COMPARATIVISM THEN AND NOW[*]

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Is a comparative anthropology of the ancient world possible? The ancients certainly had no doubts on this score: Cornelius Nepos found it perfectly reasonable to juxtapose key Greek and Roman social configurations such as rules of marriage, male and female sexual behavior, and concepts of honor (1.4.1–7.2), leading him to a relativistic stance—"the standard for judging what is respectable and shameful is not the same for all men, and all things must be judged according to the traditions of the ancestors (*omnia maiorum institutis iudicari*)"—that anticipates Melville Herskovits.[1] Plutarch, too, in constructing his pluralistic interpretations of Roman customs did not hesitate to contrast Roman behaviors with Greek behaviors, including those of his "own" Greeks—the Boeotians of Chaeronea—or those of the sanctuary at Delphi, where he had once been a priest (cf. *Quaest. Rom.* 16.267d and 23.269b).[2] And yet the history of anthropological comparison within the field of Classical Studies suggests the answer is not so straightforward. Indeed, apart from some aspects and tendencies in the Renaissance in Europe—in which, as Lévi-Strauss (1976: 272) wrote, Humanism "realized the means of putting its own culture in perspective, by confronting contemporary concepts with those of other times and places"—and the scholarly career of Christian Gottlob Heyne (1739–1812)—who insisted on using the customs of what he called "savage" (Wilden) cultures to help explain those of Greek culture—comparison of the cultures of

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[*] A fuller treatment of these same themes may be found in Bettini 2009 and 2010, and Short 2013.
[1] This stance is also detectable in Herodotus *(Hist.* 3.38.3–4), in the famous episode where Darius compares the funerary rites of the Greeks and Indian Callati. Arguments similar to Nepos'—and in an entirely parallel context, namely the relativization of "the good" (καλόν) and "the shameful" (αἰσχρόν)—recur in the Sophistic *Dissoi Logoi*.
[2] On "instabilité du sens" as a characteristic trait of Plutarch's research, see De Fontenay 1998: 171. Lévi-Strauss (1981: 42), discussing Plut. *Is. et Osir.* 45.369, thoroughly approved of this method.

ancient Greece and Rome to one another, let alone to other cultures ancient or modern, has largely been neglected (if not in fact rejected outright) by classical scholars as an interpretive strategy. But why?

Because the "primitive" Greek culture he was interested in stands at such a temporal distance, Heyne viewed the readiest source of evidence for trying to understand the *genius* or "spirit" of this culture to be ethnographic reporting.[3] Judging Greek culture by "our" standards of behavior would be misleading, since Greek culture appears to have come into being in conditions closer to what can be observed among contemporary "primitive" peoples of America, Asia, and Africa: thus, it is through "comparison with savage and barbarous peoples" that the "life of the most ancient men, especially in Greece" can best be explained.[4] This was not a view shared by most of Heyne's contemporaries, however. In fact, a new scholarly program—*Altertumswissenschaft*—and a more general intellectual and aesthetic paradigm emerging in Germany during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries tended instead to idealize Greek culture as uniquely "creative" and "original" and to uphold ancient Greece as a model of civilization. This idealization is perhaps best represented by Friedrich Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), who as Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Prussia wrote: "In the Greeks we have before us a nation in whose fortunate hands everything, which, according to our deepest feelings, sustains the noblest and richest aspects of human existence, matured to the utmost perfection . . . To know them is for us not just pleasant, advantageous and indispensable; only in them do we find the ideal of that which we ourselves should like to be and to produce" (translation of McInerney 1999: 10). Viewed in such terms, Greek culture inevitably becomes incomparable with any other—with "savage" cultures, obviously, but

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[3] Heidenreich 2006: 388–93; Fornaro 2004b.

[4] As in the titles of his works, *Vita antiquissimorum hominum, Graeciae maxime, ex ferorum et barbarorum populorum comparatione illustrata: Commentatio I* and *Vita antiquioris Graeciae ex ferorum et barbarorum populorum comparatione illustrata: Commentatio II*, both of 1779.

also with Roman culture, which under this view took on the status of only a poor imitation of Greek culture.[5]

German *Altertumswissenschaft* and its direct descendant, twentieth-century classical philology—with their defined philological focus and their devotion to ancient (especially Greek) culture as uniquely creative—came to predominate within Classical Studies, spelling the end of any comparative approach like Heyne's. Nevertheless, comparativism resurfaced in the second half of the nineteenth century, in England, in James George Frazer's (1854–1941) *The Golden Bough*, where Roman material mixes freely with "evidences" from all corners of the globe—Greek, Arab, Indian, Australian . . . A true triumph of comparative anthropology, if only Frazer's methodology were not so obviously problematic! Its faults are well known, however: Frazer gathers fragments of ethnographic knowledge under a running series of general entries with titles such as "homeopathic" or "imitative magic" or "succession to the soul", pairing *comparata* and *comparanda* in a way that suggests the meaning of this material is already predetermined.[6] Moreover, as his aim is to describe "the evolution of primitive religion and society" (Frazer 1911: ix), again according to general hypotheses (e.g., "like produces like"), his organization of the evidence adheres to an unmistakable structure of phases and developments.[7] Finally, Frazer's basis for comparison appears to be a conviction that ancient "popular beliefs"—like the one on which he based his interpretation of the *aureus ramus* that gave inspiration, and a title, to his work—can, and should be, treated like those of any other "savage" culture, since there undoubtedly exists "a

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[5] A view which has only recently begun to fade: cf. Feeney 1998.
[6] Frazer 1931 is a true "manifesto" of the analogical method, which for comparative purposes seeks out similarities between cultures; on Frazer's tendency to favor similarities over differences, cf. Evans-Pritchard 1965, insisting instead on the "importance for social anthropology, as a comparative discipline, of differences" (25).
[7] For criticism of Frazer's method, see esp. Clemente 1984, Dei 1998, and Clemente, Dei and Simonicca 2008.

layer of savagery beneath the surface of ancient society" (Frazer 1931: 130).[8] Ancient culture can be compared to "savage" cultures, in other words, because it is in large part also "savage".

