion...

[Philosophical Writings, 162]

Twist

Metaphors come from the ability of the perceiver to make comparisons, where differences and resemblances are both taken into account. It is not the quantity of these differences and resemblances that make a metaphor, but the feeling of them. They allow us not only to see the world and refer to it, but to see it as what it is not, and use that *is-not-ness* to point to what it means to us in the ocean of being.

Jan Zwicky

Surprise is common to good metaphors and good jokes; both turn on suddenly seeing connexions between language-games that appear distant from one another. A weak metaphor can fail to make such a connexion in one of at least two ways—it can be a mere assertion of connexion between distant language-games where no or little resonance exists; or the connexion can be genuine, but the contexts so close that it is unsurprising. Seeing it requires no *leap* of imagination.

A strong metaphor pulls more into focus, or focuses more profoundly, than a shallow one.

[Wisdom and Metaphor, L45]

Gregory Bateson

1) The parts of any member of *Creatura* are to be compared with other parts of the same individual to give first-order connections.

2) Crabs are to be compared with lobsters or men with horses to find similar relations between parts (i.e., to give second-order connections.)

3) The *comparison* between crabs and lobsters is to be compared with the comparison between man and horse to provide third-order connections.

We have constructed a ladder of how to think about—about what? Oh yes, the pattern which connects.

[Mind and Nature, 10]

Shift

Metaphor allows us to approach the communication of sense (to the extent that we share enough relevant context with our hearers or readers) by shifting words or other gestures across categories and destabilizing their definitions. The metaphor allows an utterance to generate a surprising image whose interpretation requires participation and intuition from the receiver, drawing on their own sense-awareness, instead of keeping communication enclosed in a referential game. This is poetry, or intimacy.

Jorge Luis Borges

Labyrinth

There'll never be a door. You are inside
and the fortress contains the universe
and has no other side nor any back
nor any outer wall nor secret core.
Do not expect the rigor of your path,
which stubbornly splits into another one,
which stubbornly splits into another one,
to have an end. Your fate is ironclad
like your judge. Do not expect the charge
of the bull that is a man and whose strange
plural form fills the thicket of endless
interwoven stone with your own horror.
It does not exist. Expect nothing. Not
even the beast obscured by the black dusk.

[The Sonnets, 311]

Horizon

There is always an implied *is* in a metaphor, that operates very differently than the *is* in a declarative phrase. Even a gestural metaphor has an implied *is*.

This different function of *is* is not indicated by a specific grammatical feature. The prescriptive use of the copula verb 'to be' as a proof or logic-laden indicator comes from a certain tradition of rhetorical usage and is so habitual in the learning and teaching of English as to seem absolute. But the forms of 'to be' can indicate any number of fields including seeing-as; they are certainly not limited to reference. *Is-ness* can be used in a restrictive sense, especially in a classroom setting, but that is a political, cultural and economic restriction.

Swing

The music of a classroom depends on this: that there be both a linearity and a simultaneity, a fullness and an emptiness, a plan and an adventure, a knowing and not knowing. The music of an ecology gives us a glimpse of its being. All classrooms have a characteristic polyphony and a fragrance.

Paul Ricoeur

From this conjunction of fiction and redescription I conclude that the 'place' of metaphor, its most intimate and ultimate abode, is neither the name, nor the sentence, nor even discourse, but the copula of the verb *to be*. The metaphorical 'is' at once signifies both 'is not' and 'is like.' If this is really so, we are allowed to speak of metaphorical truth, but in an equally 'tensive' sense of the word 'truth.'

[The Rule of Metaphor, 7]

Jan Zwicky

Strictly speaking, "X is Y" is not a metaphorical claim unless "X is not Y" is true. In the general case, an expression is not metaphorical unless it implies—or insinuates—a claim of the form "X is Y" where "X is not Y" is true.

[Wisdom and Metaphor, L5]

The implied 'is not' in a metaphor points to a gap in the language through which we glimpse the world. That which we glimpse is what the 'is' in a metaphor points to.

[Wisdom and Metaphor, L10]

Smuggle

The referential power of language creates an illusion of completeness, which is challenged when we attend to the *not-ness* present in all forms of understanding. This incompleteness of the system of signs in a language (be it gestural, musical, oral, literary, etc.) invites metaphoric intervention. This is the *not-ness* of the system of signs itself, and it, like all *not-ness*, generates a kind of flexibility and motility of meaning. Not because of a semantic abyss or lacuna (there is no such abyss; new meanings bloom, or are birthed; there is no abyss before the flower), but because of a more subtle kind of missing-ness. This is related to the 'i's felt-sense of *not-ness*. As awareness grows through the expansion of this sense and its interaction with *is-ness*, new meanings become necessary.

Metaphors allow us to talk about glimpses of the un-language-able being to which 'i' has privileged access. These glimpses are insight. Insight is 'looking' *into* meanings and finding what was not previously 'seen.'

Once the connection in words has been made, the relationship established, both elements of the metaphor are altered. This affects the future life of the language. The similarity that has been discovered may become part of their *is-ness*, having been drawn by metaphor from *not-ness*.

Anne Carson

On Sylvia Plath

Did you see her mother on television? She said such plain, burned things. She said I thought it an excellent poem but it hurt me. She did not say jungle fear. She did not say jungle hatred wild jungle weeping chop it back chop it. She said self-government she said end of the road. She did not say humming in the middle of the air what you came for chop.

[Plainwater, 38]

Tim Lilburn

Do you think it might be that certain things are fed by hiddenness and contort into various, useless simulacra when brought into full light?

[Lyric Ecology, 148]

Nothing is not nothing

Metaphor connects meanings, in wild vectors, across categories. In this way, it is an imaginative force disturbing the domesticated meanings of a language, or system.

Metaphor does not illuminate self-evident connections between meanings. In order to be considered a metaphor, the statement must illuminate an unexpected connection between meanings.

This is a kind of freedom.

Robert Bringhurst

...What is is on loan from what isn't and is *its disguise*. There is no rock bottom. No centre, no sides, no top and no bottom. This too.

There are no literal statements.
There is no unmetaphorical language.
This too.
Emptiness also is empty.

Nothing is not nothing. Nothing *is*, and *is* is nothing. All that is is nothing, yet there is no nothing there that we can cling to.

We are also then
the nothing,
and the nothing is the hunger,

and the hunger
is the question
and the answer:
be pure wonder.

[Pieces of Map, Pieces of Music, 17]

Flow

The school is in farm country: a wooden schoolhouse and a portable classroom in the parking lot. We go into the portable. We begin our songwriting workshop; by now we have the banter on the tips of our tongues. But, they are responding differently. They're not tuning in. One girl, with long yellow braids in a floral print dress, keeps saying, "pie." Another young man interrupts us often to show us "brochures" that he's made. He loves the word "brochure" and dramatically rolls the r's every time he says it.

We begin to brainstorm the chorus. They are silent. No ideas. No interest. We ask, "what do you care about?" He says, "brrrrrochures." She says, "pie."

