

Cognitive Linguistics
in Critical Discourse Analysis

Cognitive Linguistics
in Critical Discourse Analysis:
Application and Theory

Edited by

Christopher Hart and Dominik Lukeš

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P U B L I S H I N G

Cognitive Linguistics in Critical Discourse Analysis: Application and Theory,
Edited by Christopher Hart and Dominik Lukeš

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PREFACE

In 1976, at the University of East Anglia, research began into what would become inaugurated as Critical Linguistics with the publication of *Language and Control* and *Language as Ideology* in 1979. Celebrating thirty years of subsequent critical linguistic research, the University of East Anglia hosted the first international conference Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines 2006 (CADAAD'06).

In organising the conference, we set out two overarching goals, which we hoped to achieve through cross-disciplinary communication: i) to assess the state of the art; and ii) to offer new directions. As reflected particularly in the two theme sessions, *Critical Discourse Studies in Applied and Professional Areas: Environment, Health, Education and Cognitive Orientations in Critical Discourse Studies*, the second of these goals was interpreted both in terms of extending the areas toward which critical discourse analysis is directed and in terms of expanding the methodological perspectives available to critical discourse analysts.

The conference was a resounding success attracting an interdisciplinary and international community of scholars, who met with enthusiasm our proposal to build <http://cadaad.org>, a permanent online resource, which we conceive of as a user-driven electronic space where researchers brought together by a critical engagement with discourse can participate in an intellectual community. This site hosts the journal *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, the inaugural issue of which consists of selected proceedings from CADAAD'06. This volume comprises further proceedings of CADAAD'06, collated from papers delivered in the plenary and cognitive theme sessions. It behoves us, then, to thank, first and foremost, those involved with the conference. In particular, we must thank Paul Chilton for his support and encouragement throughout the organisational process and the Centre for Staff and Educational Development at the University of East Anglia for providing necessary financial and administrative backing. We are also grateful to Christina Schäffner and Gabriella Rundblad, as well as Paul Chilton again, for acting as members of our advisory board.

With regard to this volume, we owe gratitude to Cambridge Scholars Publishing for recognising the value of the contributions herein and especially Amanda Millar there for her patience. In our personal lives, which are never

really separable from an academic life, we are each, of course, indebted to too many people for too many reasons to list here.

INTRODUCTION

COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS IN CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

CHRISTOPHER HART AND DOMINIK LUKEŠ

The label “Critical Discourse Analysis” or CDA has come to refer to a particular branch of applied linguistics associated with scholars such as Roger Fowler, Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk and Ruth Wodak. It is important the reader recognise that the “critical discourse analysis” label in the title of this volume does not refer to this specific paradigm, but rather more broadly to critically-oriented discourse analysis across disciplines, which of course will include CDA. According to Weiss and Wodak (2003: 12), “studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds and orientated toward very different data and methodologies”. The reader may ask, then, why we are so keen to make this distinction. Whilst CDA is multifarious, it nevertheless consists of a number of *particular* approaches, including most prominently those developed by Roger Fowler (Fowler et al. 1979; Fowler 1991) and Norman Fairclough (1989, 1995), which have their own inherent methodologies. Not all the contributions to this volume can necessarily be located with respect to one or other of these particular models, although many do focus on theoretical development within CDA. All contributions remain, however, studies in critically-oriented discourse analysis.

Critical discourse analysis in this broader sense can be traced at least as far back as the Aristotelian study of rhetoric. In contemporary philosophy, the Marxist-influenced *Critical Theory* of the Frankfurt school, in particular that of Adorno and Horkheimer, later followed by Habermas, and Foucault’s post-structuralist discourse analysis, should also be considered critical discourse analysis. Indeed, the work of both Habermas and Foucault has provided important social theory for CDA (Fowler et al. 1979; Fairclough 1989, 1995; Wodak 1996, 2001; Wodak and Meyer 2001). Of course, it was with the inception of *Critical Linguistics* (Fowler et al. 1979; Fowler 1991; Kress and Hodge 1979), which later became subsumed by CDA, that critical discourse analysis developed a linguistic approach, where i) the focus of attention shifted

from the abstract Foucauldian sense of *discourse* as “the general domain of all statements” (1972: 80) to the concrete linguistic sense of *discourse* as statements occurring in given contexts; and ii) linguistic theory came to be applied in analysing concrete examples of discourse.

At first, Critical Linguistics drew upon Chomsky’s transformational grammar (Fowler et al. 1979; Hodge and Kress 1979) but eventually replaced this with Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (Fowler 1991), a more obvious choice given that for Halliday “language is as it is because of its function in the social structure” (1973: 65).¹ Following Fowler (1991: 5) “Chomsky is not interested in the role of language in real use (and indeed will not allow such matters to be a valid concern of linguistics). Halliday’s systemic-functional linguistics, on the other hand, is specifically geared to relating structure to communicative function”. Similarly, Fairclough (1989: 11) “would find ‘functionalist’ approaches (such as that of the systemic functional linguistics associated particularly with Michael Halliday) more helpful than ‘formalist’ approaches (such as that of Noam Chomsky and his associates)”. Indeed then, as Wodak (2001: 8) affirms, “an understanding of the basic claims of Halliday’s grammar and his approach to linguistic understanding is essential for a proper understanding of CDA”. Due to the influence of CDA (including Critical Linguistics), Hallidayan systemic functional grammar has become synonymous with linguistic approaches to critical discourse analysis. It is only much more recently that the merits of Cognitive Linguistics in providing a theory of language for critical discourse analysis have been seriously discussed.