In 1908, Robert R. Marett (1866–1943) published a collection of six articles by prestigious scholars of the time—Sir Arther Evans, Andrew Lang, Gilbert Murray, F. B. Jevons, J. L. Myres, and William Warde Fowler—under the promising title of *Anthropology and the Classics*, but was unable to articulate a true union of the two disciplines. Because anthropology deals with cultures "of the simpler or lower kind" and Classical Studies, having "their parent source in the literatures of Greece and Rome", with "whatever is most constitutive and characteristic of the higher life of society" (Marett 1908: 3), Marett was forced to appeal to a vague category of "phenomena of transition" in which the "high" cultures of classical antiquity and "low" cultures of anthropological research could meet halfway and to the unique talents of the individual scholars who participated in that endeavor. The scholarship of Herbert Jennings Rose (1883–1961) and the aforementioned William Warde Fowler (1847–1941) represented an exception to classicists' anti-comparativism, but followed an essentially Frazerian model. W. F. Jackson Knight (1895–1964) was perhaps more innovative. Though his *Cumaean Gates* of 1936 looks to Frazer's work in many respects, its conclusion is based on a very different principle of interpretation: Vergil's *Aeneid* can be compared with Malekula beliefs or the story of Gilgamesh, for instance, because it embodies a universal cultural paradigm of initiation.[9] For Jackson Knight, the possibility of comparing a Roman text to the myths and beliefs of other populations in fact depends on the nature of poetic genius, which has special access to a sort of ahistorical, transcultural world of Jungian "archetypes".[10] A peculiar

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[8] This belief is not so different than what is expressed by Thucydides in his "archaeology", sustaining that "The ancient Greeks (τὸ παλαιὸν Ἑλληνικόν) had customs similar to those of today's barbarians" (*Hist.* 1.6.6). Anyone's "ancients" may occasionally raise the disturbing suspicion of having been "savages".

[9] Interestingly, Layard's (1936) study of Malekula ceremonies and of Jackson Knight's work has recently attracted the attention of an anthropologist like Gell (1998).

[10] Jung (explicitly cited by Jackson Knight) had introduced the concept of "archetypes" into the psychology of the unconscious in 1921, based on the theory "racial memory" in early psychoanalysis. This approach was vehemently criticized by Malinowski in an

theory, to say the least, since "fierce originality" (Bloom 2002: 11)—and so incomparability—is normally considered a hallmark of "genius".[11]

Jackson Knight's comparative approach never gained many adherents among Vergilians, let alone among Classicists at large. Indeed, while in the decades since Jackson Knight's *Cumaean Gates* cultural studies of the ancient world have decidedly increased in number, yielding important advances in our knowledge on themes such as kinship, images, public behavior, the body, writing, or bilingualism,[12] Classicists who have dedicated themselves most vigorously to this kind of study have rarely given much heed to comparison. While unquestionably cultural in theme, the studies of Florence Dupont and her school, for instance, noticeably eschew that "comparative sociology" identified by Radcliffe-Brown (1956) as the essence of anthropology—not to mention large-scale intercultural comparisons along the lines of Lévi-Strauss' *Mythologiques*. In fact, in recent years, the more an anthropologist of Roman culture presents him- or herself as comparativist the more he or she is perceived to be outside of Classical Studies. This may be because the displeasure that classical philologists felt at ancient Greece and Rome being likened to other cultures in Frazer's work—where material from "primitive" cultures appears alongside historical and philological notes to explain Ovid, Pausanias, or Apollodorus—has not yet dissipated. In other words, Classicists may still not wish to admit that the cultures they study no longer have the privilege of being the most "original" or the most "beautiful".[13]

But it is probably also the Classicist's scholarly identity that is felt to be at stake. For today's Latinist, Frazer's commentary on Ovid's *Fasti*—full of tattooed Arundas, Moroccans, Indians, and

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essay published in 1928: "the psychoanalytic theory stands and falls with the assumption of a 'race memory' and a 'race unconscious' which will be accepted by few anthropologists who do not belong to the inner ring of ardent Freudians" (1962, 290).
[11] On this fascinating figure, who while working on his translation of the *Aeneid*, believed he was in contact with the spirit of Vergil through a medium, see Wiseman 1992: 192–206.
[12] I.e., Moreau 2003; Dupont and Auvray-Assayas 1998; Dupont 2000; Moreau 2002; Valette-Cagnac 1997; Dupont and Vallette-Cognac 2005: for further bibliography, see also Bettini 2010.
[13] Cf. Ackerman 1987: 129–30; Dei 1998: 320–41.

Russians—is frankly unacceptable: what leading scholars declare nowadays is their intention to clear Ovid's text from the "collective codes" imposed on it by the anthropologists and historians of religions, in order to return to the dignity, or substance, of the text as such.[14] Obviously, this is a scholarly project that can only be wholeheartedly endorsed—all the more so recognizing its absolute sympathy with the notion that every culture must be examined above all "on its own terms" and that its texts must be read for their content, rather than disarranged and distributed here and there as if they were flyers for cultural tourism. Yet it bears emphasizing that in his *Fasti*—a text that Latinists intend to "save" from Frazerianism—Ovid actually follows a very Frazerian method: both authors attempted to transform the dry material of erudition and folklore into literature; both looked beneath the surface of an extremely advanced and refined society—in Ovid's case, that of Augustan Rome; in Frazer's, that of Victorian England—to find unknown origins and uncover wild, disturbing traditions.[15] Not only this. If philologists and anthropologists together accused Frazer of decontextualizing his evidence, postmodernist anthropology has now endorsed precisely this kind of contextual play that leaves the reader to choose between interpretations, inviting us to read Frazer's interminable "collages" in a newly polyphonic and intertextual way (and also to reconsider Plutarch's "dialogic" method of cultural explanation).[16]

Perhaps, however, Classicists' resistance to comparativism cannot be laid at the doorstop either of some perceived loss of status or of Frazer's clearly untenable methodology (even if this can be in some sense "reclaimed" within a postmodernist anthropology). Another important cause may be our "closeness" to the ancients, and especially to the Romans. Indeed, a considerable portion of

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[14] Cf. Barchiesi 1997: 50; see also 49: "Critical interest has been monopolized by the religious and folkloristic material that can be extracted from the poem, and what spirit of inquiry is left over after this search for the golden bough is often dedicated to easily defined subjected-headings, such as frivolity, libertinage, Greek cooking . . . "

[15] Kezich 1984: 63–6; Dei 1998: 107–8. On the notoriously "literary" quality of Frazer's anthropology, see esp. Dei 1998: 304–19 and 393–403. (Frazer himself, moreover, at the beginning of *The Golden Bough*, calls himself an "artist": 1911, viii); for Frazer's commentary to the *Fasti*, cf. the very positive judgment of Ackerman 1987: 297–300.

