Transmission, Inheritance, Emulation 12 by Peter Goldsbury

INTERLUDE
V: The Danger of Words or,
The Elephant in the Dojo: Distinguishing the *Jumbo* from the *Mumbo*
Part 2: Ueshiba's Elephant and the Rest of the Herd

The last column was a concentrated examination of the discourses of Morihei Ueshiba. Actually, I managed to cover just four paragraphs, much less than one percent of all his discourses. The examination was dry, dealt with Ueshiba's language in a very restricted sense, but was necessary, in my opinion. The point of such an examination is most definitely not to state or even imply that Ueshiba's discourses are meaningless, or false—or even true. The point, rather, is that to understand Ueshiba *on his own terms* requires much effort and the best place to start is by studying as closely as possible what he actually states—in the way he states it. This is just the beginning, of course, and such study needs to be supplemented by other things, but what happens after this is up to each individual aikidoist / budoka.

In this column I would like to use the close examination of Ueshiba's discourses as the stepping-off point for a more relaxed and wide-ranging discussion about language in aikido and aikido training. Topics covered include, for example, translation in aikido, the language of reporting one's experiences in training, the use of metaphor. Inasmuch as it touches on the nature of aikido, however, such a discussion has occasionally been compared to several blind men describing an elephant. Morihei Ueshiba, on the other hand, seemed to be very clear about the elephant and described it in uncompromising terms. The problem, of course, is that, even with someone as important as Ueshiba, his elephant is not our elephant—and he never expected it to be. I have heard directly from so many shihans who were *deshi* of O Sensei, that he conceived of his aikido—the aikido he showed them, as **his** own, and the aikido his *deshi* trained themselves in, as **their** own. This does not, of course, mean that the latter did not strive to train exactly as they thought O Sensei expected. On the contrary, following all the clues and attempting to perceive and replicate Morihei Ueshiba's elephant was the only way open to them of coming to perceive and develop their own. Of course, Ueshiba expected their aikido and his aikido to be fairly similar: to have membership of the same herd—and occasionally exploded in anger when he thought it was not. Nevertheless, there is a context to these explosions and this has to be understood as well.

In his later years O Sensei was an acknowledged guru and became a member of the Japanese category 御年寄様 *O Toshiyori-sama* (*Honorable Elderly Person*). Japan's is an age-dominated society and mutton is firmly expected to dress and behave exactly like mutton, with very little lamb allowed to appear. Something that goes with the seniority—perhaps as compensation for the loss of effective decision-making authority to the next generation—is the liberty to discourse to all and sundry about anything considered important. There is a prior, built-in assumption, of course, that the discourse is full of wisdom, so everyone listens with the look, at least, of intense concentration, even if no one really has a clue about the actual contents of the discourse. Obviously *someone* will understand it and it is very important that it takes place, but it really is very difficult to understand for those who have not acquired the age, and especially the wisdom, that comes with 'guru-dom'. So I privately wonder how much O Sensei was conscious that he was playing an important role, so to speak, and made his discourses more obscure than they needed to be. I think he knew that there are two aspects to the discourse of a Sensei, especially a Sensei with the stature that merits an O before the name: it should obviously be 'wise', and it should also be obscure, even seemingly contradictory. Effort has to be expended in understanding it. Otherwise the gravity of the message will be lost.

Those who think I am being flippant here should listen to the discourses of a Japanese 'Godfather-style' politician, like the late Shin Kanemaru, or experience a Japanese wedding party, both of which are clear examples of *tatemae* over *honne* and form over content. In my time as a professor, I have attended about fifty wedding parties (the parties take place immediately after the actual wedding ceremony, which is much more private) and they all follow the same pattern. They are choreographed by a gushing MC with all the expertise displayed at the annual All-Japan Aikido Demonstration, but the main theme of the party—the point which everyone gathers to celebrate—is the official wisdom that these hapless newly-weds do not have the slightest clue about the life they are about to embark upon and so need all the help and advice they can get from all the old folks sitting around the tables. At the beginning of the ceremony, some important Senseis and 御年寄様 give long speeches, sometimes enlivened by a very traditional song, but always full of advice couched in very obscure and 'difficult' Japanese—and always tending to the maintenance of 和 *wa* , the prized quality of peace & harmony that lies at the roots of Japanese culture. Many of those who listen deeply appreciate the creative tension between form and content—and especially the triumph of the former.

The transition comes with the 乾杯（*kampai*) toast. After this the guests become more relaxed and settle down to enjoy themselves, the alcohol flows and the younger guests take over the speeches, which become more and more risqué. At the end of the ceremony, the newly-weds earnestly, always tearfully (the bride giving vent to a modest flood, the groom allowing the briefest of fleeting drops), vow to seek and follow the advice of all their elders and seniors, but everyone knows that this is also a *tatemae*—another official fiction that makes the Japanese feel good about themselves and their culture, and no one, the newly-weds in particular, has any doubt that the advice will never be sought, except perhaps from their own parents. The Japanese wedding is a concentrated exercise in role-play and in losing oneself in the role.

The last comment in the previous paragraph is of some importance, for it relates indirectly to how Morihei Ueshiba uses his own language. To a westerner, brought up to believe in the supreme importance of the individual as a moral being, and of actions springing from a sense of identity or self-honesty as an individual, role-playing is somewhat suspect: it is something one sees in a theater, or does in a language

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class; it is not something one does all the time. For a Japanese, in my opinion, playing an age-related role is something that is much closer to the roots of identity and self-honesty as an individual. Thus, to think that O Sensei was somehow pretending, or that he had a choice of ways of stating what he wanted to say about his art—and chose the most difficult way, creates a gap between the individual and the role that is not there.

1: The Ubiquity of Language …
Since this discussion starts from a very basic level, I think it needs to be stressed that language plays a central and crucial role in aikido and in aikido training—as it does in any human activity. There is a tendency to denigrate language in aikido, especially on Internet forums and in discussions concerning such concepts as *KI* and *kotodama*, or explanations of complex *waza*. I have just left three Japanese terms untranslated in the last sentence, but this is because there is no concise, one-to-one translation that I myself find satisfactory (and from a glance at the discussion on *tao*/*dao* in Vol. 2 of Joseph Needham's *Science and Civilization in China*, I see that I am in good company). However, this has little to do with the matter of the general adequacy or inadequacy of language as a vehicle for explaining and discussing aikido. I believe that the above issue stems from certain problems relating to translation (which probably involve far less than something like 0.0001% of all language use) rather than any general failure of language. Most of the time, language works very well indeed, even in translation and even in relation to aikido, and I think we need to remember this. If it did not, we would be in a very dire situation indeed. To understand this, consider the following excerpt, taken from a thread in *AikiWeb*. The writer is talking about 'two realms', but the point is the statement about the terms, 'physical' and 'mental':

> *…they are, ultimately, neither physical nor spiritual - those are just words with no real meaning.*

I understand the writer's intention, but I myself do not believe that there are any 'mere' words with no 'real' meaning. The fact that they have 'real' meanings and are constituents of utterances is what makes words words and not mere strings of letters. The writer is making an observation about language that cannot, in my opinion, be right: he is using these terms in an utterance and has to assume that they both have 'real' meaning. If they did not, they would not be understood. Similarly, much of the denigration of language in discussion forums assumes what needs to be proved: assertions that language 'fails' are always made in language that is assumed to 'succeed'. And, of course, language does succeed about 99.9999% of the time, even when the topics concern matters that appear unsuitable as subjects for discussion. I think that this is one of the great virtues of the Internet, for as well as forcing people to take language far more seriously as a medium of communication, it is a constant reaffirmation of the power of the written word—rather like *kotodama*, in its own way.

2: … On the Internet
I am a great believer in Internet discussion forums about the martial arts, especially aikido. I used to participate in six or seven forums, but it became far too time-consuming—and in some forums the 'signal-to-noise' ratio made participation increasingly counterproductive, so I have now cut the number down to two or three. It is always interesting to watch a promising thread developing—and see the instances of communication obscured or even overwhelmed by the miscommunication and non-communication that is also going on. Sometimes the latter two are due to practical problems, but the question whether the non-communication & miscommunication—or even the communication—is essentially related to aikido training is another, equally interesting, question. It seems to me that in Internet discussion forums, people basically extend the paradigms with which they have become familiar from training to communication in general. Thus, they assume that the *de facto* 'frames' that they have built up and come to accept from training will suffice for activities of an entirely different order.

Of course, there is a downside to discussion forums. Since all the non-verbal aspects of communication are absent and participants have to rely exclusively on the printed word, forums sometimes lay bare with disconcerting clarity the ability—or more often, the inability—to deal with these written aspects. Threads can develop into a kind of competition, where there is very little give and take and participants verbally fight to have the last word, in order to make sure at all costs that *their* version of the truth about the topic defeats all the others. In this case the focus of the discussion tends to move to the supposed defects of one or more posters—usually their way of arguing, but sometimes expressed in more personal terms—rather than keeping to the issues brought up in the thread. I think this contravenes one of the most important principles of the communication exchange (to be discussed further below, in Section 4), which is that we have certain unexpressed expectations that communication in words will be mutually satisfactory to all the parties who practice it and we become increasingly frustrated if there is a common perception that one of the parties involved appears not to grasp the common assumptions that this involves.

The fact that we are all native speakers tends to mask differing assumptions (they are assumptions to the extent that they have not been examined and thought through) of what is actually expected from language, especially in respect of training in an art like aikido. As an example relating to the Aikikai, I myself have noticed that here in Japan explanations from the instructor are rarely given during class—and that aikido is rarely talked about outside class. The *waza* are demonstrated and then people are left to get on with exploring the possibilities with their partners. In the Aikikai Hombu Dojo it is quite possible to spend a whole hour in rigorous training with one partner—but in complete silence (apart from the largely phatic *onegai shimasus* and *arigatos*). Then everyone goes home. Of course, Morihei Ueshiba was famous—notorious, even—for his discourses (see above, and below), but his example seems to be followed only by the senior shihans, the length and comprehensibility of whose discourses appears to be in direct proportion to their increasing seniority.

Outside Japan, on the other hand (NB. the remarks here are based entirely on my own experience of teaching the art), I have noticed that during class people need to have detailed verbal descriptions / explanations of what is believed to be happening to them, what they are doing and why. These discussions can also take place after class, when people are sometimes called upon to described what 'happened' to them

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during training. These explanations become even more detailed in Internet discussion forums, where discussions about such topics as whether aikido 'evolves' can go on for may pages. Even people who appear to believe wholeheartedly in the IHTBF (*It has to be felt*) doctrine give others verbal explanations of what the latter are supposed to be feeling and assume without question or further explanation that verbally expressed 'intentions' can be 'projected' around the body, as can be understood from the following extracts (all except 1, 2 and 4, taken from *AikiWeb* discussion forums).

1. '*When you control your partner in* irimi-nage, ***have the feeling that*** *you are holding a large raw egg, which can easily crack.*'
2. '***Allow* ki** *to* ***pour through*** *your fingertips.*'
3. '***Focus all your power in*** *the big toe of your back foot.*'
4. '*One preliminary aspect you might like to try is to develop an* ***ongoing awareness*** *of your left foot. Try* ***focusing upon it to the exclusion of all else, as if your mind was actually inside your foot****.* ***Mentally scan*** *the toes, the sole, heel, ankle, while trying to* ***sense the total feeling*** *of the foot. Hold this awareness for 30 seconds and you may start to* ***feel a tingling sensation****. This is your personal life energy, your "chi" merging with the Earth energy entering your body through an acupuncture point known as the "bubbling" spring on the sole of the foot. With practice one can learn to* ***feel this tingling sensation throughout the entire body****, which is in essence* ***conscious awareness****.*'
5. '*I think the spiritual comes in when we can* ***let go of knowing and step into the question.***'
6. '*The realms are intertwined in a complex dance of unity and they are, ultimately, neither physical nor spiritual - those are just words with no real meaning.* ***Just practice****, practice always* ***and you will improve in all directions****, sometimes benefitting from the physical and sometimes the spiritual, sometimes as a confirmation of your expectations, sometimes as a joyous surprise*'.
7. '*Have your partner stand in natural stance with his left hand extended. Lightly, very lightly, grasp his wrist with the fingers of your left (finger tips only) hand and put your right hand on his upper back (again, finger tips only). Do nothing. Wait.* ***Extend ki to your partner into his back at your right hand into his wrist at your left hand****. Do nothing. Wait.* ***Focus your intent on*** *having your partner accompany you. Do nothing. Wait.* ***Imagine*** *both of you beginning to move in the direction his extended left hand is pointing****.*** *Do nothing. Wait. When you feel your partner begin to move* ***use only your ki*** *to encourage him to continue. Follow his lead as you lead him in the direction he wants to go.*' (Compare this with the explanation given in 1, above.)
8. '*At a very basic level, see if* ***you can use your mind to shift where you are supporting your hands from*** *... not from the shoulders, but as close to the ground as possible. From there,* ***see if you can "feel" yourself getting under uke's center****. If you can* ***feel*** *a fairly cooperative uke getting floated up on their toes as they grab your wrists (not your hands), then you've begun to* ***get a feel*** *for it.*'

In view of what I stated earlier, I am not, of course, saying that this reliance on language is wrong. To do this would be to make far too sweeping a judgment. What I am stating is that the relative importance of silence and verbal explanations is differently understood in different cultures. Since aikido originated in Japan, this difference in cultural 'baggage' needs to be understood, even if it is not accepted.