I say, okay, and write brochure and pie on the board. Half of them sit up. The brochure-boy asks, "are you serious? We can make our song about brrrochures?" "And pie," I say. The yellow pigtails flicker. "We can make it about brochures, but do you know what a metaphor is? How can we make it into a metaphor? A metaphor for something you care about?" They immediately tune out. We return to brochures and pie, Rup and I listening for a truth-attractor, a resonance, a hint.

Here is the chorus they write:

The world is a brochure of many things
You never know what that pie might bring
A flavour explosion to stop the commotion
Piecing it together and just say whatever!

From there they create individual verses and a performance (that included paper airplanes made out of brochures specially created for the audience) that they are excited about. It is nothing like the other schools' songs. It doesn't need to be.

An Idiosyncratic Review of the Literature

Because it is the garden. What is left to us.
Because silence is not silence without sound.
Because you have let the cat out, and then in, and then out,
and then in, and then out, and then in, and then
out, and then in, and then out, and then in,
enough.
Because otherwise their precision at the blue line would
mean nothing.
Because otherwise death would mean nothing.
Because the light says so.

Jan Zwicky (Songs for Relinquishing the Earth)

Metaphor 1: Praxis

My work over the past decade using various arts disciplines to engage young people in creativity, critical thinking and community building has brought me to almost every school in Vancouver's lower mainland, and almost every city, town, and indigenous community, in British Columbia (as well as groups and communities across Canada, the US, India, South Africa and the UK). I have encountered tens of thousands of young people, thousands of teachers and hundreds of principals. There is a crisis of alienation, frustration, boredom and apathy in many BC schools, likely linked to drug abuse, violence, self-harm and suicide.

There is a consistent and significant number of young people who hate school, who find it irrelevant, or who are spiritually and emotionally disoriented by it. It doesn't have meaning; it doesn't matter. The often posed question, "when am I ever going to use this," could be rephrased as, "what does this mean to me?"

Formal education in North America is shaped by an instrumental rationality that focuses on what *could be*: striving from what is towards more or less clearly defined ideals. The focus is on what the school *produces* rather than what it *is*. My thesis is, in part, that exposure to a phenomenological worldview quite different from the prevailing one will help teachers to understand their role as stewards of meaning and the meaning making apparatus of schooling. A rationalist foundation for teacher training does not empower teachers to access or develop the most crucial aspect of the classroom: how to enable students to be more fully engaged, not just with the subject matter of the curriculum but with each other and their environment as well.

It is my belief that this is possible across the disciplines and grades in schools, if teachers are oriented differently to the task of teaching (I am bracketing for the sake of this paper the need for proper resources in schools, for example classroom numbers, or teacher wages). It is not only a matter of teaching them how to teach, but to go back further and examine with these teachers what the nature of meaning making itself might be. New pedagogies and new methodologies may be

encouraging but, once in the classroom and under stress, the teacher will often reenact the ways that they were taught. There is a need for reflection at the most basic philosophic level on what it means to teach.

All elements of meaning interact and work together to create what we might call an ecology of the classroom. An ecology can be at various levels or stages of interactivity; it can be healthy or unhealthy; it can support the growth of particular aspects or qualities. When teachers can recognize the specific qualities of the ecology of a classroom, they are more able to make the material they teach relevant and meaningful to their students.

An ecology is a field of relationships. It is important for a teacher to continually work to more deeply perceive these relationships. The teacher develops this understanding as praxis: a meeting of theory and practice. Many great teachers achieve this sensitivity to relationship through experience and/or mentorship but I believe that systematic improvement of any teacher's capabilities is possible. When teachers examine their ideas of meaning-making they can gain greater agency in their methods and pedagogies. Without an examination of this kind, a teacher is poorly equipped to mediate meaning in the classroom.

What concerns me in this work is to suggest a viable ecology of meaning, that is, a phenomenological theory of meaning that characterizes the various agents of meaning-making as interdependent. I am especially concerned with the following elements: being, meaning, subjectivity, language, and metaphor.

In this literature review, I draw attention to connections and disconnections between the various sources I used to grasp this notion of an ecology of meaning, the place of metaphor in it, and the relevance of this study to the practice of training teachers. This is not a comprehensive review of the literature concerning metaphor, but a review of the particular books and authors that I used to elucidate my idea that metaphor is a constitutive element of an ecology of meaning, and that a healthy ecology of meaning is a useful way to imagine a classroom.

The question of whether or not meaning is made by metaphor was carefully looked into by Max Black and Donald Davidson among many others, particularly in

the 1970's. In this piece I have bracketed this question of *whether* metaphor makes meaning in favour of the question *what kind* of meaning is made and how that is related to communication and relationships in the classroom. Sheldon Sacks' collection of papers from the symposium *Metaphor: The Conceptual Leap* at the University of Chicago in 1978 neatly, if not conclusively, covers the question of whether or not metaphors make meaning from various perspectives.

I combine a study of the meaning making capacity of metaphor and the premises of phenomenology to conclude that there is a metaphoric force which is constitutive of all meaning making. It is more fundamental than propositional thinking; it is a key constitutive element in the sense of self as well as our understanding of the world. Meaning making would be impossible without metaphor.

I have not used much strictly educational research in this paper, as the connections drawn in the paper between philosophy of mind/language and "the classroom" are based on my own history of loosely documented "action research" in the fields of arts empowerment facilitation and transformative education. The principles therein include the notions that everyone has a valid desire to be seen and heard, that everyone is creative, that we learn from nature and from people different than ourselves, and that creative risk-taking helps build life skills and communication skills. I wanted to study metaphor as a means of understanding why these premises and practices are so effective in supporting personal and systemic change.

In order to contain these ideas under a specific theory, I have chosen Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which describes education as a practice of freedom. Freire studied philosophy of language, in particular phenomenology, in the 1940's when he was in law school.

There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis.
Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world (Freire 1970, 87).

Often, educators and politicians speak and are not understood

because their language is not attuned to the concrete situation of the people they address. Accordingly, their talk is just alienated and alienating rhetoric. The language of the educator or the politician (and it seems the latter must also become an educator, in the broadest sense of the word), like the language of the people, cannot exist without thought; and neither language nor thought can exist without a structure to which they refer. In order to communicate effectively, educator and politician must understand the structural conditions in which the thought and language of the people are dialectically framed (Freire 1970, 96).

When people lack a critical understanding of their reality, apprehending it in fragments which they do not perceive as interacting constituent elements of the whole, they cannot truly know that reality (Freire 1970, 104).

Through his own personal struggle, Freire realized at a young age that there was a culture of silence that kept people lethargic and disengaged under oppressive conditions, and that schools were a part of creating this culture of silence. The praxis of the pedagogy of the oppressed challenges this silence. The philosophy of education that Freire expressed in his doctoral work was so threatening to the prevailing government forces in Brazil that he was jailed and then exiled for them.