[16] Cf. Strathern 1988. Dei 1998: 405 articulates the same position in a very interesting way.

the population living in modern Europe descends directly from the people of Rome, speaks languages stemming from Latin, participates in cultures deriving from Roman culture. These are populations that live in the same places the Romans lived, and that have continuously looked upon and inhabited the physical remains of Roman culture. In many areas, these populations still speak something very close to the Latin language, though altered of course by "linguistic drift".[17] Apart from direct historical and cultural descent, there is also the fact that across the centuries Europeans and Westerners have continued to read the same "books" as the Romans and to study the Latin language. Françoise Waquet (2001) has underscored for how long the "Empire of Latin" was able to keep the West under its sway. From Italy to the Russia of Peter III, from Holland to Germany, from Spain to Poland, to the missions and schools of the New World, students aspiring to receive an education have all started from the "rules" of the Latin language. But it is not only a question of language. In reading Latin texts practically continuously since the first century CE, Westerners have assimilated a vision of the world, of society, of politics, of personal relations, that is essentially Roman. When our books are Roman books, and our languages are Roman languages, then our culture is also Roman culture.

All this makes it exceedingly difficult for us to observe the Romans in particular with that "gaze from afar" necessary for any anthropological approach. The Romans are familiar to us, and this presents a challenge to comparison: comparing the Romans to others would practically be like comparing ourselves to others, something we know is not at all easy. Having studied Latin for so long, and having based our learned language on it, there is no escaping that we have to some degree—and probably to a great degree—already assimilated this language's "hidden

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[17] Proust has already written: "Those French words which we are so proud of pronouncing accurately are themselves only blunders made by the Gallic lips which mispronounced Latin or Saxon, our language being merely a defective pronunciation of several others" (2006: 125).

metaphysics" (Whorf 1956). This does not imply that a comparative approach to Roman culture is impossible, however—only that a workable approach remains to be articulated. And in trying to articulate such an approach, we can turn—as the Romans themselves would have done when confronting a difficult question—to our "best" anthropological *maiores*.[18] First, Clyde Kluckhohn, who throughout his work stressed the inseparability of anthropology from what we might call "peculiarities". For Kluckhohn (1949, esp. 9–16), the anthropologist is the person who, setting out along the path of "queer customs" (as in the title of the first chapter of *Mirror for Man*) and takes the "longest way round", only to discover that this is actually the shortest route to reach an understanding of man. In other words, it is through "peculiarities" that the anthropologist is able to free him- or herself from the constraints of any local vision of humanity. Second, Clifford Geertz, who has often spoken of the centrality of "oddities" to anthropological investigation, as, for example, when he writes: "It may be in the cultural particularities of people—in their oddities— that some of the most instructive revelations of what it is to be generically human are to be found" (1973: 43). Of course, "oddities" are not there to be jettisoned in favor of "universal" traits, nor to be bandied about by those whom Geertz (1984: 275) called "merchants of astonishment": they are important precisely because they instill in the observer a sensation of difference.[19]

The comparative anthropologist of the Roman world, then, must focus on the "oddities" of Roman culture, estranging him- or herself from this culture and emphasizing both what the Romans do but we do not, and what we do but the Romans do not—as well as how the behaviors of other cultures (and especially of Greek culture) differ in this respect. Of course, to break free

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[18] Cf. the anecdote told by Cicero (*Leg.* 2.16.40) of the Athenians interrogating the oracle at Delphi after they had been told to heed the custom (*mos*) of their ancestors: since this had changed many times, they asked *which* of those customs specifically they should heed, to which the oracle responded: "the best". The same story is told by Xenophon (*Mem.* 4.3.15) but much more succinctly.

[19] Of course, long before Kluckhohn, the Greeks had already signaled the importance of the "marvelous" (τὸ θαῦμα) as a spur to reflection: cf. Pl. *Theaet.* 155d; Arist. *Met.* 982b11–19. Incidentally, this is why Horace's *nil admirari* in the sixth epistle of the first book has always seemed suspect, though in that part of the work the author is dealing with existential concerns.

from our own culture's identification with Roman culture, there is hardly any need to return to the "savage" comparison of Heyne or Frazer. Nor are we suggesting that the anthropologist of ancient culture establish a personal *Wunderkammer* full of dragons, mermaids, and monstrous births patiently extracted from Cicero's *On Divination* or Macrobius' *Saturnalia* (cf. Daston and Park 2001), or draw up lists of forgotten and bizarre words like some modern-day Festus. When we say that cultural or linguistic "oddities" should be the basis for comparative study, by "oddities" we mean cultural configurations that are normal and predictable—institutions, conceptions, and behaviors—but that in Roman society take on forms that are, for us, unexpected. The kind of comparativism appropriate for a contemporary Roman anthropology is therefore one that aspires to juxtapose Roman culture and Greek culture, with the possibility of comparing these cultures with others both ancient and modern. Above all, this new comparativism will be one based more on the differences than on the similarities observed between cultures, more on what is present and what is absent—what seems "odd"—than on presumed correspondences between cultures that are geographically and temporally distant. If Frazer (1931) based his method exclusively on the similarities between cultures (cf. Evans-Pritchard 1965), today's comparative research must be oriented instead towards their differences, presenting experimental and constructive juxtapositions that avoid predetermining the meaning of any specific cultural configuration in placing it alongside supposedly analogous representations (cf. Detienne 2008 and 2007).