3: More Background and Presuppositions

Language is such a pervasive and complex human activity (I leave aside the very interesting question whether non-humans can actually engage in rhetoric), that a vast amount of thought has gone into explaining what we are actually doing when we use words to make utterances and exchange these with others. Aikido and discussion about aikido inevitably involves assumptions about language and its relations to the 'world' of the speaker. The reference to rhetoric, above, is not coincidental, for there is a close connection between language and rhetoric, since rhetoric is 'language with attitude', with persuasion as the ultimate aim. This can often be seen in Internet discussion forums. People who post there sometimes have subtle agendas that are not obvious and this also is a crucial feature of language. Though language is itself a world—a vast web, which the speaker inhabits, the speaker also uses language to articulate his/her own world, which is in the former, but is not co-terminus with it.

Aikido and discussion about aikido inevitably involves assumptions about language and its relations to the 'world' of the speaker. Examining one's assumptions about language and its relation to the world necessitates placing these in the general context of the thinking about language referred to above. A vast amount of thought has gone into explaining what we are actually doing when we use words to make utterances and exchange these with others. I will review some of this thought later, indicating where and how the traditions arose. This discussion will range quite widely, taking in thinkers as diverse as Plato (whose thinking, I believe, is of major importance for any discussion of *kotodama*), Descartes, Locke, Wittgenstein, I A Richards, H P Grice, George Lakoff, and the linguist R A Miller (the last especially important in respect of the Japanese language). What I attempting to do here is to use the thinking of those listed above to illuminate the language used in discussions about aikido.

It is very important to note, however, that I am not taking any stance on the correctness or otherwise of the positions articulated—or of the discussions. Language is far too rich a web to restrict it's entire use to one of other of the views discussed, or to require that any particular language user is really (without knowing it) using language in ways that are actually different from what he/she actually believes. I happen to have my own views on how I should best use my language as a native speaker, but in my opinion the acid test is always going to be whether, no matter what one thinks about the use of one's own language, fruitful communication is achieved with those who see language quite differently. So what I am doing here is to present evidence and arguments of one sort or another and to leave readers to judge for themselves.

4: Text vs. Context

Aikido Pragmatics: H P Grice and Implicature, Principles and Maxims

Earlier, I mentioned the "unexpressed expectations that communication in words will be mutually satisfactory to all the parties who practice it." I think these expectations apply just as much in website discus-

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sions as in face-to-face conversations, if not more so. One of the expectations is that participants will understand all the subtleties of context in the actual utterances. By 'context', I have in mind two things. One is the general language background of discourse on aikido, considered as a set of utterances or 'speech-acts'. The other is the more specific context of language when deployed to explain aikido movements and techniques.

Aikido Pragmatics

The general language background can be understood in the following verbal exchange, which is immediately comprehensible to native speakers of English.

> Speaker A, in the shower after training, hearing a sound: *"It's the telephone!"*
> (1) Speaker B, still in the dojo: *"I'll get it."*

The situation would become comic if Speaker B made a response that is totally inappropriate in the context, such as:

> (2) Speaker B, still in the dojo, listening to the sound: *"So it is. I've often wondered what it was."*

The above exchange is an example of what has been called conversational *implicature*. Speaker A, in the shower, is doing far more than making a simple statement and in the first response (1), Speaker B understands all the implications of A's utterance and not only answers, but announces some appropriate action. Such study of utterances is a branch of linguistics known as pragmatics and has been studied by both linguists and philosophers, such as J L Austin, John Searle and Herbert Paul Grice. Other examples of Grice's concept of *implicature* (adapted from Cruse, 2004) can be seen from the following exchanges:

> (1) Shihan A: *What about x's test? Shall we pass him or fail him?*
> Shihan B: *Well, he just about managed to put one foot in front of the other.*
> Shihan A: *So he fails?*
> Shihan B: *I didn't say that.*

If Grice were Shihan A, he could argue that Shihan B had implied that the candidate should fail, in his sense of *implicature*.

> (2) Junior Teacher A (checking out the new dojo uchi-deshi): *Has John folded Sensei's hakama and swept the dojo?*
> Senior Student B: *He's folded Sensei's hakama.*

Although it is not explicitly stated, the *implicature* here is that John had not swept the dojo at the time the exchange took place.

> (3) Student (who always late for training, at the dojo office): *Am I in time for class?*
> Senior Student: (a) *John's just swept the dojo.*
> Senior Student: (b) *John's just folded Sensei's hakama.*
> Senior Student: (c) *John's just swept the dojo and folded Sensei's hakama.*

The *implicature* here is probably clearest in (b). In the absence of any more context, it is least clear in (a).

There is much more that could be said here, but Grice's point is that what he calls *implicature* explains certain features of conversations in general (and, in my opinion, Internet conversations in particular). As Cruse (2004) puts it:

> *'A prototypical conversation is not a random succession of unrelated utterances produced alternately by the participants: a prototypical conversation has something in the nature of a general purpose or direction, and the contributions of the participant are intelligibly related both to one another and to the overall aim of the conversation. By participating in a conversation, a speaker implicitly signals that (s)he agrees to cooperate in the joint activity, to abide by the rules, as it were. Grice's version of what a conversationalist implicitly endorses (by agreeing to take part in the conversation) is expressed in terms of rules of conduct and runs as follows:*
>
> ***The cooperative principle:*** *Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.* ' (Cruse, p. 367.)

Grice elaborates the principle by means of a set of maxims. These, of course, are not a set of rules like grammatical rules. They are more like guidelines and can be infringed creatively and frequently conflict with one another. In addition, the maxims are not culture-bound conventions, like table manners. According to Cruse, they are "rationally based, and would hence be expected to be observable in any human society. In fact, Grice claims that similar maxims govern any cooperative activity" (Cruse, p. 370). Of course, the relative importance attached to the maxims can differ according to culture. Finally, Grice argues that *implicatures* arise in accordance with two main mechanisms. The first is that the speakers are doing their best to follow the cooperative principle, even though the results might not be the best. The second reason is that the maxims are deliberately flouted, but nevertheless sincere communication is intended. Here are the maxims, with some examples of how they are creatively flouted.

A. The Maxim of Quality

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(i) Do not say what you believe to be false
(ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence /
Do not make unsupported statements.

A moment's thought should convince anyone that without a truth-telling presumption of some kind, or at least a strong tendency for utterances to correspond to actual states of affairs, language would be unlearnable and unworkable. Examples:

(4) Dojo office staff, talking of a new student:
The tall white belt wants his card stamped.

(5) *Xxxxxx Sensei is really a snake in the grass.*
(This was once actually stated to me.)

(6) *It'll cost the earth to go to Japan, but what the hell!*

None of these is likely to be true, but none is likely to mislead the hearer (except perhaps [5], if the hearer is not aware of the reputation of the sensei in question).

B. The Maxim of Quantity

(i) Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange in which you are engaged.
(ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than required.

Examples:

(7) Non-aikidoist mother, to young aikidoist son:
Well, what did you do at practice today?
Son: (a) *Oh, various techniques. I learned some new ones.*
Son (b): *Aikido.*
Son (c): *Well, training began promptly at 7 and we started with 15 intensive* kokyu *exercises (*kokyu *is a kind of breathing). Then we practised* shikko *knee-walking and four different types of* ukemi*, forwards, backwards, sideways and breakfalls. After this we started techniques, beginning with* shomen *attacks to the face with a hand-blade. We did four such techniques and then …* (continues on for fifteen more lines).

(8) Frustrated female student, of certain male dojo colleagues (well beyond their teens): *Ah well, boys will be boys.*

Answer (a) in (7) is likely to be regarded as ‘normal'. Answer (b) flouts the first part of the maxim, but might be given if the son is a ‘surly' teenager, and the mother is likely to reel at the excessive amount of information given in Answer (c). At first sight (8) gives no information, but the female hearers who know the male dojo colleagues will have no difficulty in understanding what is meant.

C. The Maxim of Relation

(i) Be relevant

Examples (both fictional, the first with apologies to Allen Beebe):

(9) Doshu, at a seminar, on meeting a student for the first time:
Hello. Who are your teachers?
Student: *Well, I trained with Shirata Sensei for a few years and then with Tohei Sensei.*
Doshu: *Very good. Was it Tohei Akira Sensei?*
Student: *No, Tohei Koichi Sensei.*
Doshu: *Excuse me, I have to go. There is something very important I need to do.*

(10) IAF Chairman: *What is the current financial state of the Aikikai?*
Doshu: *Oh, look. I see it's snowing outside. This is very unusual in May.*

Doshu breaks the maxim of relation in both cases. In the first case he invents a reason for breaking off the conversation because the second response is not what he expected. In the second case, the question is not what he expected and he employs the accepted Japanese device of ignoring the question by changing the subject on the spur of the moment as politely as he can.

D. The Maxim of Manner

(i) Avoid obscurity
(ii) Avoid ambiguity
(iii) Avoid unnecessary prolixity (tedious wordiness)
(iv) Be orderly

For reasons of space, I will leave it to readers to find suitable examples here.

Note that Grice's theory attempts to explain how *implicatures* actually arise. Another scholar (Leech, 2000) has argued that the theory takes no account of another set of *implicatures* that would underlie the first of the *Aikiweb* forum rules:

Treat your fellow AikiWeb Forum members with respect.

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This might be right, but Leech's **Politeness Principle** contains maxims that are less likely to be creatively flouted. The following is a relevant example:

> (11) New Forum Member: *Hello. This is my first post. I was wondering if anyone had any thoughts about the effectiveness of aikido in real fighting situations.*
> Veteran Member: *Oh God. Not again. Do a search, for heaven's sake.*

However, one can argue that the second *AikiWeb* forum rule

> *Contribute positively to the discussion topic.*

is to some extent based on the Cooperative Principle and the maxims articulated by Grice.

The theories espoused by Grice and those who have thought about speech acts are much more complex than the brief sketch given here. Their importance lies in the emphasis given to meaning primarily as something intentional: what a speaker intends by the utterances, as much as something lying within the words used in the utterance. This point will be of some importance later, when we consider meaning in the context of translation and *kotodama*.

Dojo & Training Contexts

When I opened a dojo and began teaching aikido here in Japan, I was astonished by the fact that my Japanese students—all native speakers in the language—experienced the same difficulty in remembering the names of the *waza*, and in associating a Japanese phrase like *katate-dori ai-hanmi* with the required movement, as the students I instruct in Europe. I think that this is due to the presence of a rich and complex context in aikido that is partly caused by the artificiality of the language used, which is as mystifying to Japanese as it is to the non-Japanese who practice it. I had mistakenly assumed that Japanese native speakers would understand this context immediately, simply because of the fact that they are native speakers.

There is also a context to the following explanation of how to perform the *waza* known as *shiho-nage*.