We must make a distinction here similar to that which we made between CDA and a broader critically-oriented discourse analysis. After Taylor (2002), we may differentiate between “small c” and “capital C” cognitive linguistics, where “small c” cognitive linguistics refers to linguistics which is generally cognitive in orientation. However, in this case, the “Cognitive Linguistics” label in the title of this volume refers to a particular branch of linguistics associated with scholars such as George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker, Charles Fillmore, and Gilles Fauconnier. Following van Hoek (1999: 134):

Cognitive Linguistics is not a single theory but is rather best characterised as a paradigm within linguistics, subsuming a number of distinct theories and research programs. It is characterised by an emphasis on explicating the intimate interrelationship between language and other cognitive faculties.

Cognitive Linguistics, then, comprises a number of theories which attend to various aspects of linguistic/conceptual structure, including conceptual metaphor theory, mental space theory, frame semantics and cognitive grammar. It may essentially be defined as inquiry into the conceptual structures behind language. And it is this which provides the motivation for compiling this

volume. The editors believe that critical discourse analysis must account for the cognitive realities involved in language use, discourse.

For critical discourse analysis, Cognitive Linguistics is at the same time an obvious and a strange choice. Cognitive Linguistics' engagement with linguistic structure has been limited almost exclusively to the sentence; only relatively few attempts have been made to provide a Cognitive Linguistic account of extended text or discourse, foremost among these being Werth's (1999) text world theory.² On the other hand, in its pervasive concept of construal, Cognitive Linguistics seems to offer something like a conceptual account of Halliday's ideational function of language, where our experience of "reality" is structured by a variety of *construal operations* (Croft and Cruse 2004), which include conceptual metaphor, conceptual blending, conceptual framing, and profiling as described in cognitive grammar. Surprisingly enough, although lacking the theory and terminology, we find Hodge and Kress (1993: 8) alluding to such an account:

We regard language as consisting of a related set of categories and processes. The fundamental categories are a set of 'models' which describe the interrelation of objects and events. These models are basic schemata which derive in their turn from the visual perceptual processes of human beings. These schemata serve to classify events in the world, in simple but crucial ways.

So far, the application of Cognitive Linguistics in critical discourse analysis has in the main been restricted to conceptual metaphor theory (Beer and De Landtsheer 2004; Charteris-Black 2004; Chilton 1988, 1994, 1996; Chilton and Lakoff 1995; Dirven 1994; Lakoff 1991, 2003; Musolff 2004; Santa Ana 2002).³ Whilst we recognise the importance of conceptual metaphor theory in critical discourse analysis, and indeed many of the chapters herein reflect this commitment, its appropriation is also challenged. Reflecting the rich and varied theoretical world of Cognitive Linguistics, one single integrated model is not presented, but rather, a number of methodologies are developed and assessed across the chapters. The application of established Cognitive Linguistic theories, including conceptual metaphor theory, conceptual blending theory and frame semantics, are discussed, as well as developing theories, such as metaphor power theory and discourse space theory. As such, we aim to extend the impact on critical discourse analysis of Cognitive Linguistics. The present volume represents only tentative steps in this direction and the individual contributions each tread their own path toward this common goal.

Notes

¹ Cited by Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard (1996: xi) as “[o]ne of the paradoxes of modern linguistics”, it should be noted that Chomsky, himself a frequent commentator on the language of power, never saw fit to apply his linguistic theories in critical analysis.

² More recently, however, a number of similar endeavors have been undertaken, for example, Chilton’s (2004) discourse space theory.

³ For applications of frame semantics see Lakoff (1996, 2004) and of conceptual blending theory see Chilton (2005).

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CHAPTER ONE

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS DISCOURSE HISTORY? THE CASE OF METAPHOR

ANDREAS MUSOLFF

1. Introduction

“Discourse history” can be conceived of as a sub- or sister-discipline of historical linguistics that focuses on socio- and pragmalinguistically motivated changes. How far does such theory construction help us to establish a coherent set of objects and methods for the historical dimension of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)? And how can such a research perspective be integrated with approaches of related disciplines such as the history of ideas/conceptual history, rhetoric, historical pragmatics and sociolinguistics? The present chapter investigates these questions with reference to the diachronic account of metaphor, with special regard to the conceptualization of state/society as a (human) body. Aspects of this metaphorical mapping have become lexicalized as set phrases (*body politic*, *head of government*, etc.) that are still in use today; however, we can trace their use back to and beyond medieval times. Does such a tradition of use constitute a discourse history in an empirically testable sense? Or are we just dealing with repeated instances of what is fundamentally an “ahistorical” cognitive operation? In conclusion, I shall propose a multi-disciplinary approach that aims to reconcile the cognitive analysis of metaphors and the historical modelling of their development in discourse traditions.

2. Language history, conceptual evolution and discourse traditions

The historical investigation of language has a long tradition: in the 19th century, it almost became a paradigm of “scientific” linguistics, with the ideal of assimilating or emulating biological models of evolution (Robins 1979: 178-184; Mopurgo Davies 1987: 83-97; Nerlich 1989). In the past two decades, there has been a renaissance for “evolutionist” approaches that depict language change as a process that is guided by an “invisible hand” and can be explained as a result of selection and variation, which are conceived of as being structurally similar to natural evolution (Keller 1990; Sperber 1996; Croft 2000). The historical analysis of discourse, even though it has not quite achieved the status of a sub-discipline of linguistics, can also look back at a long and distinguished tradition of philological, philosophical and rhetorical research and, within linguistics in the narrower sense, in historical pragmatics, sociolinguistics and in critical discourse studies.