In what follows, we illustrate one possible comparative approach to Roman culture that begins from differences in metaphorical usage. Metaphors are, we believe, particularly apt for comparative anthropological analysis because, as an immense interdisciplinary bibliography now demonstrates, it is through its metaphorical imagery that a language often reveals the cognitive forms or mental models that organize the culture to which it belongs (especially when these

metaphors seem to be organized into systems). Moreover, the metaphors that the speakers of different languages use in expressing the same concepts are often strikingly different, and such "oddities" of conceptualization raise interesting cultural questions. For instance, English speakers' understanding of a *mistake* appears to depend on a theory of truth that is constituted through what Michael Reddy (1979) has called the "conduit" metaphor: In this metaphor, which has predominated in English speakers' conception at least since the Industrial Revolution in Britain, words are imagined simply as "containers" for the ideas (propositions) they express—the "truth" thus being a correspondence of verbally expressed propositions to real-world states of affairs.[20] In English, therefore, a *mis-take* is a failure to metaphorically "get" or "obtain" or "extract" the propositional content from an expression (or behavior grounded in such a failure). Greek and Latin speakers rely on quite different images to convey the concept of mistakenness, however. In Greek, this concept is delivered primarily by the verb ἁμαρτάνω and its derivatives, which refer literally to "missing a target". In Latin, by contrast, it is conveyed by *errō* and its derivatives, which literally denote "wandering from a path".

The difference is more than a linguistic curiosity: it also implies significant differences not only in how speakers of these languages conceived of mistakenness, but also in their attitudes and values towards—and thus behaviors and practices in respect of—making mistakes. Here, we focus on how Latin's "wandering" metaphor, as part of a generalized spatial conceptualization of knowledge, can be distinguished from the Greek metaphor as a "folk model" with not only widespread semantic effects but also recognizable cultural implications. Consider the metaphors converging on this concept first in Greek. In addition to the "missile" metaphor, images recruited from a broad range of human experience help define this concept: For example, the value of the

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[20] For examples of expressions that embody this metaphor, see Reddy 1979; Lakoff and Johnson 1980: esp. 10–12 and Grady 1998.

prepositions ἀπό, κατά, and παρά in compounds like ἀποπιστεύω, καταδοξάζω, and παραγιγνώσκω suggests a metaphor in which what is "correct" or "true" corresponds to a determined location, so that what is "away from", "down (from?)", or "from the side of" this location is mistaken. Figurative usage of σφάλλω and πταίω instead reflects a metaphor in which mistakenness is conceived in terms of bodily "stumbling" or "falling", while παρόραμα or ἀβλέπτημα and ἀλόγημα are metaphors from vision and reckoning, in which mistakenness is understood as a perceptual or arithmetical failure. The meanings of πλανάω—"cause to wander" and, passively, "be mistaken"— suggests Greek also has a version of the "wandering" metaphor.

Next, consider Latin's metaphors of mistakenness. Certain similarities and differences are easily made out. To begin with, several metaphors appear to be shared between the two systems. I have already mentioned the "wandering" metaphor underlying the metaphorical meaning of *erro* in Latin and of πλανάω in Greek.[21] Latin also has a "stumbling" or "falling" metaphor akin to Greek's, as reflected by *fallor* ("be mistaken", from root **fal-*, lit. "trip, cause to fall"), *offendo* (lit. "dash (the foot) against something"), *labor* (lit. "slip; fall") and *pecco* (< **ped-*, "fall": cf. Vedic *pádyate* "falls" and *padáyate* "causes to fall"; Old English *gefetan* "fall"; Old Church Slavic *pasti* "fall.").[22] Moreover, the image of "being apart from" motivating the figurative sense of the Greek prepositions probably also gives the meaning of the Latin adverb *perperam* ("incorrectly") and adjective *perperus* ("wrong-headed"), since etymologically speaking these words signify position "on the other side of".[23] On the other hand, Latin speakers do not normally talk about

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[21] Evidence from Sanskrit and Gothic suggest the metaphor may in fact belong to Indo-European. It may well be universal, in fact: cf. Danaher 2003: 448–9 for extensive data from Russian; for Semitic, cf. *Hos.* 5:5; *Prov.* 4:11-12 and 24:16; *Jer.* 39:9b, et al., also in Syriac. Bengali likely inherits the Sanskrit metaphor: cf. Sen 2005: 2.

[22] Again Sanskrit *skhalate* ("stumble; trip" as well as "err; be mistaken") and the stem *bhra-* meaning both "waver, be unsteady" and "be mistaken", suggest the metaphor is inherited.

[23] They are both from **pero-*; the reduplication may be due to the original meaning of the stem becoming opaque; or the reconstruction may be **per-poro-* "going to the other side of": see De Vaan 2008: 461. The word *vitium* may even fit here, if the reconstruction from **(d)u̯i-* (as also in *duo*) is correct: in this case, a "mistake" being seen again as the condition of "being apart, separate": see De Vaan 2008: 684.

"making a mistake" in terms of visual perception, for instance;[24] and Greek's "missile" metaphor is conspicuously absent. They also conceptualize mistakenness in ways that Greek speakers do not: if *perversus* and *depravatus* reflect a general "structural deformation" metaphor like Greek's, in *deformis* ("misshapen") and *mendosus* (from *menda*, "a blemish (of the face)"), what is "mistaken" is viewed more specifically in terms of bodily disfigurement.

What accounts for such a diversity of metaphorical imagery in Greek and Latin speakers' talk about mistakenness? Where a concept is defined by several distinct metaphors, cognitive linguists argue that these metaphors typically collaborate to produce an understanding of that concept's various aspects. Though the metaphors may recruit different conceptual materials and so fail to provide a consistent image to conceptualization, nevertheless they tend to fit together coherently as an overall system. Each metaphor, that is, targets the understanding of some dimension of the metaphorically defined concept that is not covered, or only partially covered, by the others.[25] We might think of the metaphors of love used by the Latin elegists: hunting; military service; slavery; fire; disease; madness; exile—all of which help characterize various aspects or phases of the erotic relationship: seduction, passion, devotion (or helpless dependency), and separation.[26]

In the same way, within the systems of metaphor that define mistakenness in Greek and Latin, each constituent image appears to target some special dimension of the understanding of "making a mistake". For example, the "structural deformation" image seems to focus on mistakenness as an anomalous state of knowledge in respect to some absolute standard of truth. In Latin, where another entrenched metaphor orients what is good as "up" and what is bad as "down", the image probably also imparts a strongly negative moral value to mistakes. The image of mistakenness as

