MONKEY AS METAPHOR? TRANSFORMATIONS OF A POLYTROPIC SYMBOL IN JAPANESE CULTURE

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Most symbols are *polytropic* as well as polysemic in that their multiple meanings in various contexts function as different types of trope. This article pursues the complex nature of polytropes through a formulation of synecdoche as an interstitial trope between metaphor and metonymy, and demonstrates how the two conceptual principles of analogy and contiguity, that define metaphor and metonymy respectively, are interdependent and interpenetrated, rather than of basically different natures as presented in the biaxial image of structural linguistics. The analogic thought expressed in metaphor involves movement and temporality, just as does the discursive thought of metonymy. The interpenetration of the two modes of thought is demonstrated through an analysis of the process of objectification of what, throughout history, has been a dominant symbol of self in Japanese culture: the monkey. As a polysemic and polytropic symbol, the monkey takes on different meanings, and functions as different tropic types, sequentially or simultaneously, as actors use and/or interpret the symbol in varying historical and social contexts.

Introduction

This article offers a formulation of synecdoche as an interstitial trope between metaphor and metonymy in order to demonstrate how the two dimensions of meaning—contiguity and similarity—are inseparable in poetic processes in which synecdoche is involved. Although the structuralist notion of two counterposed axes—of paradigm and syntagm, or analogy and contiguity—provides a powerful analytical tool, it has prevented us from recognising the complex nature of interrelationships and interdependencies between these opposed concepts in our thought. Through a discussion of synecdoche, I hope to show their simultaneous presence in the construction of poetic meaning.

I place the synecdoche and its relationship to metaphor and metonymy within the general framework of transformations of what I call *polytropic* symbols. A symbol functions as one or another kind of trope depending upon the context, just as 'meaning' in discourse or 'significance' in language (Todorov 1982) is never singular. Yet despite the abundance of literature on tropes, we have seldom confronted the multiplicity of tropic functions of a symbol. In part this may be due to a less than satisfactory rapprochement between literary studies and the fields of linguistics and anthropology. The former—the homeland of scholarship on tropes—have, until recently, focused on literary works primarily of the elites of various Western societies. Even Bakhtin (1981; 1984), who has highlighted the multiple voices of actors, is no exception. The fields of anthropology and linguistics, on the other hand, have focused on the multivocality of symbols (V. Turner 1967) and on 'hierarchies of meaning' (Ohnuki-Tierney

Man (N.S.) **25**, 89-107

1990

1981; Todorov 1982; T. Turner 1977*a*), that are an attempt to sort out the various meanings of a polyseme. Yet until recently they have often failed to recognise that tropes are used in day-to-day discourse by ordinary individuals in any culture.

In this article I first discuss the polytropic nature of polysemic symbols within the framework of 'objectification', which is an interactive process between subject and object. The several meanings of a polysemic symbol function in various contexts as different types of trope. These multiple tropes of a symbol may be constructed simultaneously by different actors involved in the discourse, or else different tropic types may be sequentially used or constructed—one type at a time—depending upon the context, historical and social. The construction of multiple tropes is also a function of variation in levels of abstraction and of differences of interpretation between actors and observers such as anthropologists. Focusing on the interrelationship between multiple *significances* of a symbol in the abstract and their actualisation as multiple *meanings* in a given context with particular actors using or reading the trope, I examine the use of tropes in verbal and non-verbal discourse as a complex dialectic between historically constituted representations, on the one hand, and enactments performed by actors in particular social contexts, on the other. To put it another way, tropes often tell us about the dynamics of the relation between collective representations and the creative capacities of individual agents.

In the latter half of this article, I present a type of trope that *simultaneously embodies metonymic and metaphoric principles*; being an interstitial trope between metaphor and metonymy. I refer to this tropic type, which is neither a simple metaphor nor a simple metonym, as 'synecdoche'. I do so with some hesitancy since, of all the tropes, synecdoche is most ill-defined and thus used in so many ways. I use the term *metaphor* to refer to a trope characterised by similarity or shared feature(s) between the vehicle (the metaphoric word itself) from one semantic domain and the tenor (the subject to which the metaphoric word is applied) from another,[1] whereas in *metonymy* the tenor-vehicle relationship is one of contiguity or part-whole within the same semantic domain.

All the tropes—metonymy, metaphor, synecdoche and irony—are symbols in a broad sense. I use the term *tropes*, then, only for analytical purposes in order to differentiate the poetic meanings of symbols from their semantico-referential meanings, although in reality the two often interpenetrate. For instance, a monkey is a symbol, representing a category of animals. In this case we are dealing only with its semantico-referential meaning. But the monkey becomes a trope if someone assigns it a poetic meaning, such as mediator, scapegoat or clown, as we will see later.

To illustrate my arguments, I have chosen the monkey in Japanese culture, which has served throughout history as a dominant verbal and visual metaphor of self for the Japanese.

The monkey—the beast in every body

The human-animal distinction. Although the difference between beasts and humans is delineated in every culture (see Ingold 1988), each culture draws the line between them in its own complex manner. In the normative picture of the Japanese universe, humans live in a harmonious relationship with beings of nature, including animals, who constitute their Shintō deities. The official Buddhist doctrines also offer a fluid demarcation line; since humans and animals alike undergo transmigrations the essential

distinction between them is denied. The line can be crossed by metamorphosis of a human into an animal, and the act represents a form of transcendence.

Yet there is another side to the Japanese notion of animals. Especially in later history and in plebeian culture, animals are regarded as lowly beasts without supernatural power. In plebeian culture the transcendental and the beastly nature of animals are but the two sides of animal-deities as they are of humans. The human/animal distinction, therefore, is a highly significant and sensitive issue for the Japanese as it is for other peoples.

In this regard, the macaque, native to the Japanese archipelago, has served for the Japanese as 'the beast in every body', embodying both the positive and the negative sides of animals and humans. Macaques are uncannily similar to humans—at least the Japanese think so—both in their bodies and in their behaviour. No other animal has figured more prominently in deliberations about who the Japanese are as humans *vis-à-vis* animals and as a people *vis-à-vis* other peoples. The meanings and tropic functions assigned to the monkey therefore enable us to tap essential dimensions of the Japanese conception of self. The monkey provides us with a strategic window into the Japanese world view and ethos.

Before urbanisation and industrialisation chased them off to the mountains or to 'reservations', macaques were familiar figures; the Japanese had frequent opportunities to observe them and their behaviour. Perhaps the most important basis for the affinity that the Japanese see between themselves and the monkey is the fact that the monkey, like humans, is a social animal.