In the analysis of metaphors, we can find a similar bifurcation. On one side, there are approaches that liken diachronic changes in metaphor use to biological developments. Croft and Cruse (2004), for instance, speak of the “life cycle” of a metaphor that runs from its first coinage, as an instance of semantic innovation of a meaning unit (which they compare to a mutation or “altered replication” of genetic information), through a “process of semantic drift” to the end point where “the expression’s metaphorical nature fades and eventually disappears” (Croft and Cruse 2004: 204-05).¹ In some strands of cognitive metaphor theory, naturalist reductionism leads away from historical analysis altogether, as conceptual metaphors are explained either as epiphenomena of neurological structures or as mere extensions of a small set of primary metaphors based on universal experiential scenes.² These perspectives find some corroboration in the evidence of bodily experiences as metaphoric sources for idioms in various languages, e.g. emotion concepts (Kövecses 1990, 2000), as well as for the spatial organisation of parts of the lexicon, argumentation and modality (Lakoff 1987; Sweetser 1990; Niemeier 2000). However, these data are far from conclusive. It has been pointed out, for instance, that concepts of the body and of bodily experience are in themselves socio-culturally “situated” (Zlatev 1997, 2003) and therefore can not be presumed to be simply primordial: rather, they represent constructs that are, and have been for a long time, targets for metaphors in their turn (Goschler 2005: 43-47). The origin of metaphorical emotion concepts thus seems to depend as much on cultural traditions as on experiential and physiological grounding.³

On the historical side, metaphors have been investigated by Historians of Ideas or Concepts as well as in Cultural and Political History and in Critical

Discourse Analysis.⁴ The challenge for the historical research of discourse phenomena lies in the question of what constitutes a “discourse tradition”, beyond a merely a chronologically ordered account of uses of what looks to be the same or similar linguistic and conceptual unit, e.g. a metaphorical term or phrase. For instance, we can identify the fixed expression *body politic* in modern English usage, as in the following examples.

- (1) The *American body politic* laid low. [...] Washington (DC) leads the way in crises and scandals. (*The Observer*, 13 November 2005; italics of relevant metaphorical passages here and in the following examples by AM)
- (2) The moment is arriving when Europe could cease to be *the cyanide in the British body politic*. (*The Guardian*, 18 January 1996)
- (3) *Disembowelling the body politic*. [Headline from a review of Noam Chomsky’s political writings by Alex Danchev] (*The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 22 November 1996)
- (4) I am a mere *toenail in the body politic*. (Boris Johnson, MP, quoted in *The Independent on Sunday*, 20 November 2005)

The highlighted parts of these quotations contain expressions that can be grouped in the “domain” of body-related concepts: *body*, *sick*, *disembowel*, *toenail*. The referents of these terms are clearly not physical entities but politically relevant persons, entities or states of affairs. We can therefore characterise these passages as metaphorical because, in the terminology established by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), corporeal “source” concepts are mapped onto aspects of the political “target” domain. The correspondences between the two domains are indicated in Table 1-1:

Table 1-1.

Source Domain	Target Domain
Body	Political entity (GB, US)
<i>Toenail</i>	Politician
<i>Health/sickness</i>	State of affairs in political entity (power vs. lack of power or cohesion)
<i>Agent of disease: cyanide</i>	“Europe”
<i>Disembowelling</i>	Analysis of (non-functioning?) political entity

In addition, we can associate the fixed expression *body politic* with its historical uses in political philosophy, and we can hypothesize about traditions of specific sub-concepts such as Boris Johnson’s self-deprecating *toenail*-comparison, which may have been based on his literary knowledge of an insulting reference to a rebellious citizen as a *big toe* in Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, in a debate

following a rendition of the so-called “fable of the belly” (given by the character Menenius Agrippa who defends the senate against the citizens’ accusations):

- (5) Menenius: There was a time when all the body’s members
 Rebell’d against the belly; thus accused it:
 That only like a gulf it did remain
 I’ the midst o’ the body, idle and unactive,
 Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing
 Like labour with the rest, [...]
 The belly answered [...]
 “True is it, my incorporate friends”, quoth he,
 “That I receive the general food at first,
 Which you do live upon; and fit it is;
 Because I am the store-house and the shop
 Of the whole body: but if you do remember,
 I send it through the rivers of your blood,
 Even to the *court, the heart*, to the seat o’ the brain; [...]
 Menenius: The senators of Rome are this good belly,
 And you the mutinous members; [...]
What do you think,
You, the great toe of this assembly?
 First Citizen: *I the great toe? Why the great toe?*
 Menenius: *For that, being one o’ the lowest, basest, poorest,*
Of this most wise rebellion, thou go’st foremost [...]
 (Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, Act I, Scene 1: 101-169)

The “lesson” of this tale, which has been traced to classical editions of Aesop’s fables,⁵ is obvious: the authority of the central organ, i.e. the *belly/senate*, must be accepted by the other *body members/parts* of the state, otherwise the whole *organism/state* will die. The characterisation of the leader of the rebellion as the *big toe* in (5) puts him “in his place” as a lowly and at the same time provocative and offensive part of the *body politic*. The *toe* metaphor thus implies, as a presupposition, a conceptual hierarchy of more and less important *body members*, both at the literal and at the figurative level.