> '*I think first you must 'unbalance' the* uke *by drawing* uke's *hand out of* uke's *center.*
> *Keep your hands in front of you (you must be able to see your hands easily right in front of your eyes) even when you turn your body.*
> *Do not lift your hands over your head. The highest position is in front of your forehead.* '

Here, the directions could relate to performing a special kind of dance, except that there is a Japanese term, *uke*, the meaning of which is assumed to be understood, as is the *waza* which is being explained. The term '*unbalance*' is enclosed in quotes, since the term is also to be understood in a certain context. Some consider the context to be so specific that the anglicized Japanese terms are preferred:

> '*So you prefer* uke *to jump in to* tobu ukemi *out of fear of injury instead of* nage *learning how to create* **kuzushi** *and actually take* uke *down?*'
>
> '*What I like about my judo practice is that it has provided me a very in depth study into the art of* ***kuzushi*** *and throwing that I don't believe I'd get in any other methodology.*'

The interesting point about this second comment is that the Japanese term '*kuzushi*' is preferred for the 'art of taking someone's balance', but the result, the 'art' of 'throwing', is thought not to need any refinement via a Japanese term. In aikido, the Japanese term would be *ukemi*, which can be considered as sophisticated a skill as *kuzushi*. In fact, the two could be considered to be two sides of the same coin. A similar context is assumed with the term *aiki*.

> '*He asked her about aikido technique, she said: "When you speak of matching, if your* kokyu, *or breathing, does not match then you do not match. You are thinking merely of form, aren't you? But in order to do* aiki, *both your spirit and that of your partner must enter into play and then come together. When you study* aiki, *this is what you are studying.'"*

This statement elicited the following comment, which is interesting because it adds the possibility of a further layer of context: the general cultural context in which Asian martial terms are embedded.

> '*You know, I would be careful of quotes like this* (the author is referring to the quotation in the above paragraph about *aiki*). *I have mentioned this before a number of times, but the translations of a lot of westerners who don't really have* kokyu/jin *skills or understand exactly what is meant idiomatically by* "ki" *or words like* "kokoro" *when they are used to indicate the intention-strength … those translations can be misleading.*'

The general cultural context is thought to be so important that it can affect the quality of the translation.

> '*In fact, pretty much the whole Chinese martial-arts world was shot in the foot for so long because of similar misunderstandings about* "jin" *and* "energy", "qi" *and* "spirit", "breath" *and so on. Not saying the translation is wrong, but I'd be very careful of it until I determined what the translator*

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actually knew in terms of skills and so forth.'

The point being made here is rather unusual—and would be a major problem if it were generalized to cover spheres other than so-called 'internal' arts. Even though the translation is supposedly 'correct', it is to be regarded as suspect until it is clear that the translator has some experience and practical knowledge of what is being translated (always assuming that the writer of the original text also had such actual experience and practical knowledge).

To see the issues here more clearly, consider two cases. Two different translators coincidentally produce translations of a Japanese text about 'spirit' and 'breath'. Both translations are excellent renderings of the original. However, it is independently known that Translator A has extensive practical knowledge of skills associated with 'spirit' and 'breath' etc, but less knowledge of language, while Translator B lacks this practical knowledge, but has much more extensive knowledge of the language and culture that produced the original text. Because of the practical knowledge, A's correct translation is happily accepted: it is reliable, in virtue of the practical knowledge, whereas B's very similar translation is regarded as suspect and discounted, since B lacks this essential practical knowledge, despite having a better knowledge of the language and culture.

Note that I am not stating that the original point is wrong. The point here is to see the issue clearly: to what extent is description / explanation / translation tied to the practical knowledge and/or actual experience of the matter in question. Here is another example, this time concerning a much more mundane activity, where there are no terms like *KI* and *kokyu* to cause any problems with translation.

In my university writing classes, I sometimes set students the task of describing a mundane activity in words, without the use of drawings or diagrams. One such task is to describe (to a Martian, who has arms and legs, but has never seen one before) how to ride a bicycle, the description to include getting on, moving off, riding, slowing down, stopping, and dismounting. The students, all Japanese, have first to write the explanation in Japanese and then to translate their explanations into English. The acid test was that I could bring a bicycle into the classroom, take one or more of the descriptions they produced and use them to mount the bicycle and ride it for a short distance (the students actually thought quite highly of my acting as a Japanese/English speaking Martian—this was one of the high points of the class).

In this case, one can see more clearly the issues raised previously. All the students know how to ride bicycles and use them everyday to commute to and from school. However, the respective results in Japanese and English were quite different. For example, some students found it very hard to describe the action of the rider when moving off, after having mounted the bicycle, and they described the later movements of the rider's feet, the left and right foot alternately pushing down the appropriate pedals, as paddling, as in the movement of the hands and arms when propelling a canoe. Quite a few did this and were somewhat concerned when I asked what they meant, for I initially thought it was a misspelling of *pedaling*. Nevertheless, it was obviously an acceptable Japanese way of explaining the movements of the feet when riding a bicycle and they wondered why it was strange in English.

Of course, it seems intuitively obvious that someone who has learned how to ride a bicycle should be able to explain how to do it. The converse also seems intuitively obvious: that someone who has for some reason never ridden a bicycle should not able to describe how to do it. However, neither is necessarily the case. There is a double problem: (1) first producing an accurate explanation in the native language of an action that is taken so much for granted that an accurate description / explanation is sometimes thought not to be possible, and then (2) giving an accurate translation. This conveniently leads on to the general question of translation.

5: What is Lost in Aikido Translation?
Recently, the following statement from *AikiWeb* caught my eye:

> *Things and intent are always lost in the meaning of a translation.*

The immediate context was what Koichi Tohei allegedly learned from Morihei Ueshiba. Tohei Sensei stated in an interview that O Sensei taught him to relax. The statement is an interesting case of Gricean *implicature*, for some concluded that what Tohei Sensei actually meant was that relaxing was all O Sensei taught him: the Founder taught him nothing else. So the *AikiWeb* comment should lead to questions: *Always*? Does this matter? Are 'perfect' translations possible? Does it make sense even to try for 100% accuracy, if this can never be achieved?

One of the positive effects of Grice's focus on the social aspects of utterances is that translation can be seen in much the same way. One can ask what translation is for, or what a translated text is supposed to do, and the answers can vary. Of course, the common factor is to render the original faithfully in the translated language, but one immediately has to qualify the primacy of faith here—and add: *as much of the original as is necessary in the circumstances in which the translated text is to be used*. This qualification is as relevant and necessary for simultaneous interpreting as it is for translating written texts. Here is an example from my own experience.

Shortly before I retired, I was asked by the President of Hiroshima University to translate the university's five Guiding Principles into English. The principles appear on the top page of the university's website, together with the translation:
http://www.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/en/top/hu/index.html

- 平和を希求する精神 Pursuit of Peace
- 新たなる知の創造 Creation of new forms of knowledge
- 豊かな人間性を培う教育 Nurturing of well-rounded human beings
- 地域社会・国際社会との共存 Collaboration with the local, regional and international community

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- 絶えざる自己変革 Continuous self-development

Those who have experience of decision-making in Japanese corporate bodies can imagine the immense amount of discussion that took place and readers who know Japanese can see the choices I was confronted with. I had some leverage because I was the only non-Japanese (i.e., English) member of the university's International Relations Committee and they had asked me to do it, in order to save the expense of hiring a professional translator. The constraints were that the guiding principles had to be as 'catchy' and pithy in English as they were in Japanese—and they had to be a **translation** of the Japanese: a set of principles that were similar, but that matched an 'English' way of thinking, was not possible. (Similar constraints are faced by those who produce the subtitles of movies. The translations have to match the original, but must be readable—and immediately understandable—in the same space of time as the original scene passes on the screen.) My translation was accepted, but not long afterwards supplementary 'explanations' appeared, designed to overcome the constraints of brevity and 'pithiness' that I was faced with:
http://www.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/en/top/p_f402c5.html

This is why, even though I have sometimes criticized the results of his labors, I have great respect for and sympathy with John Stevens, in view of the problems he had to deal with in translating the discourses of Morihei Ueshiba. Ueshiba's discourses obviously need extensive commentary, but no publishing company would be likely to bear the cost of publishing a text and multi-volume commentary. The publisher obviously wanted a text that people would find readable and understandable, like an aikido version of the *Penguin Classics*. Whether John has achieved this is a matter for readers to judge for themselves, but I think that the translators of Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography of the Founder, recently published in English, had a far easier task than Prof Stevens did in translating the discourses.

When I began practising aikido in the UK, my teacher was Japanese and spoke in very broken English. The names of movements and *waza* were always given in Japanese, but one day he decided that we needed to understand the names in English. He produced a two-page list of terms translated into English, which we were expected to learn by heart. The list, containing phrases like, '*one hand grab wrist turn*', was not very helpful. Of course it was in English, but it did not really advance our knowledge much beyond what '*kata te dori kote gaeshi*' already conveyed, as a result of repeated practice of the moves. So the whole operation was rather pointless.

As I have mentioned above, one of the issues raised by Grice concerns meaning. Meaning is not something solely to be found in the words themselves—and this, again, is a matter of relevance to *kotodama*. The meaning of an utterance can be understood as much from the intentions of the one who makes the utterance as from the words used in the utterance and this is an issue that translators/ interpreters have to remember. With aikido, there is the additional problem that many of the Japanese terms involved have been left untranslated and this fact has allowed some non-Japanese aikidoists, who lack the Japanese language skills to determine the cultural connotations of the terms in Japanese, to indulge in flights of fancy concerning meaning. These flights are especially evident in discussions concerning KI and KOKYU. It is as if these terms encompass vast, inexhaustible oceans of 'meaning', which requires a lifetime of training to fathom, and in which 'mere' words, like 'energy' and 'breath', hardly make any impression. It reminds me of Alan Bennett's famous sermon in *Beyond the Fringe*, the revue that took the UK by storm in 1961. Starting from the obligatory biblical text (compare Orson Welles/Fr Mapple, in John Huston's *Moby Dick*: in Bennett's sermon the text was, '*But my brother Esau is an hairy man and I am a smooth man*', from *Genesis*, 27, 11), Bennett 'preached' the following:

(NOTE: I believe that tins are *cans* in American English)

> *Life, you know, is rather like opening a tin of sardines. We are all of us looking for the key. And, I wonder, how many of you here tonight have wasted years of your lives looking behind the kitchen dressers of this life for that key. Others think they've found the key, don't they? They roll back the lid of the sardine tin of life, they reveal the sardines, the riches of life, therein, and they get them out, they enjoy them. But, you know, there's always a little bit in the corner you can't get out. I wonder -- I wonder, is there a little bit in the corner of your life? I know there is in mine.*

Similarly, some aikidoists gradually prize open the 'sardine tin' of *KI* and *KOKYU* and enjoy the meanings that they extract, but there are always bits—large chunks, actually—left in the tin and they see it as a major part of their aikido career to extract them. In my experience, Japanese aikidoists do not seem to bother with this kind of activity, even in their own language. They know what the words mean / how they are used, and the various ways in which they can be written.

6: Plato, Morihei Ueshiba and R A Miller:
Words, Souls, Keys & Tokens
In the extracts discussed in Column 11, Morihei Ueshiba talked of aikido as *kotodama*, which I usually translated as *word-soul* or *word-spirit*. The Chinese characters are 言 and 霊 or 靈 , the first character having the general meaning of *word* and the second two of *soul* or *spirit*. It should be noted in passing, however, that the characters are actually read with the Japanese *kun* reading and not with the Chinese *ON* reading (*kon*/*gon-rei*), which might be thought more appropriate, given that the words are actually written in Chinese characters and not in the Japanese *kana* script. There is a complex historical context to the role of *kotodama* in Morihei Ueshiba's aikido, which aikido practitioners are perhaps not aware of and which is not supplied by the books on the subject written by John Stevens and William Gleason. There is no space in this column to discuss these works with the respect—and the detail—that they deserve, so in this column I will discuss *kotodama* more from the point of view of language and linguistics in general, without much specific reference to Morihei Ueshiba. In Column 13, I will attempt to supply as much of this historical context as I can,

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and present a detailed critique of the discussions by John Stevens and William Gleason on *kotodama*, as O Sensei is alleged to have understood it.