In the Japanese conception, humans are both dialogically defined *vis-à-vis* other humans, and dialectically defined *vis-à-vis* society. The Japanese notion of humans is most succinctly expressed in the two characters for humans, which are combined to form the term *nigen*: the character for *nin* means 'humans' and that for *gen* means 'among' (Watsuji 1959:1-67).[2] In a culture that defines humans only in the company of other humans and in which the self is rarely defined in the abstract, the monkey, the group animal *par excellence*, is an apt symbol of humanness.

At the same time, an animal so similar to humans is threatening. It is dangerously close to being human, pressing hard on the demarcation line in Japanese cosmology between humans and non-humans. It threatens the throne on which the Japanese have sat, unique as humans and as a people. Seeing the macaques as too close to humans, the Japanese have deliberately established their distance from them. It is no accident, then, that the monkey is seldom involved in the metamorphosis between humans and animals—a theme quite popular in Japanese folktales—since human metamorphosis into animals, most of which are deified, is a form of transcendence. Thus, although metamorphosis of humans into snakes, foxes, badgers or other animals is commonly alluded to, metamorphosis is far less frequent in tales about monkeys (Nakamura 1984).

Distance is also created by emphasising the dissimilarities between macaques' bodily and behavioural features and the corresponding features of humans. Thus, when the Japanese wish to accentuate the animality of the monkey, they laugh at its 'ugly' eyes, nose, buttocks, and so on, whose equivalents in humans are seen to be 'superior', as I elaborate in a later section of this article.

Realising the similarities between monkeys and themselves, the Japanese have long deliberated upon their identity as humans *vis-à-vis* animals, and as Japanese *vis-à-vis* other peoples, by using the monkey, as it were, as a sounding board. In part this is

done by treating monkeys as various tropes in verbal and non-verbal discourse, including visual arts. For example, a newspaper editorial might admonish the Japanese by stating, 'We Japanese should not engage in the monkey-imitations (*sarumane*) of the West', just as keeping up with the Tanakas (Joneses) is frowned upon as a 'monkey imitation'.

Metaphor-metonymy linkage: the elementary structure. The process involved in the predication of the Japanese self upon the metaphor of the monkey is shown in fig. 1, in which I establish different levels of abstraction for purely analytical purposes, as discussed below. Historical and ethnographic information on cultural representations of the monkey suggests that the inchoate conceptualisation of the basic resemblance between monkeys and humans (Level I) is concretised at Level II, where the basic analogy is expressed in the equivalence of a set of selected physiological parts—the eyes, the nose, the buttocks and the hair—that both monkeys and humans possess. Note, however, that these body parts are simply equivalent and do not specify the content of equivalence: monkey eyes are similar to human eyes but not quite the same, and so on. Note also that each body part, such as the monkey's nose, is a metonym for the monkey, just as a human body part is a metonym for humans, by being a part of a whole.

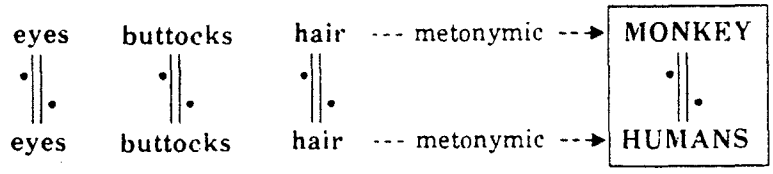
In short, *metonymic forms that are singled out to represent the monkey are chosen because of their metaphoric capacity for linking monkeys with humans.* These forms are, therefore, simultaneously metonymic in relation to the whole monkey and metaphoric in relation to human body parts. The monkey as a metaphor, therefore, is based upon 'fragments of syntagmatic chains' (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 151), but these *syntagmatic* fragments constitute the distinctive features defining the monkey precisely because of their capacity for metaphoric or *paradigmatic* linking of monkeys with humans. I come back to this point when I develop general arguments about 'synecdoche'.

Poetic meanings and significances. At Level III of fig. 1, cosmology and ethos enter the picture in assigning significances—in this case, poetic—to the monkey. Let me therefore briefly discuss the dualistic universe of the Japanese, whose fluidity is succinctly expressed in the yin-yang iconography; a small eye of yang in yin and one of yin in yang eventually grow large enough to take over the yin and yang halves of the iconography respectively. Yin-yang constitutes a system of complementary opposition (Freedman 1969: 7), with yin always having a yang element, and vice versa (for details, see Ohnuki-Tierney 1987: 130-3). In this universe, both deities and humans are characterised by dual qualities and powers. The role of ritual is to harness the positive power of deities in order to rejuvenate the lives of humans, who also embody both the negative, impure, degenerative quality and the positive, pure, energising quality.

In ancient Japan, the role of rejuvenating human lives was assigned to mediators, such as shamans, who were simultaneously musicians, dancers and religious specialists. At that time, monkeys were thought to be messengers from the powerful Mountain Deity. They were trained to dance human dances, and their dancing was imbued with the supernatural power of purity to heal the illnesses of horses and bless new rice crops and human lives in general. In short, monkeys were shamans, the sacred counterparts of human shamans. Thus the significance of the monkey was determined within the context of the principle of purity and impurity, which has served throughout history as the most important principle of classification in the Japanese universe and which

Level I. Inchoate conceptualization of analogy

Level II. Concretization: Establishment of physiological equivalence

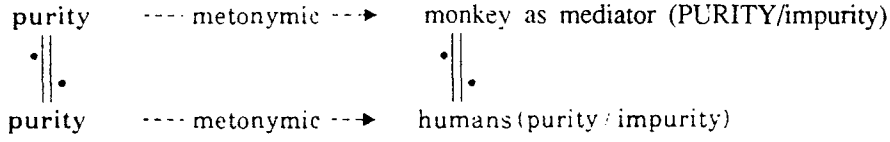


Level III. Becoming/predication at the collective level

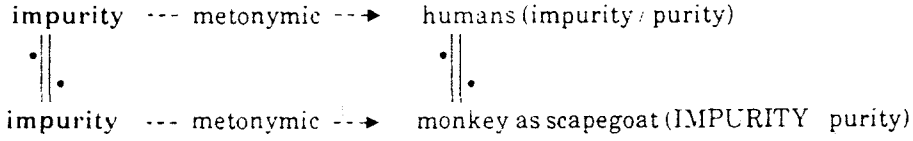
World view and ethos:

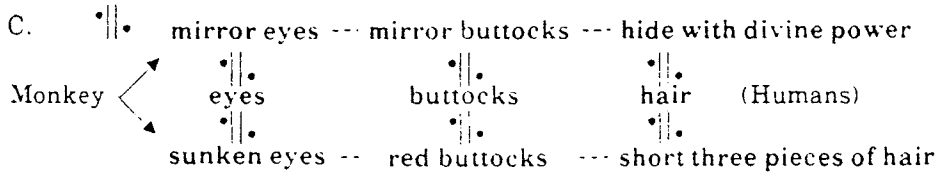
purity / impurity as the principle of classification, and as moral values accompanied by psychological aversion

A. *Monkey as mediator:* Light shining from its eyes and anus



B. *Monkey as scapegoat:* Monkey with "monkey (sunken) eyes," red butt, and "short three pieces of hair"





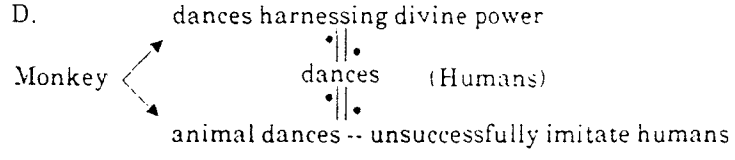


FIGURE 1. Levels of objectification.

has also underwritten the most psychologically powerful set of moral values (for details, see Ohnuki-Tierney 1984: 34-5; 1987:137-40).

But in this cosmology there is another means of maintaining the purity of the human self, besides its restoration by a mediator—that is, by transferring its impurity onto a scapegoat. The monkey turns into a secularised beast, shouldering the impurity of humans. From the Japanese perspective, the monkey as scapegoat carries out the same function as the mediator, but in reverse. As scapegoat, the monkey is laughed at because it is *short* of being human—it looks like a human but is too ugly to be one, and it tries in vain to behave like a human. This conception of the monkey as scapegoat arose later in history than the conception of the monkey as mediator, although the monkey

has been a multivocal symbol throughout history, with one or two meanings being dominant during any given historical period.

'Objectification' of poetic meanings. Given this structure of significance, every meaning of the monkey emerges in a particular context. Two types of context are involved: the historical context, which provides the general structure(s) of significance, and the context of a particular discourse, which constrains or engenders a particular meaning(s) of a symbol. Historical contexts are often neglected in our anthropological and linguistic discussions despite an almost commonsensical understanding that the significance of a word or a lexeme often changes with time. In the case of the monkey, its dominant meaning changed from mediator to scapegoat, due to the changing historical situation (see Ohnuki-Tierney 1987 for details). In the immediate context of verbal and non-verbal discourse, such factors as 'framing' (the 'definition' of the context as ritual, secular performance, ordinary discourse, or whatever) and readings by different actors, whose 'voices' are often multiple, are all responsible for the emergence of a particular meaning of the monkey.

A few specific representations of the monkey, chosen from different historical periods, illustrate how the equivalence between humans and monkeys in specific contexts is given various meanings, as actors—through the use of the monkey metaphor—move the monkey and consequently the humans (Japanese) around, in this case, up and down the scale while deliberating upon their own identity, as illustrated in fig. 2 (Fernandez 1986) .

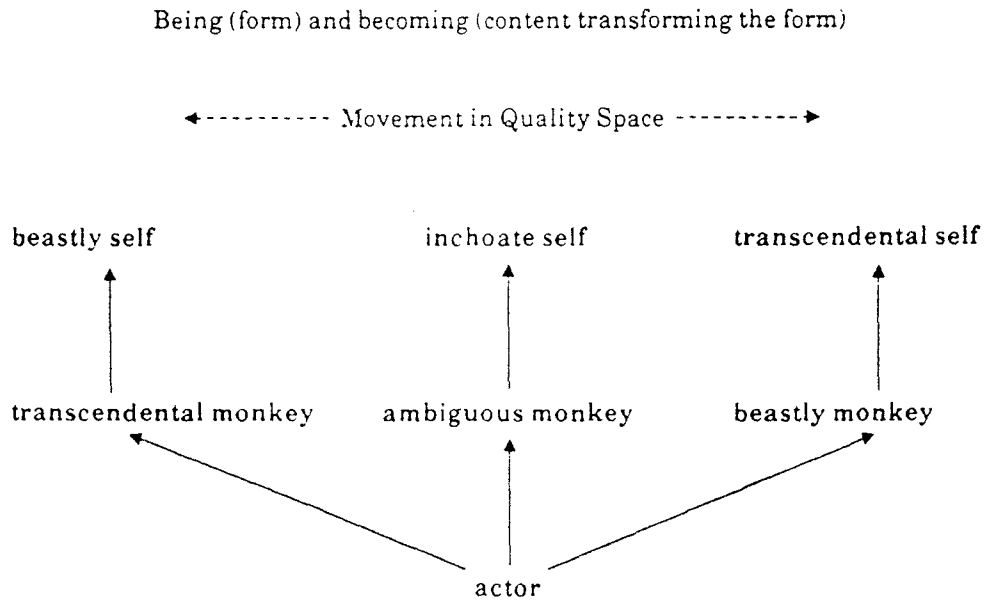


FIGURE 2. The beast and mirror in every body.

The oldest record of a monkey figure is the 'Monkey Deity' (*Saruta Biko*), which appears in the Kojiki, compiled in A.D. 712, and the *Nihongi*, compiled in A.D. 720—the two oldest writings that contain accounts of mythical-historical events of early periods. The Monkey Deity appears in an episode in which the Sun Goddess (Amaterasu Ōmikami), considered to be the ancestress of the Japanese, decides to send

her grandson to earth to govern there. As the grandson, accompanied by several other deities, is ready to descend, a scout, who has been sent earlier to clear their path, returns to report his encounter with the Monkey Deity, who has come to greet her grandson, at 'the eight cross-roads of Heaven'. The scout describes the Monkey Deity: his nose is seven hands long, his back is more than seven fathoms long, his eyeballs glow like an eight-handled [handed] mirror, and a light shines from his mouth and from his anus (Sakamoto *et al.* 1967: 147-8).[3]

In Japanese culture, light and mirrors are symbols of deities, and the deities in turn represent the transcendental selves of humans. The Sun Goddess, providing light to the Japanese universe, once hid herself in a cave, thereby depriving the world of light. Milliards of deities assembled in front of the cave, and, while making merry music and laughing, told her that there was a superior deity outside. Her curiosity aroused, she opened the door to the cave and saw herself in a mirror hung from a branch in front of the cave. Upon mistaking her image in the mirror for a goddess superior to her, she re-entered the Japanese universe which in turn regained light. Even today shrines ensconce a mirror as the soul of the guardian deity.