Johnson’s use of the *toenail* image in (4) – whether truly a sign of modesty (as the *toenail*, strictly speaking, is even less than a *toe*) or an indication of how well he knows his Shakespeare – demonstrates that the political *body* metaphor is as “alive” today as in the days of Shakespeare. Not only has it survived in the form of isolated expressions such as *body politic* but its extensions to particular body parts are also still readily available in English-speaking discourse communities. We still have in lexicalised form, the *head* of state (or government), the military *arm* or *wing* and the *organ* or *mouthpiece* of political groups, etc. (Deignan 1995: 2; *Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* 1999: 149, 713). We can probably, on an ad hoc basis, assign political topic notions

without much effort to other body-based concepts such as *eyes*, or *feet* or *fingers*. How do we account for this accessibility of mappings between corporeal and political/social concepts? Should we indeed posit the existence of a conceptual tradition spanning several centuries? This proposition would imply the existence of a continuous discourse tradition connecting “participants” as far apart as William Shakespeare and Boris Johnson. How might such a discourse tradition or history be modelled theoretically and how might it be empirically validated?

3. Historical memory and traditions of language use

Just as we remember individually and collectively the history of some political actions, we have a memory of political discourse. Specific terms, idioms and phrases “carry” with them, so to speak, a historical baggage that can make them more or less problematic to use. The designation of a particular group of people as a *cancer* in the *body politic*, for instance, is considered to be ethically and politically unacceptable today on account of its use in German National Socialist propaganda and ideology, for, as Susan Sontag pointed out in her famous essay *Illness and Metaphor*:

to treat a cancer one must cut out much of the healthy tissue around it. The imagery of cancer for the Nazis prescribes ‘radical’ treatment [...] it could be argued that the cancer metaphors are in themselves implicitly genocidal. (Sontag 1978: 81)

The cultural memory of atrocities that followed from the Nazi conceptualisation of “the Jew” as a cancer and the resulting stigma of the cancer metaphor has not prevented it from continuing to be used: after naming the usual suspects (Stalinist and Trotskyite sources as well as US politicians during the Cold War), Sontag had the courage to admit that she “once wrote, in the heat of despair over America’s war on Vietnam, that ‘the white race is the cancer of human history’” (1978: 82).⁶

Sontag also formulated a strong hypothesis about the historical development of *body-illness* imagery in political discourse which so far has rarely been tested, i.e. that there is a qualitative difference between “modern” and “classical” uses: the latter, “which analogize a political disorder to an illness – from Plato to, say, Hobbes – presuppose the classical medical (and political) idea of balance”; the “prognosis is always, in principle, optimistic” (1978: 75). By contrast, since the Enlightenment and especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, Western culture, so Sontag contended, has seen the emergence of fatalistic diagnoses of *diseases* in the *body politic*, which culminated in totalitarian ideologies that favoured images of all-powerful “master illnesses”,

such as cancer, that require matching radical cures (1978: 78, 81-84). This interpretation of modern use as a perversion of classical traditions chimes with assertions by earlier historians of ideas such as Arthur O. Lovejoy and E.M.W. Tillyard who, in their studies of Neo-Platonic concept traditions, including those of the *Body Politic* and the *Great Chain of Being*, had spoken in the 1930s and early 1940s of these traditions coming “full circle” in the “the policy of great states and the enthusiasms of their populations” (Lovejoy 1936: 313), or resembling “certain trends of thought in central Europe, the ignoring of which by our scientifically minded intellectuals has helped not a little to bring the world into its present conflicts and distresses” (Tillyard 1982: 117).

Tillyard also formulated the general hypothesis that in the Renaissance the notion of a metaphysical “order of things”, which had been believed in a quasi-literal sense in the Middle Ages, became available as an inventory of rhetorical and poetic metaphors: the Elizabethans, he asserted, gave:

the correspondence between macrocosm, body politic, and microcosm [...] a double function – it still served [...] to express the idea of a cosmic order, but they no longer allowed the details to take the form of minute mathematical equivalences: they made the imagination use these for its own ends; equivalences shaded off into resemblances. (Tillyard 1982: 107)

Modern versions of the classical conceptual metaphors, including their presumptive 20th century distortions, would thus have an epistemologically different status from those of pre-modern times. They became more flexible and could be adapted to various rhetorical and poetic registers. Sontag’s above-cited interpretation of the contrast between classical and modern *illness* metaphors could be seen as providing a specification of this hypothesis to the effect that in political discourse *body/illness* metaphors have increasingly become separated from their classical target focus of maintaining or restoring social and political order, and have instead been redeployed to express evaluations of whether certain socio-political entities deserve to exist at all.

These historical hypotheses deserve renewed consideration from the viewpoint of critical discourse studies. They suggest that a whole conceptual complex has changed its cognitive and epistemological status, e.g. from an entrenched belief system into a set of freely adaptable rhetorical and poetic figures of speech, and from a system of metaphors directed at justifying an existing political order into a perspective denouncing it absolutely and advocating radical *therapeutic* measures. Whilst these hypotheses are meaningful and testable, they suffer from the methodological problem that they rely almost exclusively on explicit inter-textual references, i.e. quotations, translations, comments or allusions from one text to another in order to posit the historical continuity of use. Often, the research also just skims the top layer of

famous poetic, scientific or philosophical formulations. Beyond this narrow band of prominent texts that build explicitly one upon the other, however, the evidence for a continuous conceptual chain is relatively thin and does not necessarily prove a link between the historical concept and present-day folk-theories and “ordinary” use. On the other hand, such a link can not be ruled out a priori either, and it would be useful in many ways to find out how currently popular metaphors are related to past conceptual traditions, how they build new traditions, and whether cognitive-evolutionist and the discourse-historical approaches can be combined to elucidate these developments.