Freire developed his method through teaching literacy. He taught people to read and write what mattered to them. A famous story relates his difficulty teaching a group of landless farmworkers to read using a textbook which taught words like “airplane” and “refrigerator.” When he took them to the city to read the title deeds to the land they were working on, however, he engaged them in the project of their own learning much more easily. This is what I think of as a “metaphoric force.” By engaging in what is relevant through an understanding of beliefs and worldviews, Freire teaches, people come to a new awareness of themselves as subjects, and as active agents of their own futures. This is vital today as we see the old institutions of politics, education, and economics become stale and inefficient in light of new modes of communication. Students must be taught flexibility and creativity as well as facts and frameworks if they are to be set up to succeed in an increasingly

unpredictable world. I believe this creativity and flexibility can be achieved through attention (both intuitive and analytical) to the ecology of meaning.

Freire is calling for a critical consciousness of political oppressions and the possibilities of transformation. While this paper will not focus on his methods, it is important to open with his work as an example of what is possible when the process of meaning-making becomes a focus of concern for educators. Part of my own project is to refocus the idea of subjectivity in a classroom setting through the lens of the metaphoric force. By coming to understand this force more intimately, teachers can be empowered to see more possibilities for the transformation of meaning.

Metaphor 2: Framework

Phenomenology offers a way of imagining the being of a classroom; a different way to approach “what matters” in a classroom. This has a profound effect on the teacher’s understanding of language, communication, and meaning. Aristotle believed that the mastery of metaphor could not be taught and, in the framework of instrumental rationality, he is right. The mastery of metaphor cannot be taught in a goal or ends-oriented manner. Metaphor, in an ecology, is not an object of study, but rather a constitutive element of meaning making itself.

Aristotle’s assertion [was] that “the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars” (Ricoeur 1977, vii).

The original inspiration for this thesis came from my reading of Chapter 7 of Lev Vygotsky’s *Thought and Speech*, which is written in a dialectical materialist framework. This may be due to his early interest in structuralism, and/or the Marxist environment in which he was working. Dialectical materialism is a vast improvement on instrumental rationality because it accounts for the importance of

culture and environment in the process of education. Vygotsky's writing was influential in my understanding of meaning making through mediation, but the materialist approach eventually was not robust enough as I became aware that nature and culture are not in a dialectical relationship but rather interdependent aspects of an ecology of meaning. The separation of nature and culture ultimately separates the body from language which, as I shall soon explain, does not work with my current understanding of meaning making.

Therefore, while the body of this work does not refer to Vygotsky's chapter other than in passing, it is important to mention it in this review in order to a) explain *why* a phenomenological framework is more useful than a dialectical one b) illuminate the question of word meaning in order to make the leap toward a phenomenological theory of metaphor and c) acknowledge Vygotsky's influence on this project.

Vygotsky calls his theory of teaching and communication "cultural-historical mediation." The idea is that children's experiences of the world are mediated by cultural-historical tools afforded by the adults around them. This means that the teacher must have expertise in both the subject matter and the cognitive tools available in the culture. In learning about schools where Vygotsky's methods were practiced, I was impressed by his success teaching deaf/mute children to "see" the world and even play music. His methods were based on specific practices of mediation, methods by which teachers translated meanings by both using and transmitting the cognitive tools (as opposed to information) of their culture. There was something very compelling to me in these success stories of teaching language and meaning making that went far beyond traditional literacy or alphabet learning. There was a connection to the sensory world that the child experienced in seeing through someone's finger-spelling; an organization of chaos; a light in darkness. This, I realized, is seeing-as, the particular kind of meaning that metaphor makes. Metaphor mediates the patterns and metapatterns between gestalts.

Like Freire, Vygotsky focused on mediation as the key to good education. Vygotsky was most interested in how to teach more effectively. Literacy, again, was

the primary mode of empowerment. Later in this review we will see that literacy can be much more broadly defined than simple access to written or spoken human language, as important as that is. Vygotsky's work achieved praxis on the level that Freire's did, although in a different realm; they were both creating transformative learning spaces. He died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-seven having made an enormous impact on educational philosophy, philosophy of art, psychology and semantics.

Gregory Bateson's book *Mind and Nature* is the other major work I have drawn on despite being based on a significantly different philosophical framework. Bateson was instrumental in the development of systems theory, which, while it uses the term "ecology" (in the way that word was taken up by systems theorists and used to describe how nature is like a cybernetic system), is not phenomenological and therefore must be used with caution. Some writers say that systems theory is based on Husserl's original work in phenomenology, but this does not mean that Bateson's work itself is phenomenological.

With regard to death, the possibility for death follows first from criterion 1, that the entity be made of multiple parts. In death, these parts are disassembled or randomized. But it arises also from criterion 4. Death is the breaking up of the circuits and, with that, the destruction of autonomy (Bateson 2002, 118).

Bateson's writing is valuable for me in the way it offers insight into the patterns that connect meanings, and the relationships between those patterns. Bateson's work, when connected with Edward Reed's on eco-psychology and I. A. Richards' on word meaning (both to be described below), articulates the place and activities of "mind" in nature. I have found this very useful in thinking about "mind" in the classroom.

The pattern which connects is a metapattern. It is a pattern of patterns. It is that metapattern which defines the vast generalization that, indeed, *it is patterns which connect* (Bateson 2002, 10).

This idea of patterns and metapatterns connects to Zwicky's idea of resonance and Bringhurst's idea of polyphony, as well as that of Lakoff and Johnson's mapping of the conceptual metaphors that give language its shape. Rather than a Saussurian structuralism, this recognition of patterns is a recognition of with-ness or the similarity in dissimilars. These begin to shed light on the semantic innovation that Ricoeur says metaphor makes possible.

Without context, words and actions have no meaning at all. This is true not only of human communication in words but also of all communication whatsoever, of all mental processes, of all mind, including that which tells the sea anemone how to grow and the amoeba what he should do next (Bateson 2002, 14).

This connects directly to how I. A. Richards talks about word meaning being completely dependent on context, to how Ricoeur makes discourse the site of his tensive theory of metaphor, and to how Abram (like Reed) talks about the mind as not being "in the head" but in the world. All of these rely on the environment of the utterance to give it its meaning.

Anatomy must contain an analogue of grammar because all anatomy is a transformation of message material, which must be contextually shaped. And finally, *contextual shaping* is only another term for *grammar* (Bateson 2002, 16).

If Abram and Bringhurst (and Merleau-Ponty) are right and language is inherent in all of life, then the question of what grammar is and how language operates syntactically must be accounted for in an ecology of meaning. The "is" (implicit or explicit) in a metaphor has a grammatical role but no grammatical marker, so using Bateson's idea of contextual shaping helps to understand how metaphor might be working ecologically in relationship to seemingly stable meaning rather than being a subset or special kind of meaning. Meanings are stabilized by their grammatical roles. But the interesting "is" in a metaphor defies those roles.

The other writers that are referenced in this paper are, to a greater or lesser degree, associated with phenomenology. Having dealt with the issue of theoretical frameworks, the rest of this review will concentrate on the connections and disconnections between all these writers and their projects, and how those connections and patterns can help a teacher work with the ecology of meaning in their classroom.