The anonymous author(s) of these 'chronicles' describe the Monkey Deity situated at a crossroads—a spatial symbol of mediation—halfway between deities and humans, and between heaven and earth. The transcendental quality is objectified as the glowing eyes and anus, as shown in fig. 1, Level III C. Here the monkey is moved up the scale, above humans, into the category of deities.

Note, however, that transcendental qualities are assigned to the same body parts that were selected later in history when the Japanese chose to assign a beastly quality to the monkey. In one of the traditional repertoire of aforementioned monkey performances, a trainer, representing his monkey, sings a song in which the monkey laments: 'Because of the karma of my parents, my face is red, my eyes are round, and, in addition, my nose is flat and ugly' (Yamaguchiken Kyōiku Iinkai Bunkaka 1980: 41). The monkey imitates weeping, covering its eyes with a handkerchief. The 'monkey eyes' (*sarume*) are eyes somewhat human, but sunken and ugly, unlike those of humans; when the phrase is used to refer to human eyes, it is an insult. The 'monkey face' (*sarumen kanja*) is likewise an ugly human face. Similarly, 'the monkey hip' (*sarugoshi*) is a human hip that looks like a quadrupedal monkey's. Importantly, a vital step in training monkeys for performance is teaching them bipedal posture, which symbolises the uniqueness and superiority of humans over animals in Japanese culture as in many others.

Sometimes the Japanese choose to identify the epitome of the monkey's animality—lack of control over its own sexuality—with its *red* buttocks. Above all, the Japanese 'definition' of the monkey is 'a human minus three pieces of hair'. As in many cultures, hair in Japanese culture is a powerful metonymic symbol, representing the essence of a person (Yanagita 1951: 121-2). The monkey, which lacks the quintessential quality of being human, thus turns into a laughable quadruped, carrying negative significance.

Figure 1 illustrates how the physiological parts of the monkey that are simple equivalents to human parts at Level II may be objectified positively or negatively at Level III, depending upon which poetic meaning is given to the monkey in a particular historical context and by a particular actor.

Two interrelated points may be registered here. First, as the preceding discussion makes clear, the monkey has never been an 'objective' entity in nature offering its

morphology and meaning as given. Poetic meaning is involved even in the perception of the monkey—its eyes are either glowing, or sunken and ugly. A broader implication of this finding is that the separation of referential meaning from poetic meaning is artificial and untenable. There never is 'pure reference', and 'poetry also refers' as Friedrich emphasises (1986: 126; 1979; Ohnuki-Tierney 1988).

Second, 'objectification' entails a continuous interactive process whereby a subject interacts with the external world through a simultaneous externalisation of itself and reappropriation, in turn, of this externalisation.[4] Neither the subject (the Japanese) nor the object (the monkey) is a determinant.

Polytropic symbols. Like meanings, tropes are not frozen onto particular objects or beings, or into their linguistic expressions. The use of tropes is *symbolic action* in Burke's (1966) sense. It has been discussed by several anthropologists, including Crocker (1977) and Sapir (1977) in their concerns with the social functions of tropes, by Fernandez (1986) with his emphasis on 'performance' and by Silverstein with his notion of 'enactment' (personal communication).

A monkey or a lion is not *ipso facto* a metaphor, a metonym, or a synecdoche; it becomes a particular type of trope through being used and/or interpreted by particular actors, including interpreters such as anthropologists, in a particular context. 'George the lion' is a metaphor, if the actor intends to point out George's courage, but it is an irony if George is a wimp.

Let me illustrate the 'polytropic' nature of symbols with our Japanese monkey from the sixteenth century during which both its significances—as a sacred mediator and as a lowly beast—co-existed as dominant meanings. The polysemes of the monkey had given some historical actors an opportunity to play with meanings, as vividly illustrated in a pamphlet that was posted on the streets of Kyoto in 1591 (Elison 1981: 244). It reads:

Masse to wa	The end of the world
Bechi ni wa araji	Is nothing but this:
Ki no shita no	Watching
Saru Kanpaku o	the Monkey Regent
Miru ni tsuketemo	Under the tree

The poster was a satirical commentary on Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who became a regent (*kanpaku*) and achieved the political unification of Japan after a long period of cyclical warfare. Subscribing to the monkey's positive significance, Hideyoshi, a commoner who became a regent, strove in various ways to identify himself with the Monkey Deity (Ooms 1985: 285-7). Thus people nicknamed him the 'Monkey Regent' (*Saru Kanpaku*). 'Under the tree' refers to Hideyoshi's alleged original family name, Kinoshita, which means literally 'under a tree', and to the monkey's abode, a tree. The satirical commentary in the poster, which obviously alludes to the negative significance of the monkey, laments the approach of the end of the world, when a commoner can be a regent, and worse still, when a monkey is governing humans. Ultimately, it is a supreme irony regarding a man who strove to be a transcendental monkey, not knowing or at least choosing to ignore the other meaning of the monkey that his people were assigning to him.

For those, including Hideyoshi, who considered the monkey to be a sacred mediator, it was a metaphor for a transcendental human self, but the author of the poster used it as an irony. Yet for another interpreter, the monkey could have been a synecdoche,

as I define it in a later section of this article, since the analogies between monkeys and humans place the two domains in a metonymic relationship. Since both irony and synecdoche presuppose the metonymic and metaphoric meanings of the monkey, they are at a higher level of abstraction than ordinary metaphor or metonym. Of all the tropes, irony requires the greatest reflexive distance between subject and object, that is, between the interpreter and the monkey. It is a meta-social commentary by someone who questions the received categories of his/her own society.

Summary. The metonymic parts representing the monkey are defined and redefined through positive and negative analogies to the equivalent body parts of humans. Actors can use not only body parts but also behavioural characteristics strategically to move the monkey, and, conversely, human beings or a particular human, up and down the scale. By so doing, the Japanese can 'adorn' or 'disparage' (Aristotle 1960: 187) themselves as in fig. 2. As a polytropic and polysemic symbol, the monkey facilitates movement along the scale, without the aid of another metaphor. It is a jellyfish, a porpoise, or what have you, simultaneously.

A meaning of the monkey is a construction in a particular context by a historical actor whose interpretation and construction nevertheless are constrained by the received categories.[5] Likewise, the monkey functions in a different tropic capacity—sometimes as a metonym, at other times as a metaphor, at still other times as a synecdoche, or even as an irony—depending upon the context, and upon the level of abstraction of its meaning. In addition, interpenetrations, overlaps and transformations and countertransformations are almost always involved in tropes, so that a symbol may be more than one trope simultaneously or successively.