A number of explanations of the term *kotodama* have been given in English and one of the issues here is whether or not the term is 'trans-linguistic': whether it makes sense to discuss the term outside the context of the Japanese language—with its complex history and cultural baggage. One eminent aikido shihan has called *kotodama*, "the miraculous power of language **inherent within the Japanese alphabet**", which would seem to rule out any 'trans-linguistic' dimension straightway. To understand the context here, it is essential to make some preliminary distinctions (1) between words and sounds, (2) between speaking/chanting/singing and written communication and, (3) between words as keys and words as tokens.

Words & Sounds: Speaking and Writing
From at least as far back as Plato, if not much earlier, people became aware that words were not mere sounds. Both on occasion had a certain power, but words had an awesome dimension that sounds did not have: they conveyed meanings and could be used by people to make utterances concerning what was or was not the case. This is rather different from Lewis Carroll's famous poem:

> *'Twas **brillig**, and the **slithy toves** Did **gyre** and **gimble** in the **wabe**:*
> *All **mimsy** were the **borogoves**, And the **mome raths outgrabe**. '*

When sung as a Gregorian chant by a group of monks in a large abbey—even translated into Latin, if it were possible, this rhyme might well have the same spiritual power as the real chants for some believers who know no Latin. It could possibly even be a description of a vision that was very similar to the one that O Sensei had in his garden in 1940. (The *slithy toves*—who/which were attacking O Sensei—were all using *mimsy borogoves* and this enabled them to *gyre* and *gimble* from their 'centers', using all the resources available to them as non-logical beings, and the *mome raths*, also attacking O Sensei, *outgrabe* him initially, until he got the measure of them and was able to control them: in fact it was this that made the whole vision *brillig*.) However, we know that there is something wrong with the poem, for language does not work like this and the nouns—the names in bold type—are not in the English lexicon and so do not denote anything (there is even a question as to whether they are actually words). Thus nothing is conveyed except the general idea that the base structure is English.

The second issue is the difference—the added 'power', that singing or chanting brings to oral communication. Again, I sometimes listen to Bach's *Cantatas* when I am driving, or to the operas of Mozart or Giuseppe Verdi. They are sung in German and Italian, respectively, but I have never bothered to check the text with an English translation, to work out what is actually being sung at any one time. The music and the voices—the complex sounds—are enough to make the experience moving. So there is a very real and immediate sense in which sounds have a certain power, quite apart from the meanings they convey. The ancient Greeks certainly understood the power aspect, as did the ancient Chinese. However, the fact that words have meanings gives them a much more awesome power than that of mere sounds, but the meanings were much more mysterious.

The distinction made between words and sounds masks another crucial distinction between the spoken word and the written word. It is noteworthy that Homer's epics were originally **oral** poems. The research of Milman Parry and Albert B Lord centered on oral epic poetry that was—and still is—sung by travelling bards in the regions where 'Homer' is thought to have lived. Both Plato and Aristotle composed dialogues: written records of spoken interactions between several interlocutors. Similarly, though put in written form much later, the *norito* collected in the *Engi-shiki*—prime examples of *kotodama*, were originally prayers to deities that were chanted, and in a special language. The connection here with the 'seed syllables' in Shingon Buddhism, themselves derived from earlier tradition, is clear. The primacy of the spoken word, with its consequences for inhalation and exhalation of breath, is a crucial factor in understanding what Morihei Ueshiba was after.

The primacy of the written word over the spoken is usually taken so much for granted that reading about the life and work of Sanae Odano comes as something of a shock. The reason why will become evident from the following quotation from her biography, together with her views on language, written by Stephen Earle (*Words, Characters and Transparency*):

> *'Odano is saying that not only the sounds but also the written characters of language—especially kanji, Chinese characters as they are used in Japanese—are special. I have just enough exposure to the Shinto tradition of* kotodama*—literally, 'word-spirit'—to recognize this as boldly original: most proponents of* kotodama *consider kanji as a corrupting influence largely responsible for the defilement and censure of an indigenous "word-spirit" attributable to the Japanese word-sounds.*' (Earle, p. 13.)

I will discuss the views of Odano in more detail in the next column (in connection with the two books by William Gleason, who was her student), but it is sufficient to note here that the normal primacy of spoken language over written language is seriously challenged, with the result that the two are thought to be at least parallel. In addition, the parallel role given to the written word gives pride of place to Chinese characters, that were imported into the Japanese language many centuries after the latter originated.

Keys and Tokens
Plato was the first philosopher to worry about language and the way he couched the problem was very simple: were the names that were given to things actually correct? Did the name reveal the essence of the thing? As usual with a Platonic dialogue, there is a dispute between two protagonists, which Socrates guides and arbitrates. The modern

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interpretation of the dialogue is best expressed in the opening paragraph of the *Wikipedia* article.

> *In the dialogue, Socrates is asked by two men, Cratylus and Hermogenes, to tell them whether names are "conventional" or "natural", that is, whether language is a system of arbitrary signs or whether words have an intrinsic relation to the things they signify.*

The *Wikipedia* statement glosses over the very important fact, not fully understood in the *Cratylus*, that words and the things that they signify are only a very small part of language and that the way one might check if names correctly reveal essences might well be quite different from the way one might check if someone is telling the truth when he/she makes a statement. There is also a context to the dialogue. Cratylus is a disciple of the philosopher Heraclitus and is also one of the Greek Sophists. The Sophists, who taught (among other things) virtue and the correct use of words or language, were a constant target of Socrates' dialectical arguments.

The *Cratylus* presents an extended argument between those who think that names are keys and those who think that names are tokens. To see the difference, consider the account in the second chapter of the *Book of Genesis*. Adam is in the Garden of Eden and God has become rather anxious that His new masterpiece is rather lonely. So He brings all the animals to Adam and has him name them. Whatever Adam called each creature, that was its name. Thus Adam was the first name-giver and the names he gave were obviously correct. Plato also considers the role of the name-giver and argues that the name-giver has to be the wisest of persons, since he has to name each thing correctly: to give names that correctly reveal the essence of the thing. Cratylus supports this view: that the name is a crucial key to understanding the thing named. Against this view, Hermogenes argues in the dialogue that a name is simply an arbitrary token for what it designates. In a typically robust Greek example, Hermogenes argues that if he buys a new slave, he can give the slave a new name, quite different from the one given by the previous owner and the new name is now the slave's correct name. It no more reveals the slave's essence than the previous name did.

As the ‘referee' in the discussion, Socrates does not initially take sides. By his usual process of question and answer he shows that there are serious deficiencies on both sides of the argument. His treatment is subtle and somewhat curious, for he appears to believe that sentences are accretions of ‘names', all of which have to show their ‘essence', in order for the sentence to make any sense. He also believes that words are like tools and must be well made in order to serve their purpose, hence the importance of a name-giver, who knows how to name things correctly. He adds that this is true even for different languages, for the same thing can correctly be named in various languages, so long as it reveals the essence or form of the thing. Thus, Socrates argues that names really are keys. On the other hand, he argues that some names are also tokens, agreed upon by convention. Numbers, for example, have to fall into this category.

Plato's student, Aristotle, took issue with his teacher on this issue and declared that if names ‘reveal the essence' of the things they name, they do so by convention, not by any intrinsic connection between the name and the object. This has come to be accepted as received wisdom ever since, such that there is no reason why *chair*, *chaise*, or *isu* (いす / 椅子) actually reveal the ‘essential nature' of the objects we sit on, any more than other words. They are tokens, not keys. This is of some importance for the linguistic background of *kotodama*. Consider the following paragraph from Stephen Earle's book:

> *‘In the context of ordinary language, words are used to communicate regarding our world—more often than not without reflection upon how mysterious is this capacity. What endows words with the capacity to impart meaning? Word-sounds, I am discovering* (from training with Odano Sanae), *constitute an atomic subset of language. And just as Einstein predicted, that the atomic nucleus contains extraordinary latent energy—energy of a magnitude not suggested by that nucleus's size—so this atomic subset of language, when split open, releases limitless metaphysical and ontological intelligence.*' (Earle, pp, 18-19.)

The style is deceptively simple and straightforward, but it is very important to see the subtle shifts in logic here. Here is a rewriting of the above paragraph, with appropriate changes in bold type and comment in square brackets.

> *In the context of ordinary language, words are used* **by human beings** *to communicate regarding our world—more often than not without reflection upon how mysterious is this capacity. What endows* **human beings** *with the capacity to* **use words in such a way** as *to impart meaning?*

[Note the shift in nuance here. In the original, the capacity had shifted from the human beings to the words. I have shifted the capacity back from the words themselves to those who utter them.]

> *Word-sounds, I am discovering, constitute an atomic subset of language.*

[Note the consequences of the shift from human beings to the words themselves: the words and the sounds of the words have been reified into an atomic subset.]

> *And just as Einstein predicted, that the atomic nucleus contains extraordinary latent energy—energy of a magnitude not suggested by that nucleus's size—so this atomic subset of language, when split open, releases limitless metaphysical and ontological intelligence.*

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[Note the extraordinary consequence drawn here, based merely on (1) a **comparison** with atomic energy and (2) the use of a **metaphor**, based on splitting the atom. The consequence is the attribution of metaphysical and ontological intelligence to the word-sounds themselves—now completely divorced from those who utter these 'word-sounds'. Even Einstein is brought in as an implicit supporter of the consequence.] If Socrates were arguing with Earle, he would accuse him of sophistry of a very high order. Of course, Earle would no doubt reply that Socrates had made a major mistake: he had assumed without question the primacy of the spoken word over the written word.

Words and Souls

Some of Plato's judgments on the correctness of names bear comparison with *kotodama*, for the concept of *kotodama* appears to rest on similar assumptions as those discussed in Plato's dialogue: that the word and the thing are so closely related that the word reveals the spirit of the thing it denotes and that uttering the words in a correctly prescribed manner ensures that the one who utters is either possessed by the spirit thought to inhere in the words, and/or is able, through the spirit, to control in some way the thing that bears the name.

R A Miller was a professor of Japanese for many years, and is the author of a major work on the Japanese language. He is also the author of a more controversial work entitled *Japan's Modern Myth* (*JMM*). His dismissal of *kotodama* is based on three major points:
(1) Japanese scholars have (wrongly) marveled at the supposedly unique features of the Japanese language, which leads to the thesis that translations from and to Japanese are virtually impossible.
(2) This is due to a belief in *kotodama*, the spirit inherent in the Japanese language.
(3) As well as lacking any linguistic foundation, *kotodama* is a dangerous concept, for the references to *kotodama* in the *Man'yoshu* were perverted by the ultranationalists of the 1930s, in texts such as 国体の本義（*Kokutai no Hongi*: *Foundations of the National Body*):

> "*The* Kokutai no Hongi*'s perverted vision of a unique, intrinsically superior Japanese state, civilization and language was nonsense, too, and hundreds of thousands of Japanese died fiery deaths in the aftermath of this vision.*" (Miller *JMM*, p. 142.)

In other words, *kotodama* was a major feature of Irokawa's 'black box', into which the Japanese people walked from 1931 onwards (see earlier columns). No wonder Messrs Ueshiba, Stevens and Gleason were at such pains to stress the postwar 'benevolent' nature of *kotodama* and the good that it can do for humanity. We will discuss Miller's argument under Point (3) in the next column, but the following extract from another work, entitled, *Nihongo: In Defence of Japanese*, summarizes his view of Points (1) and (2). Miller is discussing problems in the translation by Ivan Morris of *Makura no Soshi* (*The Pillow Book* of Sei Shonagon):

> '*…Few books in the entire history of literary translation can have been as badly deflected from their original sense and purport as has … the* Makura no Soshi *in the Morris version.*
>
> *'Given the enormous dimensions of these problems of translation from the Japanese, it is only to be expected that attempts should have been made to evolve a theory that would explain why the situation is as bad as it is. A Japanese critic, for example, has—apparently in full seriousness—suggested that the highly visible gap between most Japanese originals and their available English translations is to be accounted for by a special quality inherent in the Japanese language itself. For him, the Japanese language has* kotodama *'the spirit of the language'. This is supposed to be a mystical entity that not only interferes with, but actually defies the adequate translation of Japanese texts. The Germans have long read Shakespeare in translations that are said to rival the originals. Thomas Mann became a world literary figure chiefly through the English translations of Helen Lowe Porter. But since there are no translations from Japanese into European languages that have been similarly received, it must follow, according to this argument, that Japanese with its* kotodama *is inherently and innately different from any other human language.*' (Miller, *Nihongo*, p. 216.)