Metaphor 3: Figure

Vygotsky believed that word meanings *develop* in a living process he called verbal thought. For him, word meaning is the essential unit of verbal thought. The idea that word meanings are developing and flexible distinguishes him from the structural linguists, but he maintains that the development happens “in” the mind, which in turn distinguishes him from phenomenologists. He also maintains that thought is dependent on the development of word meaning. My current research has led me to believe, however, that thought is not all verbal but embodied in many different ways, and that its essential constituent is the metaphoric force or, as Bateson calls it, the patterns which connect.

What was missing from Vygotsky’s theory was a fluidity, an organic-ness, and a wholeness—a point that dawned on me as I delved further into study of the imagination, its potential and power. His account of the development of word meaning was still linear, moving through levels of complexity and flexibility. My inquiries convinced me that word meanings can develop and change in a more idiosyncratic way, depending on the flexibility of their contexts. Vygotsky’s blind-deaf child is not accessing the world through the words *represented* by the fingers spelling, but by the skin-on-skin sensation of the moving fingers themselves. The world is there, in its wholeness, and the access to it is through perception, through contact; the meaning is in the hand itself. This is why Freire tells us a true word is a praxis.

For Vygotsky, the “pivot,” the point in imaginative play when a child begins to be able to disconnect an object’s being from its meaning (i.e., this broom is a horse), is where imagination begins. For him, this happens once a certain level of verbal thought is achieved. I am not as interested in, and indeed disagree with, the notion of a stage of child development when we can notice this “pivoting” of meaning, which can also be called seeing-as. With Lakoff and Johnson I would say instead that this pivoting is more fundamental to the ontology of the child; that it does not develop later in life, but from the moment of birth if not before. The pivot itself, the ability for something to *be* and *not be* something else, is the very force that I wish to examine. Vygotsky, while he frames it in a materialist dialectic, is correct in identifying it as a constitutive element of meaning-making. This ability for meanings to connect and transform according to patterns and metapatterns is the heart of communication.

As I read David Abram’s *The Spell of the Sensuous*, in particular his description of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the Flesh, I realized how significant the shift from dialectical materialism to phenomenology would be in a theory of meaning in the classroom. Such a shift might make school classrooms relevant again in a world where the child has access to more information on almost any subject than a teacher (or curriculum) could deliver. At the same time the child is further and further disconnected from the sensory world and its inherent meaningfulness. What is needed is a pedagogy that attends, in an ecologically informed way, to the direct experience of being in the classroom. While Vygotsky’s dialectical materialist approach to mediation altered the role of the teacher in the classroom, phenomenology offers a reimagining of the *being* of the classroom as a whole.

By “the Flesh” Merleau-Ponty means to indicate an elemental power that has had no name in the entire history of Western philosophy. The Flesh is the mysterious tissue or matrix that underlies and gives rise to both the perceiver and the perceived as interdependent aspects of its own spontaneous activity. It is the reciprocal presence of the sentient in the sensible and the sensible in the sentient, a mystery of which we have always, at least tacitly, been aware, since we have never been able to

affirm one of these phenomena, the perceivable world or the perceiving self, without implicitly affirming the existence of the other (Abram 1996, 66).

My own understanding of our educational crisis is echoed in Abram's description of the current global environmental crisis. In response, he calls for the recentralization of direct experience; I believe this can help alleviate the educational crisis as well. Both projects seek to engender relevance and meaningfulness through renewed intimacy with life in all its diversity and immediacy:

The medicine person's primary allegiance, then, is not to the human community, but to the earthly web of relations in which that community is embedded (Abram 1996, 8).

Abram is talking about shamans and healers, but I think this statement suits teachers as well. The teacher mediates between the world of second-hand information and the embodied subject of the child. Abrams says that the natural world is where mind is located, and that the built human environment is not responsive in the same way. I agree, to a certain extent but I also want to give to the teacher the opportunity to experience even the built world of the Western city with a paradoxical logic; that is, the metaphoric force. To recognize that things are and are not what they seem is a survival skill for a child awash in a world of media and advertising. Even the built world has a wildness, a mind of its own, a responsiveness, a livingness of which the classroom is a part and to which it can respond.

Abram makes clear that there is no "other" world or ideal world. In this, he is a quintessential phenomenologist. This is a transformative idea in a classroom. There is no ideal child, ideal behaviour, ideal ambition, ideal test paper. There is no standard "out there" or "internal" attitude or aptitude. There is only the being of the world, and the worlds and worlds within it. This is the gift of phenomenology to educational philosophy.

Abram's book invites the reader into his personal stories. His deep love and trust of the natural world, the generative earth, is on every page. His encounter with

the debilitating tick-borne illness known as Lyme disease forces us to acknowledge that the world that perceives us as we perceive it is not a gentle world. It is wild, as Bringham says. Raw and unpredictable. But Lyme disease itself is indicative of one of Abram's (and phenomenology's) most poignant points: that there is no world "out there." Our boundaries, including the skin, are not only porous but fundamentally interconnected with the world.

Metaphor 4: Ecology

Maurice Merleau-Ponty was a French phenomenologist directly influenced by Husserl and Heidegger. He was a contemporary and friend of Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Simone Weil. At the heart of his work is the idea that the body (rather than the mind, or "consciousness") is the primary organ of meaning making, and that it cannot be disentangled from the world around it. The perceived and the perceiver are in an interdependent relationship with each other.

Merleau-Ponty's book *Phenomenology of Perception* (2010) helped me to move from the distinction between the known and the unknown to that of the partiality of view. This was the beginning of both my understanding of meaning as is/is-not-ness and subjectivity as I/i.

As I began to accept that "My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my 'symbolic' or 'objectifying' function." (Merleau-Ponty 2010, 162) I then had to ask, how does language operate in this context? While Merleau-Ponty does engage the question of language, I found more usable answers came from Abram,

These letters I print across the page, the scratches and scrawls you now focus upon, trailing off across the white surface, are hardly different from the footprints of prey left in the snow. We read these traces with organs honed over millennia by our tribal ancestors, moving instinctively from one track to the next, picking up the trail afresh whenever it leaves off, hunting the *meaning*, which would be the *meeting* with the Other (Abram 1996, 96).

as well as from Bringham, Ricoeur, Zwicky and especially Richards.

Most of the words we use to talk about language—including the word *language* itself—seem to rest on the assumption that language comes out of the mouth.... Speech is just a special case of *gesture*: a half-hidden kind of gesture, producing an audible trace. Language begins when the mind hitches a ride on signals transmitted by the body and another mind receives (through the aid of the body, as a rule) at least some of what is sent (Bringham 2008, 128).