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[24] *Caecus error* is an exclusively poetic formulation: cf. Sen. *Herc.* 1096; Sil. *Pun.* 15.619; Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 20.363.
[25] See Kövecses 2010: 149–67 and Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 87–105 on the "coherence" of metaphor systems.
[26] Cf. Kennedy 1993: 46ff. and Wyke 1989.

being "apart (from)" a location similarly emphasizes the "fixity" of what is true as independent and autonomous of any subjectivity, and the contingency of "a mistake" in respect to this fixed standard. The "falling" or "stumbling" metaphor, meanwhile, seems to have to do with the unpredictability or involuntariness of mistakenness, implying that a mistake is brought about by factors largely extrinsic to the person who makes it. Greek's metaphors from sight and calculation, in contrast, highlight the connection between an individual's perceptual and intellectual capabilities and mistakenness, while Latin's "disfigurement" metaphor seems to locate the origins of mistakenness in the human bodily condition: in these terms, "making a mistake" is seen almost as the outcome of intrinsic personal defects.

Latin's "wandering" metaphor and Greek's "missile" metaphor are instead comparable in their focus on the concept of mistakenness in its basic relation to rational thought, and in this sense can probably be considered "privileged" conceptualizations.[27] Though offering up quite different images to conceptualization, in both metaphors correct reasoning is conceived, at base, as motion along a path toward a predetermined goal. In cognitive linguistics terms, this conceptualization could be described as a series of conceptual correspondences in which the notions of motion toward, the path of this motion, and its destination, are mapped to the reasoning process. This can also be described in "image schematic" terms—an image schema being highly abstract structure of cognition that emerges through human perceptual and sensory-motor interaction with the world, or as Mark Johnson (1987: xiv) writes, "a recurring dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience".[28] Specifically, rational thought appears to be conceived in terms of what cognitive linguists refer to as the source-path-

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[27] The "privileged" or "preferential conceptualization" refers to the metaphor that provides the most frequent, most systematically coherent, most potentially elaborated, and most experientially motivated model for conceptualizing a given target domain: Kövecses 2005: 82–86.
[28] See also Hampe and Grady 2005; Lakoff 1990 and 1993; Lakoff and Johnson 1999.

goal schema, which portrays to the imagination a "trajector" (a dynamic foreground entity) that traces a path from one landmark (static background entity) to a definite fixed endpoint.[29] Of course, in the Latin metaphor, the trajector corresponds to the thinker who "travels" toward the truth-"destination", while in the Greek metaphor it corresponds to the thinker's thought which is "shot" at the truth-"target". But in both, failure to traverse the preordained trajectory directly constitutes a failure of reasoning: a mistake.

Despite sharing the same conceptual underpinnings—and so representing, to a certain degree, the "same" conceptualization of mistakenness—even so, it is clear that Greek's "missile" metaphor and Latin's "wandering" metaphor enjoyed very different statuses in the overall symbolic systems of the speakers of these languages, with important cultural implications. In the first place, the increasing predominance of ἁμαρτάνω's "mistaking" sense in this word's semantic structure diachronically—so that in the Christian period its literal sense is almost entirely forgotten—tends to mask the fact that the Greek "missile" metaphor remains linguistically quite circumscribed. Ἀμπλακέω and ἀλιταίνω, for instance, may show the same figurative development, but these words belong to a specialized and temporally restricted poetic vocabulary. [30] At the same time, the possible meanings of ἀστοχέω demonstrate that the metaphor does not have systematic effects: though it has the same literal meaning as ἁμαρτάνω, this verb and its derivatives are not conventionally used in the figurative "mistaking" sense; such usage is in fact restricted entirely to the language of Polybius.[31]

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[29] On the concepts of "trajector" and "landmark" in cognitive grammar and their role in image schematic structure, see Talmy 1988.
[30] See Bremer, *Hamartia* (note 12), 26.
[31] Cf. Polyb. *Hist.* 1.74.2, ἀστόχως, "amiss" and 2.33.8, διὰ τὴν ἀστοχίαν, "by mistake". Nor, in general, do we find effects of the "missile" metaphor outside of this limited semantic field. For instance, though a word like βέλος, "missile" may have afforded to Greek authors a productive image for metaphorizing many different kinds of experience—glances of the eyes (Aesch. *Ag.* 742, μαλθακὸν ὀμμάτων βέλος, or 241–2 ἀπ᾿ ὄμματος βέλει φιλοίκτῳ); heavy rainfall (Soph. *Ant.* 358, πάγων δύσομβρα βέλη); mental anguish (Pind. *Nem.* 1.48–49, ἐκ δ᾿ ἄρ᾿ ἄτλατον δέος πλᾶξε γυναῖκας); desire (Aesch. *Prom.* 649-51, Ζεὺς γὰρ ἱμέρου βέλει / πρὸς σοῦ τέθαλπται καὶ συναίρεσθαι Κύπριν / θέλει); hate (Anth. Pal. 10.111, ὁ φθόνος αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν ἑοῖς βελέεσσι δαμάζει)—it does not seem to be idiomatic in Greek to speak of thoughts as "arrows" . . . let alone of the mind as a "bow" or, say, a "quiver". In this sense, Greek's "missile" metaphor can considered a "dead" metaphor.