The critic referred to is Shoichi Watanabe, a professor of Sophia University, Tokyo, in an article published by the *Japan Echo* in 1974. (Details are given in *JMM*, pp. 137-143.) In fact, Miller's published response to Watanabe caused something of a storm. Officials of the Japanese foreign ministry, which was the organization behind the *Japan Echo*, rushed to Watanabe's defence and retorted that Miller understood nothing about Japanese culture (despite his obvious expertise in the Japanese language). Lack of understanding of Japanese culture is a common knee-jerk reaction of government officials and is also sometimes used by more conservative Japanese aikido shihans. (I myself was once accused by an 8th dan shihan of writing Japanese that was *too* good: I was a foreigner, and so the Japanese had to be taken in a sense other than what was intended. Since foreigners obviously could not write such Japanese, I was accused of ridiculing the shihan.) Miller continues with his own explanation for the problem:

> *'Few outside the rather specialized confines of modern Japanese intellectual circles will probably wish to follow this argument to its logical denouement; for most of us, the answer is rather more simple, and far more direct. Most available translations of Japanese literary texts, no matter what the period of their originals, fall far short of the mark that might reasonably expected for any translation, not because of any special mystical entity inherent in the Japanese language, but plainly and simply because these translations are generally done care-*

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> *lessly, and in haste, and more often than not by translators insufficiently familiar not only with the Japanese language itself but also with Japanese life and culture.*' (Miller, *Nihongo*, pp. 216-217.)

Miller's point here is concerned with the inadequacy of translation, but there is another point about *kotodama* that needs to be noted. Like the cognate word 言葉 *kotoba* , the *koto* 言 in 言霊 *kotodama* can denote individual words or the entire language, and the discussion so far has involved the latter. In addition, since 言 means *word* and/or *language* and 霊 means *soul* or *spirit*, in theory the term could apply to any word or language whatever, with the 'soul/spirit of word(s) or language' (of language x) being an acceptable translation. However, the term *kotodama* means specifically the soul or spirit of the Japanese language and Japanese words. This is why Miller uses the term 'myth':

> '*The Japanese language has no spirit that distinguishes it in any manner, shape or form from any other language. It has no particular power, no unique gift that sets it apart from other varieties of the human linguistic experience.*' (Miller, *JMM*, p. 142-43.)

Miller expresses this judgment negatively, but John Stevens attempts to express such a judgment positively, namely, that every language has its own *kotodama*, or, put another way, that Japanese *kotodama* is extra-linguistic and freely exportable. I am reluctant to conclude that Miller is on safer ground, but as an expert on Japanese language and linguistics, Miller has to assume as the basis for his judgment that, all things being equal, language as a subject for science is available to the same degree to all human beings.

7: Descartes and the Matrix: *I am Neo and experience* ki*, therefore I am.*

In *The Matrix*, the hero, Mr Thomas Anderson, is identified by a man named Morpheus as 'the One'. Morpheus believes that Anderson is destined to save the world from final domination by an incredibly complex computer program, called the Matrix. Like Morpheus before him, Neo (for this is Thomas Anderson's 'real' name) has become aware that something is wrong with the world he has so far taken for granted and, under Morpheus's direction, trains himself to see its limitations. *The Matrix* has become popular with philosophy teachers who want to liven up their *Philosophy 101* courses with something a little different, but the language problems taken for granted in the film are usually left unexplored. As Neo is about to discover his 'real' self by being enveloped with the surface of a mysterious mirror, Morpheus asks him three questions:

1. *'Have you ever had a dream, Neo, that you were so sure was real?'*
2. *'What if you were unable to wake from that dream?'*
3. *'How would you know the difference between the dream world and the real world?'*

The questions are almost identical to those that Descartes asked himself in his *Meditations*, as he sat in his little room systematically doubting everything that he had previously assumed existed. Descartes answered the questions with the famous retort. *I think; I exist*, which asserts the primary status of the conscious self. However, Morpheus makes no attempt to answer his own questions and Neo is not in a position to do so at the moment they are asked. The assumptions underlying the questions are that dreams can be 'real' (i.e., on the same level and with the same cognitive status as the waking state) and thus that there are two 'worlds', the dream world and the 'real' world. The assumed answers would be something like the following:

1. *'Yes. Neo has been having 'dreams' that he believed were absolutely real, right up to the time he took the red pill.'*
2. *'Yes, indeed. All the creatures in the pods (except Morpheus, Trinity, Neo, and especially the villain Cypher—who actually hates the 'real' world and wants to return to his pod) are unable to wake up from these dreams.'*
3. *'He wouldn't. These other humans have no way of knowing the difference between the dream world and the real world.'*

The root of the issue here, as with the Lockean system of ideas discussed below, is the extent to which supposedly unique individual experiences can be validated by other, equally unique, individual experiences. The reality of the dream world is validated by 'authentic' dream experiences and that of the 'real' world is also validated by equally authentic 'real' experiences. The crucial issue, as Mr Andersen / Neo spent three films finding out, is to distinguish between the two. In fact, if the supposedly unique 'dream' experiences can be validated only by other, equally unique, experiences that are unique to the person who experiences them, then Neo should not be able to find his way out of the Matrix, since all the experiences he has will be equally dreamlike and there will be no extra element to identify them as specifically 'dream' experiences. The Wachowski brothers actually cheat, since they have Morpheus explaining that Neo was a kind of flaw in the Matrix when it was first created.

Another interesting fact is that language appears to function completely identically in the two cases—and this should be troubling. When Morpheus asks the three questions, he, Neo, Trinity and all the supporting cast, are actually in the Matrix and do not encounter the 'real' world until Neo wakes up in the *Nebuchadnezzar* hovercraft. Yet, precisely the same communication protocols operate in the two 'worlds'. This is one respect in which the world of the Matrix is quite different from dreams: there is an element of control that is absent in the latter. Similarly, having stripped away everything that made him a human being, Descartes nevertheless has no trouble in believing that the words he used to make his famous assertion have real meaning—but what he did not see was that the meaning that they had, was derived, not from any self validation, but from the fact that they were shared by a community of human beings who were language users. In other words, Descartes stripped away everything that enabled him to make utterances that could be understood by anyone else—and then made such utterances, believing that they made sense. Descartes believed that this circle is charmed, but logically it is vicious. One cannot

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use words with shared meanings to prove the existence of something like a self, whose existence is not supposed to rely on such shared meanings. Another way of putting this would be to state that Descartes' whole skeptical enterprise—of paring away layers of the world while sitting in his study, right in the middle of it, was doomed to failure: he was a skeptic who could not possibly 'live' his skepticism.

One might ask how Descartes' problems with skepticism and Neo's problems in the Matrix are relevant to aikido. The answer is that they are not, but the underlying assumptions are. One of the crucial issues with aikido is the degree to which one gives credence to various 'internal' experiences that are not part and parcel of *waza*. The issue is compounded by lack of a common language that is immediately understood. This is evidenced by the following instructions, quoted earlier (numbered here for ease of reference):

> *1. Extend ki to your partner into his back at your right hand into his wrist at your left hand. 2. Do nothing. 3. Wait. 4. Focus your intent on having your partner accompany you. 5. Do nothing. 6. Wait. 7. Imagine both of you beginning to move in the direction his extended left hand is pointing. 8. Wait. 9. When you feel your partner begin to move, use only your ki to encourage him to continue. 10. Follow his lead as you lead him in the direction he wants to go.*

This could cause a major problem if the partner does not do what *nage* intends. In addition, if the partner does indeed do what *nage* intends/ imagines, there is still no demonstrable causal relationship between the intention/imagination and the subsequent action. We will see from the discussion on Wittgenstein that one of the issues with aikido, especially after Koichi Tohei split with the Aikikai, is that of the legitimacy of focusing on certain internal experiences that cannot be verified, except in terms of the experience in question. I believe that the real crux of Kisshomaru Ueshiba's issue with Koichi Tohei is that the latter gave undue importance to certain concepts, like *KI*, and divorced them from the context of aikido training. For Kisshomaru, *KI* could not be separated from *aiki* and had to be developed in the kind of training which he himself believed that his father did.

8: Locke's Ideas about Training

Plato has much to answer for. His notion that there is a world of Forms, or Ideas, that underlies the world of our experience, has dominated philosophical thinking ever since. His vocabulary, as well the self-validation of individual experiences, also underlies the thought of John Locke. Although Locke was active in the 17th century, his thought still has relevance today, for his theories concerning the relation of thought and language are still accepted by psycholinguists who attempt to explain how people with brain injuries can still use language correctly.

Locke was one of the British Empiricists and he believed that language was simply the vehicle for expression in words of another type of thing, which he called ideas. (I have put it in this way to emphasize the fact that the vehicle plays no role in shaping the ideas that are to be conveyed: whenever necessary, it simply transmits them from one person to another.) There is some ambiguity about terms, since Locke intends the term 'idea' to cover both (1) what we usually convey by the term 'image' or visual replica of a physical object, and also (2) by the more abstract term, 'thought', which is usually something that can be articulated in a phrase or statement. In itself, this poses a problem, for if some thought has to be articulated in words, the question arises how to distinguish the thought from its expression in words. There is no space for a detailed examination of Locke's views, but the main purpose of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was to establish a scientific account of what can be known. (It is as well to remember that Locke was a founding member of the Royal Society and counted among his friends Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle and Richard Hooke.) With respect to language, Locke explains in Book III of the Essay that, ' *words in their primary or immediate signification signify nothing but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them* '. So, for Locke, there was no such thing as innate knowledge.

The issue here, as with Descartes, is the nature of the connection between the idea or thought, and the word or words used to label, identify, or name the thought. Since Locke believes that the origin of all our knowledge is sense experience, the issue is to explain how we are able to talk about our 'private' experiences in a language that is not private, a language that other persons understand, for it is undeniable that other persons do, indeed, appear to understand our reports of our 'private' experiences, such as dreams and operations of *KI*. The thesis that words simply 'stand for' meanings seems to rest on too primitive a theory of language.

9: Locke and Descartes Revisited: Training Games with Wittgenstein

A challenge to the whole basis of the thinking of Descartes and Locke came from the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. The challenge rested precisely on the 'primitive' theory of language mentioned in the previous paragraph. A vast amount of controversy has arisen concerning what Wittgenstein is supposed to have stated and not stated and, once again, complaints have also been made about the accuracy of the English translation (from the German). However, what is not open to controversy about Wittgenstein's argument is his assertion that naming, or 'standing for', does not have the primary role in language that Locke gives to it, but is merely one of a far more complex set of activities. As I have stated above, the relevance for aikido is that Wittgenstein's arguments require a closer look at the 'grammar of sensations / experiences': a closer look at what, actually, is going on / being stated when one makes reports of, e.g.,

> *allowing KI to pour / extend through one's fingertips* , or
>
> *focussing upon the left foot to the exclusion of all else, as if your mind was actually inside your foot … mentally scanning the toes, the sole, heel, ankle, while trying to sense the total feeling of the foot … holding this awareness for 30 seconds and ... feeling a tingling sensation.*

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To gain a clear focus of the issues involved here, readers should keep in mind the 'grammar' of these reports when considering what follows. In *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*), Wittgenstein starts his arguments from a statement in St Augustine's *Confessions*, where Augustine explains how he learned words as a child. Wittgenstein explains what he takes to be the importance of Augustine's words. The words:

> '*give a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects—sentences are combinations of such names. In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands*. (*PI*, 2e.)