4. Religion, politics and ideology: The life and adventures of the *Body Politic*

One practical – though, in the age of electronic databases not insurmountable – problem for a reconstruction of the history of a conceptual metaphor as a discourse tradition is the sheer quantity of data. Hale’s (1971) survey of the *body politic* metaphor in English Renaissance Literature, names more than 160 authors – and this excludes popular media, pamphlets, newspapers, the bulk of the post-1700 texts and disregards to a large extent the international and intercultural dimension. Many of the authors that he includes have produced a number of relevant texts, and some world-famous ones such as Shakespeare have generated a whole tradition of further allusions to their use of biological or medical concepts and metaphors.⁷

There is the additional methodological problem that a traditional, lexicon-based concordance and collocation search of such a database – were it to be assembled – is not sufficient to analyse continuities and discontinuities of use. What matters for such an analysis are the argumentative patterns and long-term trends that would allow us to test historical hypotheses such as those put forward by Sontag and Tillyard. A summary of source-target correspondences as the one in Table 1-1 above is not adequate to analyze the argumentative and ideological bias of metaphor usage, let alone trends or major changes. In order to represent the communicatively and historically significant mappings, we shall employ the method of summarizing the argumentative and inferential bias of *body/illness* metaphors in the form of “metaphor scenarios”, which consist of mini-narratives based on source domain input and include participants, their intentions and courses of action, as well as the explicit or implicit “lessons” to be learnt from them (Musolff 2006: 27-36). The categorial correspondences depicted in table 1-1 can, for instance, be represented in a scenario table (= Table 1-2 below):

Table 1-2.

Domains	Scenario Structure		
	General Categories	Specific Categories	Inferences
Source	<i>Body</i>	<i>Belly</i> <i>Toenail</i>	<i>Bodies consist of a number of parts that are hierarchically ordered</i>
		<i>Health vs. sickness</i> <i>Agent of disease</i>	<i>Bodies can fall ill (due to agents) and then need to be treated medically so as to guarantee survival</i>
		<i>Disembowelling</i>	<i>Bodies can be taken apart</i>
Target	Political entity	Institutional centre Peripheral political entity/ political figure	Political entities consist of a number of parts that are hierarchically ordered
		Efficient functioning of political entity vs. political crisis	Political entities can become dysfunctional (due to specific agents) and then need to be reformed to ensure continued existence
		Political entity that causes crisis	
		Analysis of political entity	Political entities can be disassembled

In principle, one could give such summaries for all texts in a given corpus of *body politic* metaphors. Ideally, such a corpus would span the best part of most Western political literatures/cultures over two millennia, if we take into consideration that the earliest sources that are usually quoted are pre-Socratic thinkers, then Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the Neo-Platonists, Biblical traditions (especially St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians), many of the Church Fathers up to the Middle Ages and most of the Western political philosophies since, in all European languages, with French and English terminology traditions being the most prominent.⁸ In view of the vastness of the material, it would be futile even to attempt an overview here; so I shall present only a few snapshots, so to speak, of some of the most famous and infamous scenarios of this metaphor. The selection of three prominent stages in the development – one from the Middle Ages, one from the early modern period and a German one from the 20th century – is intended merely to illustrate the method of comparative diachronic scenario analysis and to gauge its limitations and opportunities for further application.

4.1 The *body politic* in the Middle Ages: John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*

In the history of English political literature that contains *body* imagery, one of the most famous uses is the political theory of the medieval cleric, diplomat and philosopher John of Salisbury (c 1115-1180) who was the secretary to Thomas Becket at the time when the latter was Archbishop of Canterbury and who later became Bishop of Chartres. In his work *Policraticus* (c. 1159), which was dedicated to Becket, John gave a rendition of Christian feudal society in terms of analogies with the human body that combined a hierarchical view of the *body* from the *head* “down” to the *feet* with a strong emphasis on the church's commanding role as the *soul* of the whole organism and on the *mutual duty of care* among all *body parts*. The *feet*, which owe the rest of the *body* obedience as a matter of course, thus also have a (moral) right to be properly protected and cared for by the other *body members*:

- (6) For a republic is, as Plutarch declares, *a sort of body* which is animated by the grant of divine reward [...] *The position of the head of the republic* is occupied [...] by a prince subject only to God and to those who act in His place on earth, *inasmuch as in the human body the head is stimulated and ruled by the soul. The place of the heart* is occupied by the senate, from which proceeds the beginning of good and bad works. *The duties of the ears, eyes and mouth are claimed* by the judges and governors of the provinces. *The hands coincide* with officials and soldiers. Those who always assist the prince are comparable to *the flanks*. Treasurers and record keepers [...] resemble *the shape of the stomach and intestines*; these, if they accumulate with great avidity and tenaciously preserve their accumulation, engender innumerable and incurable *diseases so that their infection threatens to ruin the whole body*. Furthermore, *the feet* coincide with peasants perpetually bound to the soil, for whom it is all the more necessary that the *head* take precautions, in that they more often meet with accidents while they walk on the earth in bodily subservience; and those who *erect, sustain and move forward the mass of the whole body* are justly owed shelter and support. *Remove from the fittest body the aid of the feet; it does not proceed under its own power, but either crawls shamefully, uselessly and offensively on its hands or else is moved with the assistance of brute animals.* (John of Salisbury 1990: 66-67)⁹

