



SOME RHETORICAL USES OF METAPHOR

- **Express an abstract idea in concrete terms**
The Harvard grad schools: “Every tub on its own bottom.”
The 800-lb. gorilla in the living room.
- **Generate new experiential frameworks to understand an old problem**
E.g., Think of your organization as a human body and try to identify the various members with the different parts
- **Create a new mental model to generate ideas for a speech or paper**
E.g., Apply the idea of evolution or “survival of the fittest” to a social problem
- **Inject some emotion into a rational analysis**
The Democratic Party as wagon train rather than ship of state.
- **Express an opinion indirectly**
George W. Bush on polling: “We don’t stick our finger in the air to figure out which way the wind is blowing.”
“The former president is still a courtesan to public opinion.”
- **Suggest a meaningful comparison or contrast**
E.g., Tom Friedman’s *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*
- **Make a humorous comment**
“Some drink from the fountain of knowledge; he only gargled.”
- **Refer to a well-known story, character, or aphorism**
Recent op-ed headline: “Rome Fiddles, We Burn”
At the Emperor’s New Oscars, a pride of the world’s most dazzling women came in dreadful get-ups.
- **Appear more intelligent, interesting, creative!**