After showing the limitations of this picture of human language, taken in isolation, Wittgenstein goes on to consider the possibility of a private language. (Note that Wittgenstein writes as if he were having a conversation with an imaginary interlocutor, whose questions and interventions are enclosed within long dashes. I have inserted into the text the places where the interlocutor (I) asks the questions, and Wittgenstein (W) responds.) Could one imagine a language

> '*in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to his inner experiences—his feelings, moods and the rest—for his private use?*——(I) *Well, can't we do so in our ordinary language?*——(W) *But that is not what I mean. The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand this language*.' (*PI*, § 243, pp. 88e- 89e)

Wittgenstein, of course, denies the possibility of such a language. Usually, the issue of a private language is not openly stated as such. However, the issue underlies a number of philosophical positions. For example, John Locke, discussed above, believed that interpersonal spoken communication works by speakers' translation of their (private) internal mental vocabularies (thoughts / ideas that are put into words) into sounds, which are then uttered. This is followed by the hearers' re-translation into their own (private) internal vocabularies. Again, Descartes thought that, while he might make mistakes about the external world, he could infallibly avoid error if he confined himself to his immediate (private) sensations / experiences.

The significance of the issue of private language for Wittgenstein can be seen more clearly by seeing the argument in context. Immediately prior to the introduction of the argument (§§241f), there is a long section on language as a system of rules. Wittgenstein suggests that the existence of the rules which govern the use of language and the possibility of communication depends on agreement in human behavior — such as the uniformity in normal human reaction that makes it possible to train most children to look at something when one points at it. One function of the private language argument is to show that the very possibility of language and concept formation depends on the possibility of such agreement. Where you do not have such agreement, there is not anything that can be called language.

Another, related, function is to oppose the idea that metaphysical absolutes are within our reach, that we can find at least part of the world as it really is, in the sense that any other way of conceiving that part must be wrong. Philosophers are especially tempted to suppose that sensations are examples of such absolutes, self-identifying objects which themselves force upon us the rules for the use of their names. The issue here is an underlying confusion about how the act of meaning determines the future application of a formula or name.

> '(I) *Let us imagine the following case. I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation.*—(W) *I will remark first of all that the definition of the sign cannot be formulated.*—(I) *But still I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition.*—(W) *How? Can I point to the sensation?* (I) *Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same tine I concentrate my attention on the sensation—and so, as it were, point to it inwardly.*—(W) *But what is this ceremony for? For that is all it seems to be! A definition serves to establish the meaning of the sign.*—(I) *Well that is done precisely by the concentrating of my attention; for in this way I impress on myself the connection between the sign and the sensation.*—(W) *But "I impress it on myself" can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connection right in the future. But in this case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is gong to seem right to me is right. And that only means that we cannot talk about 'right'*.' (*PI*, § 258, p. 92e.)

Wittgenstein discusses further the problems involving the definition of the term.

> '*What reason do we have for calling "S" the sign of a sensation? For sensation is a word of our common language, not one intelligible to me alone. So the use of this word stands in need of a justification that everybody understands.—And it would not help either to say that it need not be a sensation, that when he writes "S" he writs something and that it all that can be said. "Has" and "something" also belong to our common language*.' (PI, § 261, p. 94e: text slightly adapted.)

The temptation is to suppose that sensations are self-intimating and self-defining. The example discussed by Stuart Candlish and George

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Wrisley is itching, but the issue of self-intimation and self-definition also extends to experiences that are not tied to sensations in parts of the body, and also to intentions, when these are 'projected' to parts of the body:

> '*Itching, for example, seems like this: one just feels what it is directly; if one then gives the sensation a name, the rules for that name's subsequent use are already determined by the sensation itself. Wittgenstein tries to show that this impression is illusory, that even itching derives its identity only from a sharable practice of expression, reaction and use of language. If itching were a metaphysical absolute, forcing its identity upon me in the way described, then the possibility of such a shared practice would be irrelevant to the concept of itching: the nature of itching would be revealed to me in a single mental act of naming it; all subsequent facts concerning the use of the name would be irrelevant to how that name was meant; and the name could be private. The private language argument is intended to show that such subsequent facts could not be irrelevant, that no names could be private, and that the notion of having the true identity of a sensation revealed in a single act of acquaintance is a confusion.*' http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/f...vate-language/.

The issue for aikido here is the nature of the process of rule following and of defining that governs the occurrence of so-called 'internal' experiences. Thus, to someone who is not a native speaker of Japanese, the operations of something called *KI* could well stand for the "S" in Wittgenstein's diary, but the process of understanding what it is cannot merely be due to repeated occurrences of the phenomenon. Identifying of the operations of *KI* must be subject to the application of rules, which are socially sanctioned by a community of language users. In other words, the meaning of '*allowing KI to pour through one's finger tips*' must be accessible by other means than the simple occurrence of the phenomenon in a particular individual. The issue is even clearer in the case of ' *mentally scanning the toes, the sole, heel, ankle, while trying to sense the total feeling of the foot* ', where there is no Japanese term to cause any confusion. To prevent this operation from being the sort of ceremony condemned by Wittgenstein, above, that falsely purports to establish a connection between a so-called sensation and a sign, there must be a **publicly** accessible way of identifying both the complex sensation and the linguistic sign.

There is an additional problems about this example: the difference between **trying** to sense '*the total feeling of the foot*' and **succeeding** in doing so. Trying—and failing—to '*sense the total feeling of the foot*' must be separately identifiable from trying—and succeeding in doing so. How about trying and succeeding in sensing the **partial** feeling of the foot? How would one know that some parts had not been included? (Personally, I think this is a very tall order in this particular case.) A somewhat less bizarre example involves projecting one's intention to a particular part of one's body. The issue arises if one divorces the 'intention' from the 'grammar' governing the general use of the term.

10. Aristotle, Lakoff and Metaphors We Practice By

The idea of 'allowing KI to pour through the fingertips' or 'trying to sense the total feeling of the foot' leads to the question of metaphor. In what sense are these phrases to be taken 'literally'? If they are metaphors, does this fact make the experiences less 'real'? In the last column I mentioned a couple of the metaphors to be found in *Budo Renshu*:

> 3 いつ後から捕りに来ても*後に目をつけて居て心の窓が全身に開かれ不意の敵襲に逢っても早速後が靈体一致して敏活な働を為さねばならぬ。*
>
> *Itsu ushiro kara tori ni kitemo ushiro ni me wo tsukete ite kokoro no mado ga zenshin ni hirakare fui no tekishu ni atte mo sassoku ushiro ga reitai icchi shite binkatsuna hataraki wo nasaneba naranu.*
> **Whenever an enemy comes to grab you from the rear, you should open on to your whole body the window of the spirit (*Kokoro*), which has eyes facing even to the rear. Your back must move instantly and vigorously with soul and body unified in response to the unexpected attack.** (Bieri Translation)
>
> **as soon as the opponent attempts to grab you from the rear, you must open the eyes of your heart and the window of your mind, follow your intuition, and move swiftly and surely to the proper position to counter the attack.** (Stevens translation)

NOTES:

B. I hope readers can see the metaphors used here. *Ushiro ni me wo tsukete ite kokoro no mado ga zenshin ni hirakare*:**Open on to your whole body the window of the spirit (*Kokoro*) which has eyes facing even to the rear.** The Bieri translation has reproduced the metaphor almost exactly as the Japanese reads. ... However, there are really two metaphors: *ushiro ni me wo tsukete ite*, which has the sense of keeping, maintaining, the gaze of the eyes to the rear (compare the English phrase, 'I have eyes in the back of my head'); and *kokoro no mado ga zenshin ni hirakare*: 'the window of the spirit opens to the whole body'. Thus, a more nuanced translation would be: '**You should constantly keep your eyes focused on the rear and the window of (your) spirit (should) be opened to your whole body.**'

C. Whereas 'having eyes in the back of one's head' is a metaphor that 'works' in English, 'opening the window of the spirit / mind on to the whole body is' is less easy to deal with. Stevens … combines both metaphors into one thought: 'Open the eyes of your heart and the window of your mind', but we will discuss in the next column whether it is really illuminating to talk of hearts having eyes and minds having

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windows.

Aristotle
Metaphors make their earliest appearance as such in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. The Greek term is *metaphora*, which Aristotle defines in the *Poetics* as: "the application of an alien name by transference either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy, that is, proportion." We can ignore the first three uses and look at one example given by Aristotle on metaphors by analogy. Consider old age and the evening of the day. To call old age ‘the evening of one's life', or the evening ‘the old age of the day' is a metaphor, relying on an analogy between two relationships: the relationship between ‘old age' and ‘life', and that between ‘evening' and ‘day'. Just as evening is the last stage of the day (before passing on to something new, called night), so also old age is the last stage of one's life (before passing on to something new, called death). Whether the analogy ‘works' or not depends **at least** on finding this common factor. (I say ‘at least' because there are other factors involved: old age as the evening of one's life seems to ‘work' more than calling evening the ‘old age of the day'. I will discuss this point further, below.)

Christof Rapp, who wrote the article on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, makes the following important point about Aristotle's treatment of metaphor:

> ‘*While in the later tradition the use of metaphors has been seen as a matter of mere decoration, which has to delight the hearer, Aristotle stresses the cognitive function of metaphors. Metaphors, he says, bring about learning (Rhet. III.10, 1410b14f.). In order to understand a metaphor, the hearer has to find something common between the metaphor and the thing which the metaphor is referred to. For example, if someone calls the old age "stubble," we have to find a common genus to which old age and stubble belong; we do not grasp the very sense of the metaphor until we find that both, old age and stubble, have lost their bloom. Thus, a metaphor does not only refer to a thing, but simultaneously describes the respective thing in a certain respect. This is why Aristotle says that the metaphor brings about learning: as soon as we understand why someone uses the metaphor "stubble" to refer to old age, we have learned at least one characteristic of old age.*'
> (http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/w...otle-rhetoric/) .

Rapp's comment is important for two reasons relevant to this discussion. First, he emphasizes the fundamental importance of metaphor in general language use, which is the prime aim of Lakoff's research on metaphor. Secondly, his contrast between metaphor as ‘mere decoration' and metaphor as a cognitive / learning device is also relevant to the Japanese notion of metaphor.

隠喩 ， 比喩 ， and メタファー
On p. 1555 of *Kenkyusha's English-Japanese Dictionary*, we find the following Japanese equivalents for *metaphor*: (1) 隠喩 ，（2) 比喩 ，and (3) 象徴 .（In the explanations below, the Chinese ON reading is given in capitals and the Japanese *kun* reading in italics.)

> (1) 隠喩（IN'-YU: 隠 *kakeru* = hide; 喩 *tatoeru* = compare) occurs first and is illustrated in much the same way as the metaphor by analogy, explained above. It is also defined as one type of the more general term, which is:
> (2) 比喩（HI-YU: 比 *kuraberu* = compare; 喩 *tatoeru* = compare). The example given for this term is ‘to talk in metaphors'.
> However, another explanation given of IN'YU 隠喩 is 比喩的表現（HI-YU-TEKI-HYO-GEN), which is ‘*metaphor for*', as in, ‘the ship of the desert is a *metaphor for* the camel'.
> (3) 象徴（SHO-CHO: 象 *katadoru* = imitate; 徴 *shirushi* = sign, indication)

The third meaning is something of a red herring, since the usual meaning is symbol.

I have been teaching the philosophy of language for many years and my Japanese students have formed a convenient living laboratory for testing my own hypotheses and hunches about the Japanese language. The students have been unanimous in the opinion that the Japanese renderings (1) and (2) primarily relate to literary metaphor, the ‘mere decoration' in Rapp's explanation above. George Lakoff, however, argues that such a use is very restricted and does not do anything like full justice to the richness of metaphor in English.

Lakoff
Lakoff has written a number of books on metaphor, the most notable being *Metaphors We Live By* (*MWLB*) and *Philosophy in the Flesh* (both with Mark Johnson). In *Metaphors We Live By*, he provides a sustained argument for his thesis, which is that human beings think largely in metaphors. In other words, metaphors are not purely linguistic entities, but are conceptual in nature. I believe that Lakoff is right about this, but I also think it is very difficult to set out exactly how metaphors do work and in fact Alan Cruse, cited earlier, believes that no one has ever produced a satisfactory linguistic theory of metaphor. The crucial problem is what Cruse calls the ‘nonce' quality of metaphor. By this he means that metaphors arise spontaneously, as it were, and suffer a slow death to the extent they become accepted in a language. Thus neither Lakoff, nor Aristotle before him, is able to explain why some metaphors ‘work' and others do not. Lakoff does make a very good attempt, however.