This quotation demonstrates that John of Salisbury's image of the state as a *human body* is clearly ordered, systematically developed and at crucial points explicated in detail. In addition to the hierarchical perspective, there are clues regarding practical implications (e.g. avoidance of malfunctioning of the *stomach*/treasurers; necessity to look after the *feet*/peasants). The specifications

that the *head/prince* is “ruled” by the *soul/Church* and also assisted by the *heart/senate* show that his position is not considered to be that of an absolute monarch but instead seen in a church-oriented perspective. This latter point has been connected by historians with John’s strong condemnation of “tyranny” (as opposed to lawful kingship) in book IV of the *Policraticus* and with his own involvement in the confrontation between the Kings Stephen and Henry II of England and the Church as represented by the Archbishops of Canterbury.¹⁰ A further focus of historical interest has been John’s attention to the problems caused by the *stomach* and his concern for the *feet*: which have been related to the influence of his teachers in Paris and at the School of Chartres as well as to reformist “medieval humanism”.¹¹ The main lesson to be learnt from the analogy, which is re-emphasized time and again throughout the *Policraticus*,¹² is that, notwithstanding their hierarchical differences, all *body parts depend on each other* and must work together to enable *the whole body to stay healthy and function properly*.

So far, the *body-state* metaphor of the *Policraticus* seems to fit well within the schema of a “medieval-as-pre-modern” worldview that presented a stable perspective of society and as an integral part of the system of correspondences between micro- and macrocosm, which could be believed in quasi-literally as an unbroken “Chain of Being” (Lovejoy 1936: 67-98; Tillyard 1982: 33-94). Consequently, Tillyard saw no problem in presenting John of Salisbury’s treatise as “one of the most elaborate medieval statements” of the *body-state* analogy (Tillyard 1982: 103). However, there are some elements of the analogy in the *Policraticus* that do not match its interpretation as a “standard” version of pre-modern beliefs. One smaller internal inconsistency in John’s application of the *body* metaphor is the occurrence of a second version of it in the form of the “fable of the belly”, which we encountered in a later form in Shakespeare’s version in example (5). In the *Policraticus*, this fable appears in book VI, as a lesson taught to the author by none other than the reigning Pope, Adrian IV. According to John’s own account, he was prompted by the pontiff to report on complaints against the church and, after having done so, he challenged the Pope himself: “If you are father, therefore, why do you accept presents and payments from your children?” (John of Salisbury 1990: 135). By telling the fable, the Pope elegantly arrived at the “obvious” answer and conclusion: “Measure neither our harshness nor that of secular princes, but attend to the utility of all” (1990: 136).

The purported speech-situations of the Plutarchian quotation and the conversation with the Pope are clearly different but the argumentative import is similar, i.e. a focus on the duty of *all* body members to cooperate. The “fable of the belly” and the *head-to-feet* analogy both include, as example (6) has shown, *stomach* and *intestines* as the equivalents of socio-economic management in the

res publica. In a secular state, this task is fulfilled by the Prince's treasurers and record-keepers, whilst in the church, it is the Pope's and Bishops' administrations. What matters most for the conclusiveness of the analogy are the implications regarding the dangers for the *body politic* if the *stomach/belly/bowels* do not function properly. Whether they are starved of food (as in the "fable of the belly") or keep it for themselves instead of dispersing it (as in John's main analogy): in both cases they "engender innumerable and incurable diseases so that their infection threatens to ruin the whole body" (1990: 67).

Within the context of the main hierarchical analogy (*prince/head-....-farmers/feet* etc.), John discusses the *illnesses* (already hinted at in example 6) and the *treatments* they necessitate. He holds "negligence or dissimulation on the part of the ruler" responsible for "illness and blemishes" of the *body politic* (1990: 76) and quotes Plato as having warned of an oppressive magistrate as being equal to a "swollen head" that makes it "impossible for the members of the body to endure it either at all or without difficulty" (1990: 63). On the other side, John highlights the Prince's obligation to save the body, if "palliatives and gentle medicines" do not help, by way of *amputation* of any "afflicted" members (1990: 49-50). Together with the main *body-state* mappings, these *illness-therapy* scenes in the *Policraticus* form the following metaphor scenario:

Table 1-3.

Scenario Structure in <i>Policraticus</i>			
Domains	General Categories	Specific Categories	Inferences
Source	<i>Soul</i> <i>Body</i>	<i>Head OR Belly</i> <i>Heart</i> <i>Eyes, ears, tongue</i> <i>Hands</i> <i>Sides</i> <i>Stomach/intestines</i> <i>Feet</i>	<i>Interdependence of functions of all body parts obeying the soul</i>
	<i>Health</i>	<i>Care</i>	<i>Moral obligation that all body parts be coordinated by the soul</i>
	<i>Illness</i>	<i>Swollen head,</i> <i>Injury, Infection,</i> <i>Affliction</i>	<i>Alternative: Endurance of pain and Death or Medical treatment - if necessary, involving even amputation</i>

Target	God/Church State/Society	Prince Senate Judges and governors Soldiers Other state officials Financial officers Farmers	Interdependence of all parts of state/society obeying the God-inspired commandments of the Prince (guided by the Church)
	Proper order of “res publica”	Proper functioning of “res publica”	Moral obligation of mutual care for all parts of state/society according to the will of God (as represented by the Church)
	Tyranny, rebellion	Tyrannical prince Rebellious subjects	Alternative: Crisis/Dissolution of the state OR just, if painful punishment

John of Salisbury used the *body-state* analogy not as a rigid classificatory schema but to drive home specific socio-political conclusions that he regarded as necessary to maintain the well-being of the “commonweal”. His warning of *diseases* that could *ruin the whole body* and the possible need for *amputation* put in question Sontag’s hypothesis quoted earlier – i.e. that in classical formulations up to the period of Hobbes the “prognosis is always, in principle, optimistic” (Sontag 1978: 75). In defence of her analysis (which did not include John of Salisbury), one could point out that the purpose of the analogy as presented in the *Policraticus* was, of course, to warn the leadership of State and Church against *diseases* so as to avoid or manage them. Such a reading can still be squared with Sontag’s (1978: 76) overall assessment that in “political philosophy’s great tradition, the analogy between disease and civil disorder is proposed to encourage rulers to pursue a more rational policy”.