Synecdoche as an interstitial trope and trope theory

Placing my discussion of the Japanese monkey within a broader framework of trope theories, I propose in this section a formulation of synecdoche as an interstitial trope, rather than as a subtype of metonymy.

Trope theories: a sketch.[6] Of the two dominant approaches to tropes, one makes a fourfold distinction between metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony; the other recognises only two types, metaphor and metonymy. Without going into the details of the two schools and their arguments, my discussion focuses upon the interrelationships between metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche.

For Jakobson (1956), Lévi-Strauss (1966: 150) and Leach (1976), metaphor is characterised by similarity, whereas metonymy is characterised by contiguity, cause and effect, means and ends, and container and content.[7] In this schema, synecdoche is included in metonymy. Recognising the two types of tropes, these scholars have wrestled with the interrelationship between metaphor and metonymy. Lévi-Strauss has drawn attention to the 'transformation and counter-transformation' between metonymy and metaphor (see Ohnuki-Tierney 1987: 218-21). Similarly, even those who hold metaphor to be the most central of all tropes emphasise that a metonymic principle is often involved in metaphor. For example, de Man (1979) insists that striking metaphor depends upon metonymic connexions, and Gennette (1972) emphasises the co-existence and mutual support or interpenetration of metaphor and metonymy.

The orthodox argument—held since Aristotle (1960 [1932]: 187 [3, 1405*a*]; 206 [3, 1410*b*]) and by many, including Vico (1961: 87 [I, 404]), Culler (1981), de Man (1979), Fernandez (1986), and Ullmann (1964)—has been that metaphor is the most creative and powerful of all tropes. Recently, Sapir (1977), Todorov (1970), and T. Turner (1987) have argued that synecdoche is the master trope, but Friedrich would choose irony if he were forced to choose only one (personal communication). Offering to synecdoche a privileged status by assigning to it a special kind of 'part to whole' relationship, T. Turner (1987: MS. p. 20) defines it as 'the relation through which an entity presents homologous qualities to, or reproduces the structure of another as a consequence of forming part of the same system or whole'. Sapir's (1977) synecdoche is characterised either by the anatomical mode (whole for part or part for whole) or the taxonomic mode (genus for species or species for genus). The question of the choice of a particular trope as *the* master trope seems spurious when we consider that a particular meaning or a tropic type emerges in a social context as it is used or interpreted by an actor. On the other hand, a focus on synecdoche offers us insights into the dynamics and complexity of tropes.

I now proceed to a formulation of synecdoche and delineate the interrelationships between synecdoche and metonymy, on the one hand, and between synecdoche and metaphor, on the other. Each tropic type is seen to emerge during a *continuous* conceptual process in which one tropic type transforms into another as actors 'play' with the tropic principles, as illustrated schematically in fig. 4 (see p. 101). I begin with a discussion of metaphor and the semantic tension involved in it, since it is this tension that reveals the presence of synecdoche.

Semantic tension in metaphorical predication. The presence of similarities and dissimilarities is often pointed out in discussions of metaphor. Most frequently the arguments point to the presence of similarities in the dissimilar. Aristotle emphasises this point when he states, 'a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars' (Aristotle 1960[1932]: e.g., 212-15 [3, 1412a, 1412b]). Burke's (1955) well-known statement reads: 'It [metaphor] brings out the thisness of a that, or the thatness of a this'. In discussing the power of metaphor, Geertz (1973: 211), while stressing semantic tension, explains, 'When it works, a metaphor transforms a false identification . . . into an apt analogy, when it misfires it is a mere extravagance'. Tambiah (1968) emphasises that 'it [metaphor] highlights a resemblance'.

Although metaphor does foreground a particular feature of similarity in the dissimilar, I would argue that for certain metaphors the tension between dissimilarities and a similarity (or similarities) of the tenor and the vehicle is the source of their metaphorical power, as Richards (1950 [1936]) long ago emphasised.

A brief comparison of the monkey as self in Japanese culture with such well-known metaphors as 'George the lion' and 'The Attorney General is a jellyfish' (Fernandez 1986) will serve to situate the monkey 'metaphor' within trope theories. A lion or a jellyfish so remotely resembles a human that its use as a metaphor places in prominence only a particular feature of often unexpected similarity. In these cases, although the actor is credited with powerful creativity, evident in his/her ability to unveil the unexpected similarity, the distance between the semantic domain of the tenor and that of the vehicle is so great that the two domains remain separate except for that feature—namely courage, or the absence of backbone. Consequently, the metaphoric

predication does not bring the two semantic domains closer together. A particular feature of similarity is revealed, but dissimilarities are taken for granted. The power of the jellyfish metaphor rests upon the identification of an unexpected similarity.

By contrast, in the case of a monkey in Japanese culture, or a dog in British culture (see Leach 1976), the proximity between such an animal and humans is recognised even without a metaphorical predication. The role of metaphor, then, is to bring to the fore an inherent metonymic relationship—sometimes uncomfortable to articulate in the mind—between the two semantic domains by emphasising similarities. Humans and monkeys (or dogs) are placed side by side in *a metonymic relationship through the metaphorical emphasis on the likeness*. In a given context, a particular feature of similarity stands for the general analogy between the two domains, which at the referential level are kept separate. The semantic tension underlying the monkey as a metaphor derives from the specific nature—at times welcome and at other times threatening—of the proximity between the two domains.

Thus the macaque has served for the Japanese throughout history as 'the beast in every body' precisely because monkeys are uncannily and often unwelcomely similar to humans when they are or should be dissimilar. The mission of some metaphors is not to offer an insight into certain similarities between two dissimilar forms. Rather, their mission is simultaneously to juxtapose similarities and dissimilarities, thereby creating the tension that is the source of their affectivity and illocutionary power.

Put another way, 'the lion' leaves George and all other humans alone, except for a particular feature of similarity, whereas 'the monkey' is ready to lump humans and monkeys in a single category. We should be aware of the difference between these two types of metaphor since it is of consequence for the nature of their performative powers.

Synecdoche as an interstitial trope. The metonymic relationship established by metaphoric predication must be examined further in order to elucidate the interrelationships among tropes. I do so by examining the conceptual principles involved in the figures we call the 'mediator' and the 'scapegoat'—the two roles assigned to the monkey in Japanese culture. Although 'mediators' and 'scapegoats' are not tropes, the principles that define these figures are of contiguity and analogy/similarity—the same principles that define metonymy and metaphor, respectively.