Lakoff's major aim is to sketch an explanatory theory of metaphor and to elaborate certain metaphor ‘categories' that are displayed in English. Like Aristotle, he starts off with the concept of correspondence or

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mapping (Aristotle uses the term ‘transfer') between two areas or domains. According to Lakoff, there is first (i) a source domain, which is usually concrete and familiar. Especially popular in English are conduits, containers, journeys, physical objects, and, surprisingly, warfare. Secondly, (ii) there is a target domain, which is usually abstract, or not well structured. Finally, (iii) the two domains are connected by a set of correspondences or mapping relations. The correspondences are ontological, involving entities in the two domains, and epistemic, involving relations of knowledge about the entities. Cruse illustrates this by means of the metaphor (which he always expresses in capitals): ANGER IS HEAT OF FLUID IN A CONTAINER

Ontological correspondences

- Source domain, HEAT OF FLUID : Target domain, ANGER
- Container : body
- Heat of fluid : anger
- Heat scale : anger scale
- Pressure in container : experienced pressure
- Agitation of boiling fluid : experienced agitation
- Limit of container's resistance : limit of person's ability to suppress anger
- Explosion : loss of control

Epistemic correspondences

- When fluid in a container is heated : When anger increases beyond a certain limit,
- beyond a certain limit, pressure increases : ‘pressure' increases to a point at which the
- to a point at which the container explodes. the person loses control.

Lakoff notes that it is important to note that the correspondence or mapping is partial and this might explain the differences between the examples below. The first example in each case ‘works', but there is something distinctly odd about the second example.

ANGER IS HEAT OF FLUID IN A CONTAINER

> (12) *As I listened to his speech, my anger was steadily rising, until I found it impossible to contain it any longer.*
> (13) ** *As I listened to his speech, I could feel a churning sensation down in my stomach. It was my anger, steadily coming to the boil, which steadily rose until it reached my mouth and then burst forth in a succession of curses.*

IDEAS (OR) MEANINGS ARE OBJECTS
COMMUNICATION IS SENDING

> (14) *I found it very hard to get that idea across to him.*
> (15) ** *I sent that idea off in his direction, and it made very good progress across the room, but when it reached him, try as it might, it was unable to gain access to his mind.*

ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY

> (16) *He suddenly strayed from his chosen line of argument and set off in another direction—the wrong direction.*
> (17) * *His defence was going fine; his argument had covered a lot of difficult ground and had reached a gentle plateau. From then on the going would have been easy, but suddenly he set off at a tangent and went deeper and deeper into the thickets of abstruse logic, that had no bearing on the issue at hand: the jury lost him altogether.*

As another example, let us take the statement of O Sensei (translated by the Bieris), quoted earlier:

> (18) …*you should open on to your whole body the window of the spirit (Kokoro), which has eyes facing even to the rear…*

Questions should immediately arise about how the metaphors are meant to work in English. On one level, the two elements in each metaphor can be connected by the central ground concept of light, and its derived concept of vision. Thus, you (who are in control of the *kokoro* [which is a building with window/windows, and which is also a body, with eyes that face in all directions]) should open these windows [of the building] on to your whole (physical) body. Even so the metaphor is very unusual.

If we consider Lakoff's schema, the source domain (building, windows), target domain (spirit, which can ‘see' / perceive), and some of the ontological mapping (windows can be opened; eyes open / can ‘see') are all in question. Certainly, Lakoff's container schema is appropriate, but questions arise which do not arise with the ANGER AS THE HEAT OF LIQUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor. In other words, the mapping from source domain to target domain needs to be clearer. The metaphor sees the *Kokoro* as an entity, possessed of eyes and a window, within the body. The ‘metaphorical' nature of the body (Container? Machine?)—and its relationship with the ‘*Kokoro* entity'—is not made clear. So questions of mapping remain: what does it mean for the ‘*Kokoro* entity' to open its ‘window' on the whole body? Is the ‘window' usually closed and to be opened only as the result of the correct training? It would seem so. Similarly, the ‘*Kokoro* entity' has eyes (given the Bieri translation, which I questioned in Column 11: the aim of the questioning was actually to suggest a restriction in the scope of the *Kokoro* metaphor), but these eyes face to the rear in any case, with or without the correct training. So the question remains about the two metaphors run together in the text: What is the connection between eyes facing to the rear and windows opening to the whole

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body in the case of attacks from the rear? And what does all this actually *mean* on the *tatami*, with one or more real attackers?

A curious thing about Lakoff is that many of the examples he gives as evidence of metaphor categories do not work in Japanese (and this is relevant to the example [18], from *Budo Renshu*, for it a translation from the Japanese original). This was brought home to me one year in my Philosophy of Language class, when I used as set texts the English version of *MWLB* and also the Japanese translation, called レトリックと人生（*Retorikku to Jinsei = Rhetoric and Human Life*). The theme of the class was categories of metaphor and I had the good fortune to have several Japanese returnees in my class (students of mixed marriages, who had spent a large a part of their lives in the US and who were bilingual in English and Japanese). They were able to read the original and the Japanese translation and see clearly where the metaphors ‘worked' in English, but not in Japanese. Actually, the Japanese translation of *MWLB* is full of footnotes, which explain the metaphors that do not ‘work' in Japanese and which substitute other examples. This does not, of course, mean that Lakoff's project of attempting to find a universal cognitive role for metaphor: a role that works across different languages and cultures, necessarily fails. It does mean, however, that the linguistic basis for this cognitive role is not necessarily English.

11: Mencius and Practical Training with I A Richards

Having made the language version of Kukai's 88-temple circuit, we are almost back where we started, with Morihei Ueshiba and his discourses on *kotodama*. The last stop is a discussion on a work of the English literary critic, I A Richards. Richards was a professor of English in the UK and the US and, following the lead of John Crowe Ransom in the USA, pioneered *New Criticism* in the UK. Richards spent some time in China (in 1930, not long before the Japanese invasion of Manchuria) and as a result, wrote an essay on Mencius, the Chinese disciple of Confucius. His application of ‘new criticism' to the works of Mencius will, in my opinion, illuminate the problems involved in reading a text such as Ueshiba's discourses.

Before this, however, a few minor autobiographical details will be in order. At school, I studied English literature under the guidance of an enthusiastic teacher who had been a student of F R Leavis, himself a student of I A Richards. My teacher strongly believed in the importance of New Criticism, which meant starting with an extremely rigorous analysis of the text (unencumbered with any intentions on the part of the author) and seeing where this led. Leavis himself did this with a number of English writers and the same type of analysis by another student of Richards resulted in a classic study of poetic ambiguity (Willian Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, which I read very carefully at school). Many years later, a retired Japanese colleague of mine, who for almost three decades has been teaching me to read Japanese, asked me to correct and edit the Japanese translation he had made of I A Richard's *Practical Criticism* (*PC*). So I rediscovered Richards (after a gap of nearly 50 years) and, in particular, his essay on the Chinese philosopher Mencius. I suspect that this book was not one of Richards' best selling works, but I believe that it has some relevance to a way of interpreting Morihei Ueshiba and his discourses.

Mencius on the Mind consists of four chapters and an appendix. The 44-page appendix is a close word-for-word translation of selections from Mencius, with the Chinese characters, the readings, and English translation printed together, rather like the translation of Ueshiba in Column 11 (except that the translation here is far more literal). The four chapters deal, respectively, with problems of ambiguity in the translation, different types of utterance in Mencius, Mencius' view of the mind, and some thoughts on what Richards calls ‘Comparative Studies'.

Translation

The appendix is an extraordinary work. It is not by Richards himself, but by three of his friends, two of whom were Chinese academics. The translation is organized in such a way that each Chinese character has beneath it the Romanized reading and one or two English words. Though Mencius appears to be prose, the closest examples from Morihei Ueshiba's writing would be the 和歌（*waka*) poetry known as 道歌（ *doka*). An example will make this clear (*Mencius*, Book IV; Part II, Chapter 26):

> *Meng tzu said, ‘Heaven below 's talk (of) Nature (is) about Causes only. Causes use profit as root.*
> (The only items without a corresponding Chinese character are those in brackets.)

James Legge (1895), on the other hand, translates the same passage in the following way:

> ‘*Mencius said, "All who speak about the natures of things, have in fact only their phenomena to reason from, and the value of a phenomenon is in its being natural."*'
> http://nothingistic.org/library/mencius/mencius16.html

Problems of Translation

The first chapter, on translation, points to that Richards calls a major problem in interpreting Mencius: the collision of ‘western logic' and traditional Chinese thinking. Having extracted six examples of ambiguity from each of the sentences given above, Richards points to a dilemma:

> ‘*In attempting to choose one reading rather than another, a very important consideration is soon forced upon us. As we shall see, Chinese thinking often gives no attention to distinctions which for Western minds are so traditional and so firmly established in thought and language, that we neither question them nor even become aware of them* as distinctions. *We receive and use them as though they belonged unconditionally to the constitution of things (or of thought).*' (*Mencius*, pp.3-4.)

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One issue for Richards in the above example is that nature *hsing* (性) stands both for human nature and for nature in general, while cause *ku* (故) can mean cause, reason, conviction, fact, datum, phenomenon. Thus he is forced to the conclusion that Mencius is writing in a style of 'condensed poetry'.

The problem is that Richards is actually a part of the problem—the dilemma felt by every anthropologist doing fieldwork; he cannot stand outside it as a detached observer, so to speak. The translation which his friends have produced is also the result of choices made previously and so this translation cannot claim any superiority over Legge's, for example. Like the anthropologist, Richards has a practical aim for producing an 'unbiased' translation:

> '*The number of persons equipped today with a purely Chinese scholarship is rapidly diminishing. Before long there will be nobody studying Mencius into whose mind philosophical and other ideas and methods of modern Western origin have not made their way…the Chinese scholar of the near future will not be intellectually much nearer Mencius than any western pupil of Aristotle and Kant. Unless the thinking which has been fundamental to historic China can somehow be explained in Western terms, it seems inevitably doomed to oblivion. In a sense, of course it is lost already…No one will think again the thoughts of Mencius.*' (*Mencius*, p. 9.)

Nor the thoughts of Morihei Ueshiba, but does this matter? Richards has a touching naivety in his belief that it will be possible to explain the thinking of a Mencius *in Western terms*, without any change to either during the process. His belief that the only way of keeping the thinking of Mencius alive in its pure state is in Western terms of thinking, before the Chinese become corrupted by the very same thinking, does not bear serious examination. The parallel with Morihei Ueshiba and postwar Japanese aikido is very clear.

Richards was educated in the intellectual powerhouse of Cambridge University, where he resided towards the end of his life (1974-1979). There he might have met another product of this powerhouse, who was in the middle of a massive research project. In Joseph Needham's *Science and Civilization in China*, we find the following comment after a discussion on the 'Ladder of Souls'. In a chart, Needham compares Aristotle (4th century BCE), Hsun Chhing (3rd century BCE), Lin Chou (6th century CE) and Wang Khuei (14th century CE). After a quotation from Hsun Tzu, on the similarities between *chhi* (氣) / *seng* (生) and the Greek concept of *pneuma*, Needham writes:

> '*And this raises one of those awkward time confrontations…, for Aristotle's life (384-322 BCE) was only a very little anterior to that of Hsun Tzu (c. 305-235 BCE). Since this was a century and a half before the opening of the Silk Road, I confess to much difficulty in believing that the one system could have been derived from the other, and would prefer that both were independent, though very similar, results of reflection on the same phenomenon. It is typical of Chinese thought that what particularly characterized man should have been expressed as the sense of justice rather than the power of reasoning.*' (Needham, Vol. II, p. 23.)

Needham had a certain advantage over Richards, in that he spent many years in China and immersed himself in the language. Unlike Richards, he also saw that Chinese thought evolved and that the Chinese themselves, long before the time that Richards was writing, were already far away from Mencius. Needham was also naïf, but in a different way. He believed, somewhat like E H Norman believed, that there was no conflict at all between dispassionate historical/scientific research and belief in the power of Marxist/Chinese communist ideology.

Multiple Definition

In the final chapter of his analysis of Mencius, Richards isolates what he thinks is the main problem.