Where we *do* find the "missile" metaphor is above all in contexts where authors wish to call attention to its figurativeness for some creative purpose.[32] So in Aeschylus' *Eumenides,* Apollo rests his case in defense of Orestes: ἡμῖν μὲν ἤδη πᾶν τετόξευται βέλος, "For my part, every arrow has already been shot"—where the image of "arguments" as "arrows" is contextually motivated, a clever expression in the mouth of a god whose sphere of divine power includes both archery and reason.[33] Similarly, "Homer's" choice of an archery contest as the scene for the revelation of the beggar's identity in the *Odyssey* is no doubt motivated by several considerations (cf. Ready 2010). But at a very basic level the scene "makes sense" in that it literalizes the symbolic association captured by the "missile" metaphor: the moment at which Odysseus hits the target coincides with that of knowing the truth of his return. Elsewhere, as Carin Green has pointed out, the "missile" metaphor is used especially in the elaboration of philosophical concepts.[34] For instance, archery provided Plato a metaphor for just lawgiving and eudaimonism,[35] while Aristotle likened knowledge of the good to hitting a target.[36] Stobaeus distinguished the "goal" (τέλος) of one's life from its "target" (σκοπός) to express the difference between one's ideal purpose and the corporeal manifestations of its attainment. Similarly, Panaetius compared the pursuit of individual goals to aiming at different marks on the same target.[37] The metaphor also appears in Greek theorizing about perception, prophecy, and emotion.[38] For this reason, the Greek "missile" metaphor may

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[32] In Plato's *Philebus* Socrates exclaims that for the long discussion ahead of him he will need "a new contrivance—other weapons, as it were (οἷον βέλη)" (23b). In the *Symposium,* Socrates says of his debate with Alcibiades: "I exchanged these words with him and, as it were, let fly my shafts (ἀφεὶς ὥσπερ βέλη) . . . ".

[33] The MSS. attribute 676–77 to the Chorus. However, following Simon Karsten's 1855 edition, most editors now give them to Apollo; see R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Studies in Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1983), 219, for discussion of internal evidence in favor of this attribution. Of course, the image could just as easily be ironic.

[34] C. M. C. Green, "Terms of Venery: *Ars Amatoria* I," *TAPA* CXXVI (1996), 221–31.

[35] E.g., *Leg.* 706a1 and *Gorg.* 507c1–6.

[36] Cf., e.g, Ar. *EN.* 1094a22–4, ἆρ᾽ οὖν καὶ πρὸς τὸν βίον ἡ γνῶσις αὐτοῦ μεγάλην ἔχει ῥοπήν, καὶ καθάπερ τοξόται σκοπὸν ἔχοντες μᾶλλον ἂν τυγχάνοιμεν τοῦ δέοντος. See D. Lasky, *An Examination of the Metaphorical Use of Skopos or "Target" in the Philosophical Works of Plato and Aristotle Through a Study of Archery Imagery in the Greek Literary Tradition* (Chicago 1994), University of Chicago dissertation.

[37] Fr. 109 van Straaten. Cf. Inwood 1986.

[38] Graf 2008; Stanford 1936; Keith 1914: 122.

justifiably be considered what in cognitive anthropology is called an "expert" model—in that it provides an image to the Greek imagination especially for the construction and development of theoretical models in technical, specialist contexts.[39]

Latin's "wandering" metaphor, conversely, participates in a large-scale metaphorical pattern in which not only "mistakenness" and "falseness" but also "correctness" and "trueness"—and indeed many other aspects of mental life—are expressed in terms of movement in physical space, as a feature of everyday speech (cf. Short 2012). It structures polysemy across the lexicon of "wandering", for instance: not only *erro* but also of *vagor* and *palor* can be used figuratively in the sense of "mistaking".[40] Indeed, as evidence from Latin literature demonstrates, nearly the entire field of words literally denoting motion away from—"departing (*discedere*)", "going away (*recedere*)", "turning away (*avertere*)", "leading away (*abducere*)", "directing away (*deflectere*)", "pushing away (*depellere*)" . . .—can be used with the preposition *a* and either *vero* or *veritate* to convey notions of mistakenness or falseness. As expressions such as Cic. *Q. Rosc*. 46, "For he who has once been dishonest (*qui semel a veritate deflexit*), is easily persuaded with no greater scruples to perjury than to a lie (*non maiore religione ad periurium quam ad mendacium perduci consuevit*)" or *Cat*. 3.21, "Who can be so mistaken (*aversus a vero*) . . . ?" show, the vocabulary of physical movement is employed in a systematic way to deliver figurative meaning: the metaphor, that is, operates at a level of meaning that is supralexical, structuring figurative usage over the range of words denoting motion away. This is why it also makes sense in Latin to speak of

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[39] For definitions of, and a survey of scholarly literature related to, "expert" models within cognitive anthropology, cognitive linguistics, and cultural semiotics, see esp. Gentner and Stevens 1983.
[40] For their metaphorical senses, cf. Cic. *Off.* 2.7, *vagetur animus errore nec habeat umquam quid sequatur* and Ov. *Met.* 15.150, *palantes homines passim ac rationis egentes.*

something as being "distant from (*procul* or *distat a*)"[41] or "on the farther side of (*ultra*)"[42] or "outside of (*extra*)"[43] the truth, to mean that it is false or incorrect.

Correspondingly, notions of correctness or trueness are conveyed in Latin by terms literally denoting motion toward—"going (*ire*)", "coming (*venire*)", "arriving (*pervenire*)", "proceeding (*pergere*)", "turning (*convertere*)", "approaching (*accedere*)" . . .—along with a prepositional phrase made up of the preposition *ad* and either *verum* or *veritatem*, what is true or correct again construed metaphorically as a fixed destination. This metaphorical usage of the vocabulary of motion toward in a sense antonymous to "mistaking" is illustrated by, for example, Pl. *Rud*. 1150–51, "By god, if you make the slightest mistake (*si hercle tantillum peccassis*), even if afterwards you wish to correct yourself (*quod posterius postules te ad verum convorti*), you'll be wasting your time, lady" and Aul. Gell. *NA*. 14.1.33, "By assaying many things they suddenly and unknowingly come to know the truth (*incidunt . . . in veritatem*)". Relative progress towards this truth-"destination" thus conveys different degrees of trueness or correctness: This is why, for example, the expression *ad veritatem propius* or *proxime* or *maxime accedere*—literally, "come closer (closest) to the truth"—has the sense of "have a better (the best) knowledge of what is true" in the philosophical works of Cicero and Seneca[44] or why, later, for Tertullian and Lactantius "being in the truth (*in vero esse*)" means, metaphorically, to be true in an absolute sense (The expression is likely borrowed from Roman law, where *in veritate esse* refers to something's "real" value, rather its value for a plaintiff: see Berger 1953: 761). By the same logic, something that comes "out of" or "from" this truth-"destination" shares in trueness, so that what is *ex vero ductum* or *positum* is

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[41] Cf., e.g., Sallust, *Epistula ad Caesarem* 1 2.4, *procul a vero*; Ov. Trist. 5.6.27; Luc. RN. 1.758, *a vero . . . distet*.
[42] Cf., e.g., Ps.-Var., Sententiae 139, *ultra veritatem est, qui in planis quaerit offendiculum*.
[43] Cf., e.g., Sen. Dial. 7.5.2, *extra veritatem proiectus*.
[44] E.g., Cic. *De orat*. 1.220; 1.262; *Lucull*. 6; 47; Sen. *Clem*. 2.3.2.