Nevertheless, the option of “therapy-by-amputation” certainly shows little sign of “optimism”. In one instance, John even draws, with reference to the famous passage from the *New Testament* (Matthew, 18: 9) – “If your eye or your foot offend you, root it out and cast it away from you” – the most radical solution in case of a rebellion:

- (7) I think this is to be observed by the prince in regard to all of the members to the extent that not only are they to be *rooted out, broken off and thrown far away, if they give offence to the faith or public security, but they are to be destroyed utterly* so that the security of the corporate community may be procured by the extermination of the one member. Who will be spared, I say, by him who is commanded to do violence against even his own eyes? Indeed,

neither the ears nor the tongue nor whatever else subsists within the body of the republic is safe if it revolts against the soul for whose sake the eyes themselves are gouged out. (John of Salisbury 1990, 140-141)

The justification that John provides for this zealous plea in favour of *amputation* and utter *destruction* is the fact that the *injury* of rebellion concerns the *soul*, i.e. the inner core of the *body*, its metaphysical reason of existence. Such an attitude is perhaps to be expected from a high-ranking representative of the Church in medieval times – but it is remote from Sontag’s benign characterization of pre-modern uses of *illness* metaphors.¹³ In John’s view, rebellion against the church-led state and society was what Sontag would call a political “master illness” in the modern sense: “Now, to liken a political event or situation to an illness is to impute guilt, to prescribe punishment” (Sontag 1978: 80).

4.2 The *body politic* in Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*

For Sontag, the end point of the classical tradition was marked by Thomas Hobbes’s political theory. *Body politic* imagery is evident right from the start and throughout his most famous work, *Leviathan* (1651).¹⁴ Even the frontispiece gives a first, graphic presentation: it shows a crowned figure, holding a sword and a crosier in his hands, with the arms and the trunk consisting of a mass of miniature heads symbolizing the whole “Common-wealth”.¹⁵ The introductory chapter provides the initial allegory for Hobbes’s approach to political theory as a “Civill Science”:

- (8) For by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, or STATE, (in latine CIVITAS) which is but an Artificiall Man; though of greater stature and strength than the Naturall, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which the *Soveraignty* is an Artificiall *Soul*, as giving life and motion to the whole body; The *Magistrates*, and other *Officers* of Judicature and Execution, artificiall *Joynts*; *Reward* and *Punishment* (by which fastned to the seate of the Soveraignty, every joynt and member is moved to performe his duty) are the *Nerves*, that do the same in the Body Naturall; *The Wealth* and *Riches* of all the particular members, are the *Strength*; *Salus Populi* (the *peoples safety*) its *Businesse*; *Counsellors*, by whom all things needfull for it to know, are suggested unto it, are the *Memory*; *Equity* and *Lawes*, an artificiall *Reason* and *Will*; *Concord*, *Health*; *Sedition*, *Sickness*; and *Civill war*, *Death*. Lastly, the *Pacts* and *Covenants*, by which the parts of this Body Politique were at first made, set together, and united, resemble that *Fiat*, or the *Let us make man*, pronounced by God in the Creation. (Hobbes 1965: 1; italics and spelling as in the original)

Later in the book, in chapter 23, Hobbes gives another list of “parts Organically” as equivalents of various types of “Publique ministers”. These include “Protectors, Vice-Roys, and Governors” (“Nerves, and Tendons”), economic administrators, military officers, teachers, moral instructors and judges (“Voice”), officers of justice (“Hands”), ambassadors and spies (“Eyes”), and receivers of petitions (“Eare”) (1965: 127-129). As in the introduction, there is no equivalent of the *head*; there are a few overlaps and discrepancies between the two lists of aspects; the “nerves”, for instance, appear twice, as *Reward and Punishment* in the first list (example 8) or as the top echelon of “Publique Ministers”. Together, the two lists present a more complex political physiology than the *Policraticus*: many more organs and bodily processes are mentioned, but, curiously, *head* and *heart* are missing. The *heart*, traditionally associated with a senate or other quasi-parliamentary institution (cf. example 6), is completely absent. The *head*, however, may be viewed as being implied in the notion of an “Artificiall Soul” – the latter does not represent the Church as in the *Policraticus* but the notion of “soveraignty”, and it is visually present in the *Leviathan’s* frontispiece as the *head* of the “Aritificiall Man”.