While Bringham and Abram give a clear account of where *else* language is found in the world, it is I. A. Richards who gives the clearest account of how human verbal language operates phenomenologically. Abram, Zwicky and Ricoeur extensively quote I. A. Richards' book *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Richards is a literary theorist and rhetorician. In this book (which is a transcription of his Mary Flexner Lectures at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania in 1936) he makes the case that rhetoric is a study of misunderstanding and its remedies (Richards 1936, 9).

A word is always a cooperative member of an organism, the utterance, and therefore cannot be properly—in ordinary, free, fluid and non-technical discourse—be thought to have a meaning of its own, a fixed correct usage, or even a small number of limited usages, unless by 'usage' we mean the whole *how* of its successful cooperations with other words, the entire range of the varied powers which, with their aid, it can exert (Richards 1936, 60).

What a word means is the missing parts of the contexts from which it draws its delegated efficiency (Richards 1936, 35).

...the meaning we find for a word comes to it only with respect to the meanings of other words we take with it...I extend this view to include not only the other words uttered with it, but also *unuttered* words in various relations to it which may be backing it up though we never think of them (Richards 1936, 70).

As the movement of my hand uses nearly the whole skeletal system of the muscles and is supported by them, so a phrase

may take its powers from an immense system of supporting uses of other words in other contexts (Richards 1936, 65).

Richard's small book inspired me to understand not only (with Abram and Bringhurst) that language belongs to the world but it is also true that language itself is a living being.

A chief cause of misunderstanding, I shall argue later, is the Proper Meaning Superstition. That is, the common belief—encouraged officially by what lingers on in the school manuals as Rhetoric—that a word has a meaning of its own (ideally only one) independent of and controlling its use and the purpose for which it should be uttered. This superstition is a recognition of a certain kind of stability in the meanings of certain words. It is only a superstition when it forgets (as it commonly does) that the stability of the meaning of a word comes from the constancy of the contexts which give it meaning (Richards 1936, 11).

If we take this idea into the classroom we realize that the context of the classroom shapes its meaning. Meaning is both the shaping of the context by the language and the shaping of the language by the context. All five elements of an ecology of meaning (being, meaning, subject, language and metaphor) are part of this process. This returns us to Merleau-Ponty's entanglement of perceiver and perceived, with language and the being of the classroom as the interdependent subjects.

Richards and Vygotsky are not far from each other in their technical understanding of how word meaning works. But Vygotsky's framework relies on culture to shape nature, and Richards' phenomenology suggests that word meanings grow of their own accord as they move from context to context (in other words, that language operates as both nature and culture).

This may be the fundamental difference, that words for Richards, Zwicky, Abram and Bringhurst have their own life, their own beingness and are not very different from other ways of being. For Vygotsky, word meaning is tied to preexisting meanings in the cultural historical context, and the child learns the "right" meanings from his surroundings. As I understood this distinction I began to

move away from Vygotskian mediation to the beginnings of an understanding of another kind of mediation that is not “in” the teacher or the culture, but that is “becoming” or emerging from the whole ecology of the classroom.

We shall do better to think of a meaning as though it were a plant that has grown—not a can that has been filled or a lump of clay that has been moulded (Richards 1936, 12).

Are not words parts and germinations of the plant? And what is the law of their growth? In something of this sort, I would endeavor to destroy the old antithesis of words and things: elevating, as it were, Words into Things, and living things, too (Richards quoting Coleridge 1936, 131).

How does language operate if there is no such thing as a proper meaning? One answer can come from Edward Reed’s work. Reed talks about environmental affordances, and I suggest that this idea works wonderfully to talk about how metaphor works in a classroom.

The idea of affordances comes from Edward Reed’s eco-psychology in *Encountering the World* (he himself building on the breakthrough ideas of James Gibson). Reed is not technically a phenomenologist, but rather an ecological materialist but I did not have trouble reconciling his framework with the phenomenology of later writers like Bringham and Abram. Reed’s ecology is different than Bateson’s; all elements of the ecological system are considered to have various kinds of co-existence and are not ultimately divisible into component parts. Reed’s work is very useful in understanding *how* the mind can work if we eschew notions of “inside” and “outside” the body, reject the idea that “mind” is an image-producing organ inside the human head and embrace the idea after Bringham and Abram that mind exists in all of nature.

The heart of ecological psychology is a functional account of [an animal’s] encounterings [with their surrounding]: animals seek out *affordances* of the environment, doing so by means of available *information* (Reed 1996, 184).

The surface of a pond is perceived as a surface of support by

many insects, but not by the frogs which eat them—and this surface is indeed both a surface of support and not. The environment is so rich that, like Walt Whitman, it contains multitudes and contradictions. One reason for this is that perceiving an affordance is perceiving a relation of my self to the environment.... *The basic objects of knowledge, affordances, are thus unlike simple objects or logical entities, and apparently do not conform to the constraints of logic and set theory.... For example, it is almost universally assumed that objects of knowledge cannot be mutually contradictory, but this is not the case with ecological observation* (Reed 1992, 19).

Reed, like Abram, nestles the mind in the environment; it is the relationship between the animal and its environment that is “thinking.” Thinking is not a model or mock-up of the world that is translated into some kind of code and then instructs the body to act. It is the action of the body that *is* thought, and from that perception emerges. Perception is not interpreted internally. He disturbs the inside/outside dichotomy, and this is very useful when I want to talk about why metaphor is a universal force, not solely a literary trope or conceptual map. The habitat itself is meaningful; meaning does not need to be made of it. There is a reciprocity in the environment; a web of relationships. Language is a part of this reciprocity, not separate from it, not necessarily only naming it, but emerging from it and utterly interpenetrating it. Language is not something that is used to transmit ideas... it is not a medium. It is instead something that makes information available...it is an affordance. Then language, also, is part of the ecology, not a separate code that merely names the world.

Reed makes a distinction between fragmentary thinking about psychology, with the mind treated as existing autonomously, and holistic or ecological thinking. He puts the body of the animal as it feels, chooses, and communicates right at the heart of meaning-making.

So now we have a world perceiving the perceived, and vice versa. The classroom itself is “mind.” *How* does this happen? Abram opens his book, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, with personal stories of the context-dependent flexibility of meaning and its connection to magic, spirituality and the body.

Only by temporarily shedding the accepted perceptual logic of his culture can the sorcerer hope to enter into relation with other species on their own terms: only by altering the common organization of his senses will he be able to enter into a rapport with the multiple non human sensibilities that animate the local landscape. It is this, we might say, that defines a shaman: the ability to readily slip out of the perceptual boundaries that demarcate his or her particular culture—boundaries reinforced by social customs, taboos, and most importantly, the common speech or language—in order to make contact with, and learn from, the other powers in his land (Abram 1996, 9).

Letters, like words, are things—but letters, like words, and like language itself, are also metaphors, and metaphors, I think, stand in much the same relation to the mind as proteins and amino acids to the body...The original book is, of course, the world itself (Bringham 2008, 132).

Once I saw that language has its own being I wanted to know how that being lived. I knew I had come very far away from Vygotsky's development of word meaning. Reading Ricoeur's *Rule of Metaphor* I understood that it was metaphor that allowed language to grow and develop. That metaphor, by allowing meaning extreme flexibility across categories and contexts, was the site of the growth and development of linguistic meaning.