"based on actual fact".[45] By the same logic, to remove someone from a truth-location by force—as in *de-cipio*, literally, "take away, capture from"—is, metaphorically, to prevent them from knowing the truth: that is, "to deceive" them.

That the "missile" metaphor of mistakenness has a relatively restricted role to play in Greek speakers' semantic system and tends to be elaborated chiefly in contexts where the image's metaphoricity is explicitly at play—whereas Latin's "journey" metaphor characterizes a meaning structure with widespread effects in the language even, or especially, where a theory of the truth is not at issue—suggests these metaphors operated very differently at the level of culture. In delivering sense to Latin's ways of speaking about what is "mistaken" over different authors and genres, different periods of the language, and different levels of the linguistic code, the "wandering" metaphor can in fact be distinguished from Greek's "missing a target" metaphor as a "folk" or "cultural" model. Unlike an expert model, a folk or cultural model is a non-technical "naïve" understanding that a society's members rely on implicitly in organizing their experience and in reasoning, a model that functions as that community's unconscious and automatic operating theory of "just how things work" in some domain of experience.[46]

From this perspective, it is interesting to consider the very different ontologies of mistakenness that the manifesting images of Greek's "missile" metaphor and of Latin's "wandering" metaphor would seem to provide to speakers of those languages. Take the image of the Greek metaphor again. In this image, "true" or "correct" reasoning is seen as corresponding to a discrete, finitary act: a one-off "shooting" whose success or failure in reaching the truth-target is independent of the outcome of any other "shooting". In this way, the metaphor implies a certain finality and causality

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[45] Hor. *Serm*. 2.56; Ov. *Fast*. 2.859. If, etymologically, *sentire* means "go (towards)" (cf. De Vaan 2008: 554), then Cicero's *sentire vera* would also appear to reflect the metaphor.
[46] The concept of "folk model" has been developed particularly by Holland and Quinn 1987; D'Andrade 1990; and D'Andrade and Strauss 1992.

to mistakenness: since rational thought consists of a series of "shots" at the truth-target, single instances of reasoning are viewed as either right or wrong, true or false. That is, according to the metaphor, once let loose, a thought-missile either "hits" or "misses": there is no middle ground; the trajectory of a thought-missile cannot be corrected in mid-course, and so there is no remedy for failure, except perhaps to "shoot" again. There is also only one "true" way to hit the truth-target, corresponding to a direct trajectory from the location of the thought-archer to the predetermined location of the truth-target.

Now consider the image given by the Latin metaphor, which engenders a view that, in reasoning, the truth-seeker undertakes an act with all the characteristics of a journey. In this image, truth-seeking is an on-going process of metaphorical motion, and the truth is a destination towards which an individual advances within a single occurrence of temporal and spatial development. As when traveling on a road, progress towards this metaphorical truth-destination may be sometimes faster, sometimes slower. There may be obstacles, detours, and so on—or, conversely, shortcuts or alternative routes. The actual endpoint of a journey may also not correspond to its originally intended destination—yet still the journey will be "complete". There is also a finality and causality implied by this image to mistakenness, but one quite unlike that entailed by the Greek metaphor: since truth-seeking is a journey, and journeys often involve turning back, retracing one's steps, or assaying different paths, rational thought—imagined in this metaphor, as a single, unified event of "getting to" the truth—may quite naturally have an *indirect* aspect with all sorts of deviations that may nevertheless eventually bring the traveler to the intended destination. In this image, attaining the truth is not a finitary act with all-or-nothing consequences, but a continuous process in which "wandering" can and perhaps always does enter into the picture.

Arising directly out of the inferential structure of the "journey" metaphor, the notion that mistakenness is a natural, if not in fact necessary part of "getting to" the truth stands out, we would claim, as a distinctive feature of Latin speakers' understanding of mistakenness, a sort of hidden ideology that implicitly motivates their thinking about and indeed valuing of "mistakes". Now, in making such a claim we may appear to be advocating for a strongly Whorfian view of the relationship between language and thought: that is, that the structure of the Latin language, including its metaphorical structure, determines—in the sense of "limits"—its speakers' possible pathways of thought. Hardly so. For starters, areas of Roman cultural practice in which this metaphor's "metaphysics" do not hold are not far to seek. In Roman religious practice, for instance, mistakes were scrupulously sanctioned. Any mistake in the recitation of a ritual formula or in carrying out the ritual procedure was deemed a dangerous omen requiring the repetition of the ritual in its entirety, motivating the inclusion of expressions like *sive deus sive dea* as hedges against human fallibility. Similarly, certain utterances by Roman magistrates were legally binding even if somehow "mistaken": for example, Varro (*LL*. 6.4.30) tells us that if a praetor freed a slave using the formula "*do, dico, addico*", the slave's new status was irrevocable, even if these words were spoken "by mistake" (*vitio*)—say, on a *dies nefastus*.

What is more, Roman authors regularly deploy the "wandering" metaphor towards overtly "literary" aims. For instance, Ovid (*Met.* 3.142) plays on the two meanings of *error* when he asks in reference to Actaeon, *quid enim scelus error habebat?*—Actaeon's (and perhaps Ovid's own) "mistake" being precisely his "wandering". Consider, in addition, two well-known "mistakes" from Latin literature: Lucius' transformation into an ass in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and Tarpeia's love affair with Tatius as told by Propertius. In both cases, representations of literal wandering work in parallel with, and provide a narrative framework for, figurative "wandering". Lucius—as

we know—is accidentally transformed into an ass when Photis, eager to help him indulge his curiosity over her mistress Pamphile's shape-shifting powers, mistakes one box of magical ointment for another. Lucius rubs himself down with the oil and he turns into a donkey, requiring him to go wandering off in search of the roses Photis assures him will restore his original form. Similarly, the "mistake" Tarpeia makes in falling in love with the Sabine king is reproduced by what Tara Welch (2005: 76) has called her "confinement" to a sort of "no-man's land" where she is compelled to tread and retread the "windy path" (*torta via*) between the Capitoline and Forum. And in both cases, revelation of "the truth"—Lucius' human form; Tarpeia's feelings for Tatius—corresponds to reaching a destination (the temple of Isis; the Sabine camp in the Forum). The metaphor, in short, implies a spatial dimension to mistakenness that can be realized "literally" through narration.