As shown schematically in fig. 3, both mediator and scapegoat stand in a metonymic relationship to the human self. The monkey, as a marginal deity, is situated at the margin of the semantic category of deities, thereby next to the semantic category of humans. It is metonymically related to the self through the contiguity principle. Conversely, the monkey as scapegoat is positioned within, but at the margin of, the domain of humans, as expressed succinctly in the aforementioned Japanese 'definition' of the monkey as 'a human minus three pieces of hair'. In relation to the self, then, a scapegoat is closer than a mediator. A scapegoat is one's own kind but is lacking some qualifications; it is metonymically related to the self through the part-whole principle.

The monkey's proximity to humans is in turn the basis on which the monkey becomes a messenger/mediator, bringing, during a ritual, the purifying energy of deities to humans whose life, without the replenishment of purity, would degenerate into a state of impurity. As shown in fig. 3, humans, who embody both purity and impurity, are placed in an analogous relation to the monkey as mediator through the sharing of purity. A scapegoat, on the other hand, situated at the classificatory margin,

becomes the repository of impurity—it shoulders the impurity of the self, which in turn becomes purified. It is analogically related to the self through the sharing of impurity. These three structures—the self, mediator and scapegoat—are analogous, embodying both purity and impurity; purity, shown in capitals in fig. 1 (Level III A), overshadows impurity in the case of deities and the mediator, but impurity, shown in capitals in fig. 1 (Level III B), overshadows purity in the case of the scapegoat.

Otherwise put, the monkey as a messenger belongs to a semantic category distinct from but next to the category of humans, and is linked to the latter through *contiguity* in the syntagmatic chain, while it is also related to it through *analogy* in the paradigmatic chain, as shown in fig. 3.

The monkey as scapegoat transforms itself from a metonym of humans through contiguity, to a metonym of humans through a part-whole relationship by occupying, albeit at the margin, the same semantic domain, and finally to a metaphor of humans by sharing impurity. The monkey as scapegoat, therefore, is related to humans through standing in a *part to whole* relationship, as well as through the *analogy* of sharing impurity.

As set out in fig. 4, the monkey as mediator and the monkey as scapegoat represent two types of synecdoche characterised *simultaneously* by analogy and either contiguity (A) or a part-whole principle (B). These two types of synecdoche are two phases of the *conceptual process* of symbolic representation. In the case of monkey symbolism, its historical transformation was in fact from synecdoche A to synecdoche B, but the model is not meant to represent a historical process. According to the model, synecdoche B may just as well transform into synecdoche A, as the bi-directional arrows indicate.

Synecdoche B is the type of trope most broadly applicable in studies of ideology and political economy. Defining synecdoche as characterised by whole-for-part or

Mediator and scapegoat--Metonymic/syntagmatic and metaphoric/paradigmatic relation to self

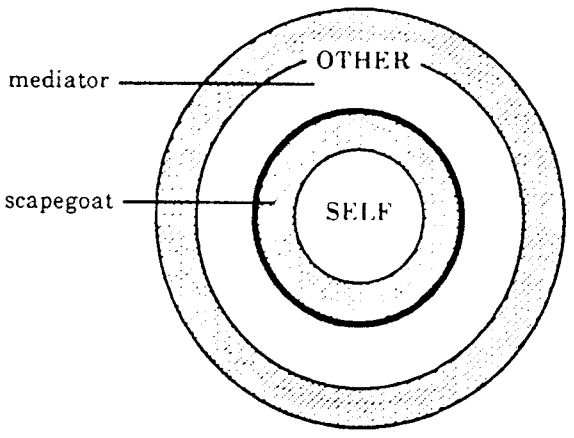


FIGURE 3. Metonymy-metaphor transformations.

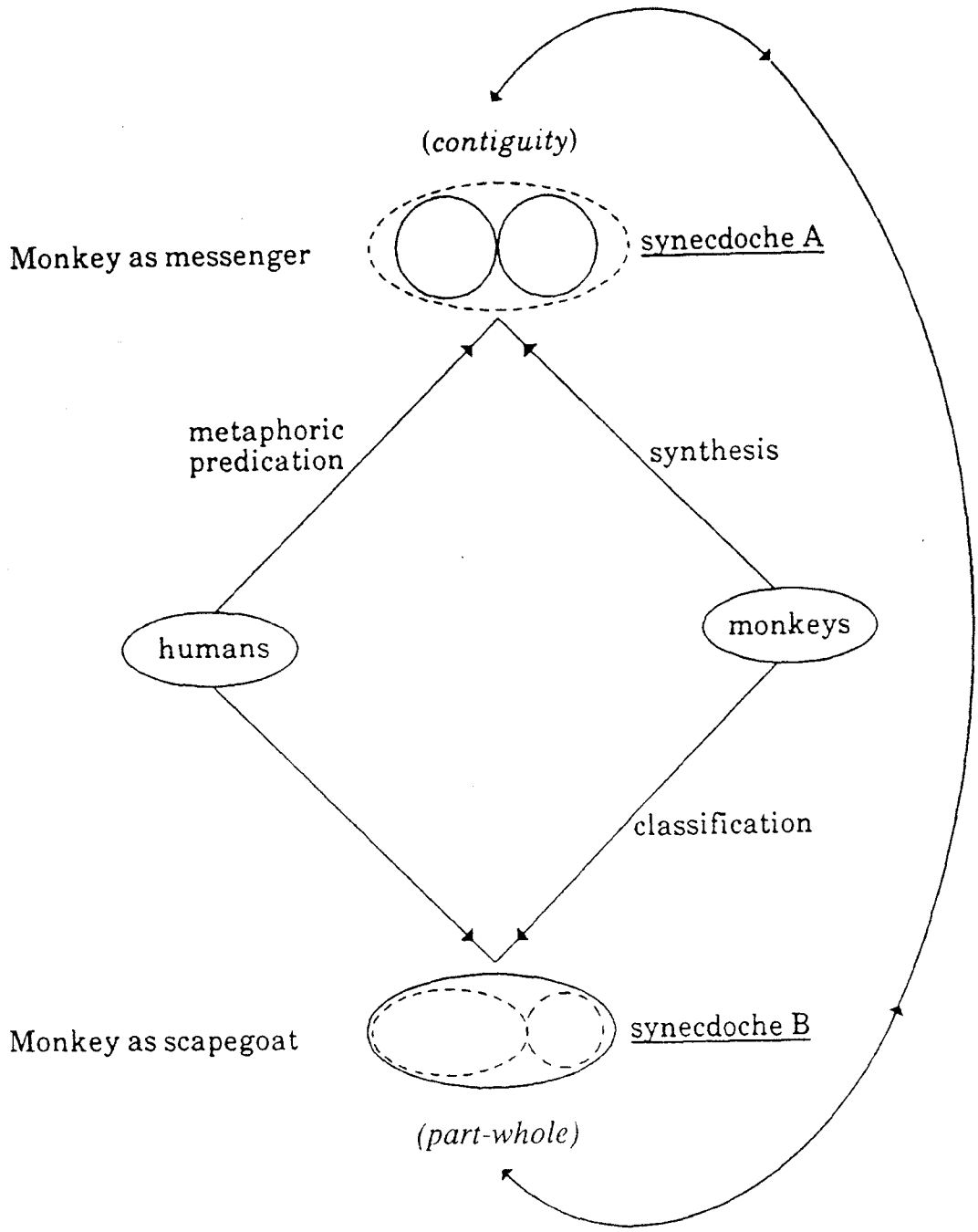


FIGURE 4. Synecdoche as an interstitial trope.