I read Lakoff and Johnson's work, *Metaphors We Live By*, very early in this course of study, but it was only after reading Merleau-Ponty and Reed that I understood some of its more profound implications. At first I thought it was a necrotic analysis, picking through language to find the history of meanings. But once I understood phenomenology I saw the vitality of this analysis in an ecology of meaning. Rather than looking (as Zwicky and Ricoeur do) at the living/creative metaphor, they are looking at the ontological significance of the "dead" metaphor.

Our conceptual system is not something we are usually aware of. In most of the little things we do everyday we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines. Just what these lines are is by no means obvious. One way to find out is by looking at language. Since communication is based on the same conceptual system we use in thinking and acting, language is an

important source of evidence for what that system is like (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 454).

Lakoff and Johnson imagine language as if it were a landscape and uncover its history by the way the metaphors are formed in it. This makes clear that the figurativity of language is really, as the term suggests, an embodiment. In fact, there is no other term. The only grammatical clue we get for a metaphor is that it is a “figure” of speech, itself a conceptual metaphor.

We have found that metaphors allow us to understand one domain of experience in terms of another. This suggests that understanding takes place in terms of entire domains of experience and not in terms of isolated concepts (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 117).

Set-theoretical categorization is not a sufficiently flexible way for a human to comprehend the world (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 122).

Ontological metaphors are necessary for even attempting to deal rationally with our experiences (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 26).

Lakoff and Johnson’s project is to rescue metaphor from its limited status as a rhetorical trope. They want to prove that metaphor is metaphysically relevant and that an understanding of conceptual metaphor will shed new light on ancient philosophical conundrums, like the nature of meaning, truth and aesthetics, as well as offering new insight into stagnant political issues of identity, nationality and othering. I suggest it also offers new answers to stagnant conundrums in the field of education, as well.

Metaphor 5: Meaning

Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish—a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words

rather than thought or action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 453–4).

Paul Ricoeur began his study of phenomenology in a German detention camp during World War Two where he was detained with various French intellectuals including Mikel Dufrenne. Their study group in the detention centre was sufficiently rigorous that the camp became a degree granting institution. It was here that Ricoeur began to translate one of Husserl's early works in phenomenology. Ricoeur's writing begins as existential phenomenology, like Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's, but develops into what he calls hermeneutic phenomenology which brings into account the operations of signs and symbols. This was important to me when I began to desire to turn my study of meaning and metaphor back to my work the classroom. It was once I read (and re-read, the book is very dense) *The Rule of Metaphor* that I began to see the connection to Freire and my own field work.

I was uniquely thrilled by *The Rule of Metaphor*. Where Lakoff and Johnson focus their work on the way that metaphor is embedded in our perceptions phenomenologically, Ricoeur looks more closely at the way that metaphor allows for semantic innovation. This is a vital question for the teacher in a classroom: it suggests that metaphor is the most effective mechanism for teaching and eliciting new meanings. He does this by examining the role of metaphor in various orders of being: first, the level of the word (as a substitution of signs, a semiotic reading), second at the level of the sentence (as a category shift, a semantic reading) and third at the level of discourse (as an emergence of meaning, a hermeneutic reading). Finally, he situates the essence of metaphor in the copula of the verb 'to be.' The result of Ricoeur's retrieval of metaphor from the linguistic structuralists who focus solely on the semiotic aspects of word meaning and looking at it again as if it were *both* semantic and semiotic at different levels

Polyphony, in short, is singing more than one song, playing more than one tune, telling more than one story, at once (Bringhurst 2008, 33).

is that we realize that it is not only a substitution of stable meanings (in his eight studies Ricoeur paints a minutely detailed picture of the history of thought about metaphor, from the French, British and Americans schools of thought, and going back to Heraclitus and Aristotle) but a tensive interaction theory of metaphor whereby semantic innovation is possible. That is to say, Ricoeur offers a theory of meaning where metaphor is central to the production of new meaning through the tension created by category shifts when metaphor is used in actual discourse. Ricoeur's division and re-assembly of the sites of metaphORIZATIONS: the word, the sentence, and discourse itself, is vital for anchoring my current paper in a reasonable yet radical recognition of the place of metaphor in meaning-making (in particular the question which haunted me from the very first, where does meaning come *from*).

It could be said that everyday reference to the real must be abolished in order that another sort of reference to other dimensions of reality might be liberated. This, when the time comes, will be my thesis (Ricoeur, 145).

[Metaphor's] power to refer to a reality outside of language preserves and develops the heuristic power wielded by fiction (Ricoeur 1977, 6).

Robert Bringhurst is a Canadian poet, anthropologist and typographer. Both his books, *The Tree of Meaning* and *Everywhere Being is Dancing*, give insight into what language is and the way meaning is made from a phenomenological point of view. Although I have mentioned him extensively above, and encountered his work quite early in this study, I mention him explicitly here because of what how he influenced my reading of Ricoeur. Bringhurst's theory of meaning is very close to Ricoeur's but his execution of it is vastly different. His work, in particular the book of lectures *The Tree of Meaning*, begins to do what I hoped most to do with this work, to both describe and to *be* an ecology of meaning. Ricoeur's brilliant book still reads like a rationalist text, though it's meanings are by no means so. Bringhurst,

instead, brings his books to life with experiments in oracularity, typography and poetry.

Language is an organism. A weightless, discontinuous organism that lives in the minds and bodies of those who speak it—or from the language's point of view, in the bodies and minds of those *through whom it is able to speak* (Bringhurst 2008, 163).

...human language is no more unnatural than antlers, hair, or teeth, and that phenomena we encounter in the languages we speak—phenomena with names such as grammar and syntax—may have roots that run much deeper than most of us have looked.

If elemental biological mechanisms really are linguistic, then there are languages in which we are spoken as well as languages we speak (Bringhurst 2008, 317).

My hypothesis is this: stories are the reproductive organs of languages (Bringhurst 2008, 246).

The most important idea that Bringhurst offers to my project is that of polyphony. In these two books he examines it from numerous points of view: musical, linguistic, cultural, metaphorical, poetic, typographical, visual and more. It is important because it is another way of thinking into the concept of tension that Ricoeur offers. We can now see this is/is-not-ness as a whole. The way that polyphonic music allows different voices into the same space/time, metaphor allows different meanings to occupy the same space time, and in doing so to become generative.

Bringhurst made another offering to my project: he inspired Jan Zwicky's innovation in form, called *lyric philosophy*, which I have attempted to imitate in the body of this paper.

There is no metaphor without two creative subjects, one on either side of the metaphor: making and receiving. This, Ted Cohen suggests, is a question of intimacy.

I want to suggest a point in metaphor which is independent of

the question of its cognitivity and which has nothing to do with its aesthetical character. I think of this point as the achievement of intimacy. There is a unique way in which the maker and the appreciator of a metaphor are drawn closer to one another. Three aspects are involved: (1) the speaker issues a kind of concealed invitation; (2) the hearer expends a special effort to accept the invitation; and (3) this transaction constitutes the acknowledgement of a community (in Sacks 1978, 6).