> '*The problem, put briefly, is this. Can we in attempting to understand and translate a work which belongs to a very different tradition to our own do more than read our own conceptions into it? Can we make it more than a mirror our minds, or are we inevitably in this undertaking trying to be on both sides of the looking glass at once? To understand Mencius, for example, must we efface our whole tradition of thinking and learn another; and when we have done this, if it be possible, will we be any nearer being able to translate the one set of mental operations into the other? Is such translation, at best, only an ingenious deformation, in the style of the clever trick by which the children's entertainer makes with his fingers and thumbs a shadow very much like a rabbit?*' (*Mencius*, pp. 86-87.)

The solution is a plan for *Multiple Definition*:

> '*a systematic survey of the language we are forced to use in translation, of the ranges of possible meanings which may be carried by our chief pivotal terms—such as Knowledge, Truth, Order, Nature, Principle, Thought, Feeling, Mind, Datum, Law, Reason, Cause, Good, Beauty, Love, Sincerity…—and of our chief syntactic instruments, 'is', 'has', 'can', 'of' and the like.*' (*Mencius*, pp. 92-93.)

Richards gives examples of the 'multiple definition' of some of these terms and the examples read very much like the survey of English usage that Lakoff used in his treatment of metaphor. Knowledge, for example, is divided into several categories (*Mencius*, pp. 106-09):

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(1) *Knowledge as Response*

A knows B = A varies with B

(a) Response in action
Pigeons know their way home
A dog knows his master

(b) Response in Feeling
He had never really known happiness of misery until she came.

(c) Response in Thought
He knows his subject well
He knows what you mean

(2) *Knowledge as Participation*

(a) To be known is to be part of the life-history of the individual who knows, part of his stream of consciousness
(b) By extension, states or experiences which have been part of a knower's life history can be said to be known by him—unconscious perceptions, for example
(c) The act of knowledge requires within the knowing subject the presence of the object known
(d) Senses in which to be known is to be in the mind

(3) *Knowledge as Involving a Unique Relation or Act*

(a) Knowledge is a relation of a unique kind between a conscious subject and a presented object
(b) Knowledge is a modification of the conscious subject arising with the presentation of an object
(c) Knowledge is a state or act of the mind accompanying, but not caused by, certain states of acts of the body.

(4) *Knowledge as Reflection*

Knowledge is a copy or image in the mind of what is known.

(5) *Special Senses*

Knowledge is of the necessary only. Opinion is of the contingent.
Knowledge is of data only, with which the mind is in immediate contact. The rest is hypothesis.

Such a list would enable one to locate the meaning of the term as used by a particular writer, like Mencius. Richards is not the only one to have had such an idea. Over in Oxford, a contemporary of his, J L Austin, was pursuing a type of philosophy that involved the rigorous description of ordinary language. Unlike Richards, however, Austin never extended his researches into poetry and emphasized much more strongly meaning as use: what people were actually doing when they made utterances.

Practical Criticism
One can ask how Richards' 'Multiple Definition' is any different from the treatment of words in a large dictionary, such as the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the aim of which is to provide as full a record as possible of the English language. Of course, there are differences. Richards gives a similar weight to definition as Lakoff gives to metaphor: both are second-level devices used to illuminate words and utterances in context with a certain level of rigor. The context is as crucial as the words themselves, but the context is more than simple word-association. In this respect another book by Richards bears mentioning. *Practical Criticism* is the record of classes taught to university English students, who were shown the text of thirteen poems and asked to comment (the students did not know who wrote the poems). The results were of great interest, as much for the technique of critical appreciation as for the severely adverse comments on some supposed masterpieces of English literature. Here is the first stanza of the poem that was most severely criticized:

In the village churchyard she lies,
Dust is in her beautiful eyes,
No more she breathes, nor feels, nor stirs,
At her feet and at her head
Lies a slave to attend the dead,
But their dust is white as hers.

And the first half of the poem least severely criticized:

There was a rapture of spring in the morning
When we told our love in the wood.
For you were the spring in my heart, dear lad,
And I vowed that my life was good

But there's winter now in the evening,
And lowering clouds overhead,
There's a wailing of wind in the chimney-nook

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And I vow that my life lies dead.

Richards then discusses at great length the nature of poetry criticism and the question of meaning in poetry. '*It is plain that most human utterances and nearly all articulate speech can be profitably regarded from four points of view. Four aspects can easily be distinguished: Sense, Feeling, Tone, and Intention.*' (Richards, *PC*, pp. 181-182.) Richards goes on to define each one. Briefly, Sense is what is being communicated, what the speaker says: the state of affairs upon which the hearer's / reader's attention is being directed. Feeling is the speaker's attitude to what he is saying: a general term for the '*conative-affective aspects of life*', encompassing emotions, emotional attitudes, the will, desire, pleasure, non-pleasure. Tone is the speaker's attitude to the listener; the tone of the utterance reflects the speaker's awareness of his relation to his audience, his sense of how he stands towards those he is addressing. Intention is the speaker's aim, conscious or unconscious, the effect he is endeavoring to promote.

> '*Ordinarily, he speaks for a purpose, and his purpose modifies his speech. The understanding of it is part of the whole business of apprehending his meaning. Unless we know what he is trying to do, we can hardly estimate the measure of his success. Yes the readers who omit such considerations might make a faint-hearted writer despair.*' (Richards, PC, p. 182.)

We might think that Richards is stating what seems obvious, but it should not be forgotten that he was a pioneer. He attempted to introduce a level of intellectual rigor in literary criticism that had not been seen before. There is certainly the need for such rigor in dealing with Morihei Ueshiba's discourses, no matter what literary category they fit into.

Conclusion: Back to Morihei Ueshiba's Elephant:
Do his discourses—and the language of his discourses—really matter?

My own answer is 'Yes, they do' and 'Yes, it does'. I will come back to this question again in another column, but it seems clear to me that Morihei Ueshiba's discourses and 道歌（*doka*) do merit extensive and intensive study, along the lines I have sketched above.

To place this in context, here is the quotation from *AikiWeb* that I gave at the beginning of Column 11, but with the rest of the statement.

> '*Almost everyone looks to the teaching of O Sensei for guidance in their practice of Aikido.*

The author then asks a very pertinent question:

> *However some focus more on things he said at specific times in his life; for example, his pre-war teachings vs. his post-war teachings. My question is, when studying any person's genius, doesn't it make more sense that whatever that person said last holds to be the culmination of his whole life's experience, study, and practice? Why would anyone go back x number of years in one person's life and say, THIS is his true art, and discount everything after that? I mean when I think of my own practice of Aikido, I certainly don't think that I was better off when I was younger. Doesn't wisdom grow with age? Has this sort of thing been done with any other great genius in history?* '

The question is pertinent because some people do, in fact, seek guidance for their aikido in the words of O Sensei, but are sometimes unduly selective in what they consider. The author of the comment makes a plea for studying what Ueshiba said last. It is true that this might be a culmination of his whole life experience, study and practice, but there is a case for studying all this as well. Seiseki Abe has divided the *doka* into prewar and postwar groups, but this has never happened with the discourses. In any case, the *doka* are examples of Japanese *waka* poetry and need to be studied as poems, as much as anything else, and this means studying their antecedents and the tradition in which they were written. This has not yet been done. The discourses, too, need to be studied in the same way, with close attention paid to the general categories outlined by Richards: Sense, Feeling, Tone and Intention. Not all these categories might be relevant to Ueshiba's discourses, but nothing remotely like what Richards pioneered in *Mencius on the Mind* or in *Practical Criticism* has ever been attempted, or probably even thought about, with Morihei Ueshiba.

Reading

For those who have never studied philosophy, one of the *Oxford Companions* series is a good way of becoming acquainted with the thinkers discussed in this column: Ted Honderich, ed, *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Second Edition, OUP, 2000. I have also found the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* of great help. Continuously updated, this website is a source of many high-quality articles.

The research of Milman Parry and Albert B Lord on Homer can be found in: Adam Parry, Ed, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, 1987, Oxford U P; Albert B Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Second Edition edited by Stephen Mirchell and Gregory Nagy, 2000, Harvard U P.

Books on language abound. I found the following introduction useful: Christine Kenneally, *The First Word: The Search for the Origins of Language*, 2007, Penguin. Steven Pinker is always readable and provocative, even if he is not always right: *Words and Rules: The Ingredients of Language*, 2000, Harper Collins; *The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature*, 2007, Penguin. Stephen Earle, *Words, Characters, and Transparency - An Introduction to the Art and Science of Kotoha* (2003, ASNeX) is a very interesting mixture of biography and speculation, while David Anthony's *The Horse, The Wheel, and Language*, 2007, Princeton U P is a complex discussion about language and archeology. The key to Lewis Carroll's 'nonsense' poem can be found on pp. 148-149 of Martin Gardner's *The Annotated Alice* (2000, Norton).

More specifically dealing with meaning is one of the *Oxford Textbooks*

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in Linguistics series: Alan Cruse, *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*, Second Edition, 2004, Oxford U P. Geoffrey Leech discusses some of the issues raised by H P Grice: Geoffrey Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, 1983, Longman. Grice's own views are expounded in a collection of essays: G P Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* , 1989, Harvard U P.

The books of R A Miller are of some importance when considering the Japanese language, especially *kotodama*. Miller wrote four books, including a seminal work on the nature of the Japanese language: Roy Andrew Miller, *The Japanese Language*, 1967, Chicago U P, 1980, Tuttle; *Japan's Modern Myth: The Language and Beyond*, 1982, Weatherhill; *Nihongo: In Defence of Japanese*, 1986, Athlone Press; *Languages and History: Japanese, Korean, Altaic*, 1996, White Orchid Press.

Dark areas of the 'dream world' have been illuminated by J Allan Hobson: *The Dreaming Brain: How the brain creates both the sense and nonsense of dreams*, 1988, Basic Books; *Dreaming as Delirium: How the Brain Goes Out of Its Mind*, 1999, MIT; *The Dream Drugstore: Chemically Altered States of Consciousness*, 2001; *Dreaming: A Very Short Introduction*, 2002, Oxford U P.

The most precise statement of Ludwig Wittgenstein's later philosophy, especially his account of language games, can be found in his *Philosophical Investigations*. The best edition of this text has the German original and the English translation on facing pages (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 1968, Blackwell). Among the vast amount of literature on Wittgenstein's work, there are a number of commentaries, the best two being by Garth Hallett, and by G P Baker & P M S Hacker (Garth Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations"*, Cornell U P, 1977; G P Baker & P M S Hacker, *An Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations*, 4 volumes, 1980 - 1996, with subsequent revisions, Blackwell).

Books on metaphor abound also, ranging from the attempts of linguists or philosophers to 'explain' metaphor, to attempts to set out the categorical frameworks of metaphor in English. One of the latest attempts to do this is: Samuel Guttenplan, *Objects of Metaphor*, 2005, Oxford U P. Lakoff's theories are best read in: George Lakoff & Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 1980, 2003, Chicago U P. Those who can read Japanese should look at the translation: G レイコフ & M ジョンソン， レトリックと人生， 1986, 大修館． Lakoff's book on poetic metaphor is also highly relevant to the discussion on I A Richards and 'New Criticism': George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*, 1989, Chicago U P. Three important collections of articles are: Andrew Ortony, Ed, *Metaphor and Thought*, Second Edition, 1993 Cambridge UP, Lynne Cameron and Graham Low, Eds, *Researching and Applying Metaphor*, 1999, Cambridge U P; Raymond W Gibbs Jr, Ed, *Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, 2008, Cambridge U P. One of Lakoff's students has produced a number of books: Zoltan Kovecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 2000, Oxford U P; *Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture and Body in Human Feeling*, 2000, Cambridge U P; *Metaphor in Culture: Universality in Variation*, 2005, Cambridge U P.

There is also a vast amount of literature concerning I A Richards and 'New Criticism'. For this column I have consulted: I A Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*, 1929, Routledge & Kegan Paul; C K Ogden and I A Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, 1948, Harcourt Brace; I A Richards, *Mencius on the Mind: Experiments in Multiple Definition*, 1932, Harcourt Brace (reprinted as one of Kessinger's Rare Reprints [www.kessinger.net]); Anne E Berthoff, Ed, *Richards on Rhetoric -- I A Richards: Selected Essays (1029-1974)*, 1991, Oxford U P.

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