part-for-whole relations, Friedrich (1989: 27) points to its 'terrible power' which 'surfaces from its workings in the political economy when allegorical individuals ... or an entire population ("The Americans", "The Germans", "The Russians") ... are accused of atrocities and mass crimes in which only a tiny fraction of the population was engaged ...'.

We can also turn his argument around to find the beguiling power of synecdoche. 'We, the Japanese', for example, often negates the presence of minority groups, who are represented by the dominant group, to which 'we' in fact alone refers. Thus the label, 'the Japanese', has always meant the dominant Japanese—the elites in the agrarian sector—and yet it has been seen as 'naturally' representing *all* Japanese.

This is clearly illustrated by 'the special status people'—a minority group in contemporary Japan.[8] In my original work on the monkey (Ohnuki-Tierney 1987), I examined the historical transformations of the meaning of the monkey in relation to those of the meaning assigned to the special status group, once referred to as 'outcastes', because monkey-training was one of the traditional occupations of this group. The meanings assigned to the special status people, or at least to some of them, have undergone the same transformations as the meanings attached to the monkey—from mediator to scapegoat.

Historical evidence suggests no genealogical continuity between the special-status people in different historical periods. Nor did they form a closed social group. Although some have argued that they are of Korean descent, there is very little evidence that these people actually had a different ethnic origin from the majority of the population. Throughout history they have held primarily non-agrarian occupations. Some were traders, artisans, religious specialists, and performing artists. Others held occupations that dealt with culturally defined impurity, including specialists in purification rituals and a number of occupations related to animal and human deaths. The formation of the special-status people as a minority in Japanese society was gradual, resulting from the interplay of a number of factors. One was the growing hegemony of an agrarian value system that devalued non-agrarian occupations. Another was the establishment of impurity as radical negativity sometime during the latter half of the Medieval period, resulting in an extremely negative evaluation of occupations dealing with death and other culturally defined impurity. In 1572 people in such occupations were legally codified as 'outcastes'. Since then, the special-status people have been a minority in Japanese society. Above all, they have been seen as 'impure'.

In relation to Japanese society at large they constitute synecdoche B, being subsumed by 'we, the Japanese'. Like the monkey as scapegoat, the special status group is related to the dominant Japanese through the sharing of impurity, which the latter have imposed on it, and through being part to the whole of Japanese society. In addition, 'the Korean descent theory' exemplifies how a relationship between a minority and a dominant group may be construed as a historical development from synecdoche A to B, such that the dominant group can deny its identity with the minority.

The model illustrated in fig. 4 serves to explain the way the relationship between dominant and minority groups is generally conceptualised.[9] On the one hand it shows how, through synecdoche B, the presence of minorities is negated in discourse in which the generic 'we' or, for example, 'the Americans', is used to refer to an entire population. On the other hand, the model also serves to explain how people, such as the dominant Japanese, often falsely conceptualise 'the actual historical process' whereby an entire social group might have derived from two distinct social categories.

As a conceptual model fig. 4 indicates that synecdoche A inherently involves the uneasy tension between the two original semantic categories, whereas the tension inherent in synecdoche B is the threat of fission into two distinct categories. Synecdoche A and B are, therefore, interstitial tropes in the sense that they involve a process of becoming. Our poetic constructions thus represent a movement of thought. They involve temporality. Just as metaphoric predication involves a process, both types of synecdoche are not simply the end results of conceptualisation. Rather, they embody the analogic synthesis of classificatory categories and the discursive process of classifi-

catory fission. The two modes of thought are enacted as conceptual processes in our poetic construction of synecdoche.

Because I have stressed temporality and processuality in the poetic process, let me clarify my use of these terms, especially in view of the perpetuation of Lévi-Strauss's misuse of the notion of diachrony. In its original use by the Prague School, diachrony refers to irreversible historical change. Yet as Ingold (1986) and T. Turner (1977*b*) point out, Lévi-Strauss (1966: 208) equates it with the temporal sequence involved in *la parole*, falsely identifying the opposition between the synchronic and the diachronic with those between *la langue* and *la parole* and between paradigm and syntagm. Lévi-Strauss's 'diachrony' refers to acts of speech—actual utterances that are, in his scheme, manifestations of the linguistic code (*la langue*). Furthermore, Lévi-Strauss's emphasis on the temporality of *la parole* is placed at the expense of temporality at the other pole, involving paradigm and metaphor, which, as I have argued above, is characterised by temporality just as well.[10]

Conclusion

The intellectual appeal of tropes may very well be that they remind us of multiple realities and multiple representations, and, ultimately, of the centrality of indeterminacy in our conceptual world. Tropes remind us that the world out there is not as statically classified and delineated as we might assume. It is this indeterminacy, however, that enables creative energy to engender polytropic and polysemic symbols. Flights of imagination may lead us to transcendence, and yet that transcendence may lead us into the body of a beast, perhaps one with glowing eyes and anus. The tension in metaphors and the creation of synecdoche arise from the kaleidoscopic realities whose dynamic movements let us reach the heights of poetic imagination, but not nihilistic chaos. Ultimately, the new creations are enacted by agents who are constrained but not determined by the received categories of a given historical period and by the context of their social interaction.

Using the Japanese monkey as an example, I have presented a formulation of *polytropic* symbols—symbols that transform into different tropic types in different contexts. I emphasise the constructions of these tropes as movements. In particular, I argue that not only metonymy but also metaphor represents a movement, thus involving temporality.