But *what* is making this invitation, and what accepts it? One of the affordances of a phenomenological theory of metaphor is that we can look closely at the metaphor of self. In phenomenology there is a certain “I”, and Merleau-Ponty refers to it as inter-subjective. In her review of Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*, Simone de Beauvoir writes:

Our body is not first posited in the world the way a tree or a rock is. It lives in the world; it is our general way of having a world. It expresses our existence, which signifies not that it is an exterior accompaniment of our existence, but that our existence realizes itself in it (de Beauvoir 2004, 161).

Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*, though an inspiring and engulfing description of subjectivity, lacked the clarity I sought.

The world, in the full sense of the word, is not an object, for though it has an envelope of objective and determinate attributes; it also has fissures and gaps into which subjectivities slip and lodge themselves, or rather which are those subjectivities themselves. We now know why things, which owe their meaning to it, are not meanings presented to the intelligence, but opaque structures, and why their ultimate significance remains confused (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 389).

A clearer phenomenological reading of subjectivity came from Michael Polanyi, who was a chemist, an economist and a philosopher. (Many of the philosophers I’ve cited in this paper had this particular trait of working across disciplines, which fact, while I have not focused on it, is I think another order of the same metaphoric force and possibly linked to having a phenomenological world view.) Polanyi writes that

all knowledge has a vast personal dimension, and that to ignore it is to ignore the actual apparatus of meaning making.

Polanyi argues gracefully against objectivism and reductionism in his book, *The Tacit Dimension*. He uses the word “tacit” to describe knowledge that is not explicit.

Our own body is the only thing in the world which we normally never experience as an object, but experience always in terms of the world to which we are attending from our body. It is by making this intelligent use of our body that we feel it to be our body, and not a thing outside (Polanyi 2009, 16).

In this sense we can say that when we make a thing function as the proximal term of tacit knowing, we incorporate it in our body—or extend our body to include it—so that we come to dwell in it (Polanyi 2009, 16).

It might be said that this tacit dimension is the one that metaphor attempts to access, and in which patterns and metapatterns are recognized. Jan Zwicky calls this the ineffable. It’s also likely that the interpretation of a metaphor requires access to this tacit dimension, and that this is what Ted Cohen means by intimacy. That is, the metaphor requires the listener/reader to intuitively grasp resonances from the speaker/writer of the metaphor.

Zwicky’s central preoccupations were apparent as early as *A Theory of Ineffability*, her 1981 doctoral thesis. There she began from the assertion by many mystics that their experience is profoundly meaningful, but can’t be expressed in words (Lee 2010, 19).

If we return now to Abram, or to Bringhurst, we can make the point that this kind of tacit knowledge of “the other” is more fundamental than explicit meaning when interpreting or creating a metaphor. The ecology of meaning depends more on this kind of knowledge for its health and wellbeing.

I would rather say poetry is one among the many forms of knowing, and maybe it is knowing in the purest form we know.

I would rather say that knowing freed from the agenda of possession and control—knowing in the sense of stepping in tune with being—is what we mean by poetry (Bringhurst 2008, 15).

This tacit knowledge, I would say (and in saying would align myself with Abram and Bringhurst as well as Polanyi and Reed), is shared with the whole planet, and that the planet communicates primarily in this way.

To define another being as an inert or passive object is to deny its ability to actively engage us and provoke our senses; *we thus block our perceptual reciprocity with that being*. By linguistically defining the surrounding world as a determinate set of objects, we cut our conscious, speaking selves off from the spontaneous life of our sensing bodies...only by affirming the animateness of perceived things do we allow our words to emerge directly from the depths of our ongoing reciprocity with the world (Abram 1996, 56).

This passivity and blocking was exactly what Freire and Vygotsky worked to overcome in their educational practices. The reanimation of the classroom comes from the acceptance of this tacit dimension; the communication of this is possible by means of metaphor, and the metaphoric force.

The question is begged: how can teachers work best with this tacit dimension? We can look to the methods of Vygotsky and Freire, of course, but I suspect the answer is more broad. By becoming aware of ontological/conceptual metaphors (following Lakoff and Johnson) as well as embracing semantically innovative metaphors (following Zwicky and Ricoeur) teachers can learn to work with an intuitive sense, one that is very focused and specific, not only with the student but with the curricular material as well. They do this by becoming sensitized to and valuing the tacit dimension/the ineffable/the ecology of meaning/the metaphoric force.

Polanyi says that thoughts have “intrinsic powers” and that they can help a knower to know the end of his investigation at the beginning. This suggests an entirely different way of inquiring and teaching. One where hunches, guesses and

hints are not sublimated but encouraged, a way of allowing the world to think through us.

Any tradition fostering the progress of thought must have this intention: to teach its current ideas as stages leading on to unknown truths which, when discovered, might dissent from the very teachings which engendered them. Such a tradition assures the independence of its followers by transmitting the conviction that thought has intrinsic powers, to be evoked in men's minds by intimations of hidden truths (Polanyi 2009, 82).

Metaphor 6: Subjectivity

With Polanyi the idea of “dwelling in” in order to know arises. So we must look at least briefly at Heidegger, with whom the idea of “dwelling” in phenomenology originates (though the term itself he takes from the poet Hölderlin). I limited my use of Heidegger to his book *Poetry Language Thought* (1971) to be able to think more into this idea of dwelling, as it is also connected to what Zwicky, and Abram are doing in their projects.

The Greeks called the unconcealedness of beings *aletheia*. We say ‘truth’ and think little enough in using this word. If there occurs in the work a disclosure of a particular being, disclosing what and how it is, then there is here an occurring, a happening of truth at work (Heidegger 1971, 36).

The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth is *Buan*, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell (Heidegger 1971, 147).

It's important to the bigger picture in this work, too; a way that I ask the teacher to know their students, as well as their subject. To dwell is the opposite of to observe. It is a different way of being, of perceiving resonances. Polanyi is promoting a kind of soft-focus knowing that is opposed to the scrutiny of some teaching practices. A being-with or dwelling-in.

...it is not by looking at things, but by dwelling in them, that we understand their joint meaning. We can now see how an unbridled lucidity can destroy our understanding of complex matters. Scrutinize closely the particulars of a comprehensive entity and their meaning is effaced, our conception of the entity is destroyed (Polanyi 2009, 18).

Polanyi suggests that even the “hard” sciences suffer from this kind of scrutiny and dependence on explicit formal knowledge. For Polanyi indwelling is more precise than empathy, and underlies all observations. This is important, to take the activity of empathy and re-apply it so it doesn’t only refer to human emotion; this is what I want to do with metaphor. And when empathy is broadened from the dimension of human emotion, its connection to metaphor is clearer. So here we return again to Freire, and in this case directly to the story we began with. His insight to shift his teaching method from textbook to real life came from a dwelling-in, an empathy, a category-shift, an intersubjectivity with his students.