A further innovation lies in the mechanistic concept of the body. In the passage immediately preceding that in example (8), Hobbes makes it clear that the body he thinks of is “but a motion of Limbs”, so that he asks, rhetorically:

what is the *Heart*, but a *Spring*; and the *Nerves*, but so many *Strings*; and the *Joynts*, but so many *Wheeles*, giving motion to the whole Body, such as was intended by the Artificer? (1965: 1)

This new perspective on the body as a machine is connected with the contemporary weakening of Galenic concepts of medicine and human biology, including the theory of the “four humours”, and their replacement by the theory of blood circulation pioneered by William Harvey (1578-1657) and the generalized mechanistic conception of the body promoted by Descartes (1596-1650). Hobbes admired Harvey,¹⁶ and it is not surprising that he endorsed mechanic principles in physiology itself. Hobbes saw both physical and political bodies as mechanisms and products of “Art”, i.e. as “Automata (Engines that move themselves by springs and wheeles as doth a watch)” (Hobbes 1965: 1).

As regards the use of *illnesses* and *diseases* as source concepts in his analysis of the *body politic*, Hobbes occasionally falls back on humoral terminology, e.g. when he likens unlawful “systemes” or assemblies to “Wens, Biles, and Apostemes, engendered by the unnaturall conflux of evill humours” (1965: 126). However, the dominant perspective on *illnesses* of the *body politic* is the *life-cycle*. Hobbes begins by discussing the *Defectuous Procreation*, i.e. “Imperfect Institution” of states, which he considers to lie chiefly in a lack of power of the sovereign (1965: 171). In second place, Hobbes talks of “*Diseases*

of a Common-wealth, that proceed from the poison of seditious doctrines” (1965: 172). The first cause of such doctrines is the “Example of different Government” in other nations, which is so seductive that people “though they be grieved [...] like hot blouds, that having gotten the itch, tear themselves with their own nayles, till they can endure the smart no longer” (1965: 174). The second cause of *poisoning* is “the Reading of the books of Policy, and Histories of the antient Greeks, and Romans”: they incite “young men and all others that are unprovided of the Antidote of solid Reason” to emulate the seemingly heroic revolutions without considering the concomitant “frequent Seditions, and Civill warres” (1965: 174). In particular, ancient justifications of “Tyrannicide” seem *poisonous* to Hobbes: such “Venime” he compares “to the biting of a mad Dogge, which is a disease the Physicians call *Hydrophobia*, or *fear of Water*” (1965: 174). Then Hobbes denounces those who claim that there may be several sources of authority in a state, especially clerical “*supremacy*”, which he sees as the chief cause of fanaticism, by likening them to “Doctors, that hold there be three Soules in a man” (1965: 174). In Hobbes’ view, “this is a Disease which not unfitly may be compared to the Epilepsie, or Falling-sickness”, as in both cases an “an unnaturall spirit” causes “violent, and irregular motions” of the members, which puts the victim, the “Common-wealth”, in danger of falling into “the Fire of Civill warre” (1965: 175). The implication is that the sovereign must remain the sole *soul* of the state, any other rival authority is seen as a mortal danger to its *health*. A further challenge to sovereignty that leads to an “irregularity of Common-wealth” is the theory of dividing government between the powers of “levying mony, (which is the Nutritive faculty,)”, “of conduct and command, (which is the Motive faculty,)” and “of making Lawes, (which is Rationall Faculty,)” (1965: 176). Hobbes dismisses any such division as an equivalent of the dangerous condition of *twins joined at birth* (1965: 176).

After having discussed political *diseases* “of the greatest and most present danger”, Hobbes goes on to describe less dangerous but still important conditions: the “difficulty of raising Mony” (congested arteries obstructing “passage for the Bloud”), monopolies that hoard “the treasure of the Common-wealth” (“pleurisie”), “Popularity of a potent Subject” that tempts him to become leader of a rebellion (“the effects of Witchcraft”), immoderate growth of towns, corporations and “liberty of Disputing” (“wormes in the entryles”), expansionist policies (“Bulimia”), which lead to “Wounds [...] received from the enemy; and the *Wens*, of united conquests”, excessive “Ease” (“Lethargy”) and “Riot and Vain Expense” (“Consumption”) (1965: 176-177). Lastly, defeat of a state in war only leaves its “carcase” (1965: 178). We can summarize the ensemble of the *body-state* scenario in *Leviathan* in the following scenario overview:

Table 1-4.

Domains	Scenario Structure		
	General Categ.	Specific Categories	Inferences
Source	<i>Natural Man</i>	<i>Soul Joints, nerves, hands, eye, Eare, blood, muscles</i>	<i>Interdependence of functions of all body parts obeying the soul</i>
	<i>Life functions</i>	<i>Strength, safety, memory, reason and will, health, death, voice, nutritive, motive and rationall faculties, procreation, children</i>	<i>Complexity of human body according to early modern medicine</i>
	<i>Illness (infirmities, sicknesse)</i>	<i>unlawfull conflux of evill humours, madnesse, disease from poisoning, hot bloods, Defectuous Procreation, Biting of Mad Dogge, Epilepsie, or Falling- sicknesse, joined twins, Ague (obstructed Heart arteries), Pleurisie, Witchcraft, wormes in entryles, bulimia, Wens, Biles, apostemes, lethargy, consumption, dissolution</i>	<i>Necessity of cure by competent physician</i>
Target	Artificial Man	Sovereignty Magistrates, reward, punishment, Publique Ministers: Protectors, Vice- Roys, Governors, executioners, govt. spies, Publique Ministers: govt. receivers of petitions, mony, gold and silver	Interdependence of functions of all parts of society obeying the God-inspired commandments of the Prince (guided by the Church)
	Life functions	wealth, riches, businesse, counsellors, equity and laws, concord, civill war pacts, covenants, judges, Powers of levying mony, of conduct and command, of making Lawes, colonies	Complexity of state according to early modern political science