Within this framework, my discussion has focused on synecdoche. Traditionally, synecdoche has been regarded as a subtype of metonymy, which is a subtype of 'contiguity'. In an attempt to draw attention to the fluidity and complexity of tropic functions in practice, I propose to recognise an interstitial type between metaphor and metonymy, labelled synecdoche, and defined as: *a trope that involves analogy between two semantic domains metonymically linked as a result of metaphorical predication.* A synecdoche must thus meet two conditions: first, it must involve two *distinct* semantic categories that *become* metonymically related—either through a part-whole relationship or through contiguity; and secondly, metaphor and metonymy must be involved simultaneously.

On the one hand, synecdoche is distinguished from metonymy, which is also characterised by part-whole or contiguity principles, by the involvement of two semantic categories. On the other hand, synecdoche is distinguished from metaphor by the formation of the metonymic relation between the two domains.

As for the conceptual principles involved in relating a vehicle to a tenor, synecdoche involves both metaphoric and metonymic principles, rather than an altogether distinctive principle. As a trope representing the *interpenetration* of metaphor and metonymy, however, synecdoche is a more complex form of trope, and is thus to be differentiated from ordinary metonymy or metaphor.

Synecdoche, like metaphor, presupposes both a classificatory scheme—underlying the two distinct categories—and a synthesis of categories through analogy. Furthermore, its metonymic dimension reveals the process whereby a new category is created. Seen in this light, synecdoche, governed simultaneously by metaphoric and metonymic principles, represents a trope that is truly processual.

The notion of polytropic symbols therefore seriously challenges both the biaxial framework of the structuralist approach to tropes and to discourse in general, and the choice of a particular tropic type as the master trope. Even when scholars emphasise the interdependence between metaphor and metonymy, their representation through a Saussurian image of counterposed axes falsely denies their interpenetration. Such representation fails to portray the essential characteristic of polytropic symbols, which transform from one type to another in a fluid process. Even more importantly, we must re-examine the conceptual foundations of the dichotomy between analogic and discursive/propositional modes of thought, although a detailed discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this article.

Likewise, the choice of a particular trope as the master trope—often metaphor, but recently synecdoche or irony—also denies the contextual construction of tropic types. As with meanings, tropes are not out there waiting for us. They are *not* things unto themselves. A particular symbol is construed to be a particular trope by an actor in a given social context. Scholars who claim metaphor to be the master trope often stress the metonymic underpinnings of effective and powerful metaphors. Yet, by offering metaphor a privileged place, this view freezes the essentially processual nature of the construction of poetic meanings into a static, abstract model. When the Saussurian biaxial framework is combined with an emphasis on paradigm and metaphor, it denies the temporality not only of the syntagmatic chain, but also of metaphor itself.[11]

Synecdoche as defined above clearly illustrates how metaphor and metonymy interpenetrate, thereby showing how the dichotomy of paradigm and syntagm is false. Our monkey, as a polytropic symbol, illustrates the interdependence of the two axes as they conjoin in the continuous process, as a symbol transforms from one tropic type to another. Both axes involve temporality, and the two join hands in the movements of a polytropic symbol.

NOTES

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[1] The terms tenor and vehicle were first used by Richards (1950). See also Basso (1981).

[2] I do not wish to imply here that the dialogical and dialectical definitions of being human in Japanese culture translate into 'groupism', that portrayal of Japanese as always interacting harmoniously with each other and sacrificing themselves for the goals of the social group, which is sometimes presented in the genre of writing known as *nihonjinron* (theories about the Japanese).

[3] For the identification of Saruta Biko as the Monkey Deity, see Inada & Ōshima (1977: 392); Kurano & Takeda (1958: 127); Minakata (1972: 401); Philippi (1969: 138, 140, 142); Shimonaka (1941: 118).

[4] For a detailed treatment of 'objectification, see Miller (1987). See also Humphrey (1988) for her insight into the process of objectification with an emphasis on its indexical nature.

[5] For a discussion of three different structures of meaning engendered by the same monkey performance, see Ohnuki-Tierney (1987).

[6] Needless to say, the available literature is too vast even to present an adequate overview of this field of trope theory. Some representative overviews are included in: Black (1981 [1962]); Culler (1981); Ortony (1979); Ricoeur (1987 [1975]); Sacks (1979 [1978]); Sapir & Crocker (1977); Todorov (1987 [1977]).

[7] Leach separates out the 'cause and effect' principle to set up a third figure, signals.

[8] I borrow from Susan Tax Freeman (personal communication) the designation in English of 'the special status group', since it has neither positive nor negative connotations. It therefore enables me to refer to people whose meaning in Japanese society has changed through time. In Japanese they are referred to as *burakumin* or *hisabetsu burakumin*.

[9] For a similar use of pronouns of the first person plural in the case of the Swazi Newala, see Lincoln (1987: 152). On the 'origin' of the gypsies, which is similar to that of the special status people, see Okely (1983). For the purging of the German self through the creation of Jews as scapegoats, which likewise parallels the Japanese case, see Burke (1955).

[10] Temporality as a mode of thought must be distinguished from historical processes involving the actual flow of time, which is not involved in the temporality of poetic construction. Poetic temporality is akin to historicity or historical consciousness—to the way people experience and understand history. People often relate the past and the present either metaphorically through analogy or metonymically through contiguity (see Ohnuki-Tierney n.d.). Likewise, concepts of time do not include the actual flow of time, but implicate patterns of thought (Ohnuki-Tierney 1973).

[11] This dualism is persistent in trope theories and inherent even in Langer's (1980: 79-102) contrast between discursive and presentational symbols, although her emphasis on the latter is otherwise an important perspective.

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Le singe comme métaphore?: transformations d'un symbole polytropique dans la culture japonaise

Résumé

La plupart des symboles sont polytropiques aussi bien que polysémiques en ce que leurs significations multiples dans des contextes divers fonctionnent comme des types différents de tropes. Cet article poursuit la nature complexe des polytropes à travers une formulation de synecdoche comme un trope interstitiel entre métaphore et métonymie, et démontre comment les deux principes conceptuels d'analogie et de contiguïté, qui définissent respectivement métaphore et métonymie, sont interdépendants et interpénétrés plutôt que fundamentalement de natures différentes comme présentées dans l'image biaxe de la linguistique structurelle. La pensée analogique exprimée en métaphore engage mouvement et temporalité, précisément comme le fait la pensée discursive de métonymie. L'interpénétration des deux modes de pensée est démontrée par une analyse du processus d'objectification de ce qui a été à travers l'histoire, un symbole dominant du moi de la culture japonaise: le singe. Comme symbole polysémique et polytropique, le singe prend des significations différentes et fonctionne comme des types de tropes différents, séquentiellement ou simultanément, comme des acteurs utilisent et/ou interprètent le symbole dans des contextes variés historiques et sociaux.