Metaphor is a way of creating the possibility (Reed would call this an affordance) of indwelling, between any two actors as well as between meanings themselves. Reed might look at this as the way that various affordances in an environment can simultaneously play multiple roles. Ricoeur might look at it as the various levels that metaphor operates in discourse, again, simultaneously. This simultaneity that Bringhurst brings to his writing, and that I attempt to use as the primary embodiment of this piece.

By elucidating the way our bodily processes participate in our perceptions we will throw light on the bodily roots of all thought, including man’s highest creative powers.... In this sense we can say that when we make a thing function as the proximal term of tacit knowing, we incorporate it in our body—or extend our body to include it—so that we come to dwell in it (Polanyi 2009, 15–16).

And, perhaps, this is what Zwicky means by wisdom.

It's certainly very important to my idea of subjectivity, called I/i. When Simone de Beauvoir says that phenomenology gives the body back to the subject, this is what she means.

There is one existence in particular that science claims to annex to the universe of objects, from which phenomenology returns it to man's possession: it is the existence of his own body (de Beauvoir 2004, 160).

Subjectivity is treated either directly or indirectly in most of the central books of this project. Even the idea that "I" is a metaphor occurs in both Ricoeur and Zwicky. In this review I want to bring Reed's idea of affordances to shed light on the particular problem of subjectivity. Reed makes it very clear that the knower and the known are in a relationship. The knower (subject) does not create a model in its "mind" or react to its environment with its central nervous system. Instead, knowing is the relationship between the knower and the known. It is relationship that makes the perception into an affordance (as in the example of the pond above).

This question of perception as the relevant and primary activity is the heart of phenomenology. In the classroom the effect of this change is the methodology for a praxis in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* where the classroom becomes a site of empowerment through a healthy ecology of meaning,

Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by their world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming—between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right has been denied them. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression (Freire 1970, 88).

To speak a true word is to not fall prey to the Proper Meaning Superstition. In fact, it is the opposite. The true word is the felt word, the dwelling-in, the word as living being. To speak a true word is to be the word as it speaks you.

This is why the ecology of meaning in a classroom is of the utmost importance to a teacher; otherwise much of communication is impossible.

Metaphor 7: Form

As mentioned above, it was Robert Bringhurst who reminded Jan Zwicky of the idea of the palimpsest when she struggled with the form of analytic philosophy as a vehicle to describe the ineffable. A palimpsest is a text which is “polyphonic,” where one text overlaps another, and new meanings are possible. It is normally a result of paper being reused and writing being left behind. Some of Bringhurst’s poetry is written in a form like this (I think rather unsuccessfully, but still of interest to my current project). Zwicky’s form, Lyric Philosophy, is not palimpsest, but it is working with the same idea of *simultaneity*, just like Ricoeur’s tensive theory of metaphor, or Lakoff’s conceptual mapping or Abram’s shedding of accepted perceptual logic.

Zwicky’s work, *Wisdom and Metaphor*, is an opus in its own class. When I encountered it, I had already read all of the works mentioned above. It so encapsulated the ideas that were just beginning to grow in me that I sometimes found it difficult to read. I felt both recognized and erased. Sometimes I would laugh, or need to leave my study, or write emphatically in the book as if I could speak directly to her. The brilliance of the book is that it is strictly phenomenological both in its framework and its form. The book itself teaches the body how to read. Not only how to read it, but how to read in general; how to read the world and how to interpret metaphor.

Surprise is common to good metaphors and good jokes; both turn on suddenly seeing connexions between language-games that appear distant from one another. A weak metaphor can fail to make such a connexion in one of at least two ways—it can be a mere assertion of connexion between distant language-games where no or little resonance exists; or the connexion can be genuine, but the contexts so close that it is unsurprising. Seeing it requires no *leap* of imagination.

A strong metaphor pulls more into focus, or focuses more profoundly, than a shallow one (Zwicky 2008, L45).

The implied 'is not' in a metaphor points to a gap in the language through which we glimpse the world. That which we glimpse is what the 'is' in a metaphor points to (Zwicky 2008, L10).

Though it may seem similar, it is actually the opposite of what Vygotsky suggests. Vygotsky makes the world available through language, and only through language. Zwicky says the world is there, available to all beings, and metaphor allows us to glimpse through the obscurity of language at it. It is the central question of this paper. What is metaphor in an ecology of meaning? If it is not a mediator of inner and outer "speech" or worlds, if it does not mediate cultural historical knowledge, what is it? What does it do?

It's not just that things are unsayable. There is an extraordinary tension between being and linguified knowing (Lilburn and Zwicky 2010, 143).

This is not to make the world separate from the language, but to acknowledge that language has a way of referring to itself, and creating a loop whereby the world, the sensual world that Abram and Bringham describe, the world before definition, proposition, objectification comes to be. Metaphor allows us to see through, to see-as, and to live-with language. Zwicky's innovation in form in *Wisdom and Metaphor*, called Lyric Philosophy, was her answer to the problem of ineffability. It reminds me of the project of Lakoff and Johnson, in that it is a radical epistemological shift that allows insight into philosophical and metaphysical issues which, in a dualist framework, appear unanswerable. Zwicky's texts are simultaneous. We are meant to read the left and right hand pages together, and to allow them to enter into the paradox of is/is-not-ness where new meanings are possible.

In Paul Ricoeur's book, *Interpretation Theory*, he describes a concept of hermeneutics closely connected to Heidegger's. Ricoeur's hermeneutics, like Zwicky's, states that when two things are put side by side a new meaning emerges.

And that meaning centralizes the experience of the body of the receiver and its placedness.

The experience of understanding something is always the experience of a gestalt—the dawning of an aspect that is simultaneously a perception or re-perception of a whole.

One way the facilitation of understanding may proceed, then, is by the judicious selection and arrangement of elements of that whole. Another is by the setting up of objects of comparison (Zwicky 2008, L2).

But if metaphor does not consist in clothing an idea in an image, if it consists instead in reducing the shock engendered by two incompatible ideas, then it is in the reduction of this gap or difference that resemblance plays a role. What is at stake in a metaphorical utterance, in other words, is the appearance of kinship where ordinary vision does not perceive any relationship (Ricoeur 1976, 51).

The nature of meaning, therefore, is not a scrutinizing of details and context, but to have a wide awareness, to understand something of beliefs; to understand in the soft-focus way, the tacit way, and to allow meanings to live.

We return one last time to Freire and the embodied and daily act of teaching. When the teacher, that hero who is burdened with political and economic tasks not of their own making, can come to the classroom with the desire to dwell in it, with the courage to allow language to live its own life, and with the acceptance of her own and her students' tacit, ineffable, infinite potential we will begin to see schools that attend to what matters.

To love wisdom is to find your way home in the protean *phusis* of what-is. It is to embrace the *duende* of language, the emptiness and fullness of things (Zwicky 2008, L118).

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