Nor do Latin authors have any trouble using innovative metaphorical images in representing mistakenness. In Horace's *Ars Poetica*, for instance, poetic mistakes are expressed in terms of "stumbling" and of "wandering"—but also as "spots (of dirt?)" (*maculae*) and "fallings-short" (*delicta*) (347–60). Seneca (*Ep. mor.* 71.3), too, resorts to a "stumbling" metaphor, a "wandering" metaphor, an "archery" metaphor, and a "nautical" metaphor—all in dizzying succession: "We make mistakes in life (*peccamus*) because we all tend to consider our lives in pieces; no one thinks about the whole of their life. An archer wishing to shoot an arrow (*ille qui sagittam vult mittere*) should know what he is aiming at, and then direct and guide the shaft with his hand. Our plans go wrong (*errant*), because they are not aimed at anything (*non habent quo derigantur*); no one can have the wind at their back if they don't know the port they're heading for". Cicero, meanwhile, uses images of physical weightiness to metaphorize "trueness" and "falseness", as when he speaks

of glory as being "true, heavy, and solid" and of "solid and true praise", or conversely of "light and false men".[47]

Nevertheless, in being a symbolic structure that manifests itself across the spectrum of Latin speakers' conventional and non-conventional representations of mistakenness, the "wandering" metaphor can appear to enter spontaneously and automatically into their thinking about such experience even in the most varied contexts of sense-making. Its influence is probably detectable, for example, in the sentiment Plutarch puts in the mouth of the general Marcus Minucius Rufus, that "while it is beyond human skill to make no mistakes in matters of importance, a brave and sensible man makes use of his mistakes as warnings for the future",[48] as well as in Josephus' description of the Romans as a people who—to paraphrase—think that mistakes can be better than successes, since the latter, if they occur by chance, entice men into acting rashly, whereas the former provide good instruction against repetition.[49] Or consider Quintilian's theory of learning, which is not only couched explicitly in the terms of, but also grounded implicitly in the logic of this metaphor. As Quintilian explains, there is no "shortcut (*compendium*)" to correct knowledge. Students should not be asked to "hurry on (*properare*)" through a lesson, since "haste (*festinatio*)" impedes accurate learning. Instead, by "going back to (*repetere*)" and "treading over (*inculcare*)" the material, it will be learned correctly. In this way, when students do make mistakes (*cum errarunt*), they will rely on the process itself to help them "arrive at the thing (*consequi rem*—later in the same passage)".

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[47] Cic. *Phil*. 5.18.50, *vera, gravis, solida*; *Sest*. 93, *solidam laudem veramque*; *Lael*. 25.91, *levium hominum atque fallacium*. The metaphor is also easily extended. The difficulty of correcting a mistake can be suggested by construing *error* as a trap in which someone can be "held (*teneri*)" or "entangled (*implicari*)" or "twisted (*versari*)"—as, for instance, when Cicero (*ND*. 1.29) asks of Democritus' treatment of "wandering images" as gods, "Isn't he caught in the greatest mistake (*nonne in maximo errore versatur*)?
[48] Plut. *Fab*. 13.2, 'ἄνδρες' ἔφη 'συστρατιῶται, τὸ μὲν ἁμαρτεῖν μηδὲν ἐν πράγμασι μεγάλοις μεῖζον ἢ κατ' ἄνθρωπόν ἐστι, τὸ δ' ἁμαρτόντα χρήσασθαι τοῖς πταίσμασι διδάγμασι πρὸς τὸ λοιπὸν ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ καὶ νοῦν ἔχοντος'.
[49] Flav. Joseph. *Bell. Iud*. 3.100, ἡγοῦνταί τε τῶν ἀπὸ τύχης ἐπιτευγμάτων ἀμείνους τὰς ἐπὶ τοῖς προβουλευθεῖσιν διαμαρτίας, ὡς τοῦ μὲν αὐτομάτου καλοῦ δελεάζοντος εἰς ἀπρομήθειαν, τῆς σκέψεως δέ, κἂν ἀτυχήσῃ ποτέ, πρὸς τὸ μὴ αὖθις καλὴν ἐχούσης μελέτην.

Seneca's reliance on the Stoics' "journeying" metaphor of virtuous living is also well known. But in the Roman philosopher's vision, making mistakes—"wandering"—is almost a precondition of finding the truth. His own practice of moral self-reflection, described in *On Anger* 1.29, seems thoroughly conditioned by this image: "What could be more beautiful than the habit of scrutinizing one's entire day?" Seneca begins; "I exercise this authority and daily bring myself before the court. When the light has been removed, and my wife, knowing of my practice, falls silent, I examine my entire day and rehearse everything I have said and done; I conceal nothing from myself, I omit nothing. For why should I fear any of my mistakes (*quare enim quicquam ex erroribus meis timeam*), when I can say: 'See that you no longer act in this way. Now I forgive you'". Michel Foucault (1999: 164–65) has argued that in this passage Seneca employs a "bureaucratic" metaphor in which he imagines himself as a kind of "permanent administrator of himself" whose task it is to ensure that correct rules of conduct are followed. Since in Seneca's view moral development is always a work in progress and improvement comes only in small degrees, "mistakes" are thus welcomed as an essential part of the sage's attainment of true knowledge. Yet what most likely delivers this view of mistakes is the "journey" metaphor again, reflected here in Seneca's spatial vocabulary: *scrutor* ("to search after")*, remetior* ("to measure over; traverse"), *abscondo* ("to put out of sight", perhaps originally "depart from"), and above all *transeo* ("to go across"). It is almost as if Seneca cannot avoid thinking "mistakes" in terms of the "journey" metaphor.

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