

Vaclav Havel's *Temptation*: Modal Resources and Metaphors

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the tools of discourse in Vaclav Havel's play: Temptation. Based on exploration of modal verbs and metaphors, I argue that metaphors and modal verbs assume their roles to represent the definite ideological stances. Not surprisingly, the metaphor draws parallel between concepts and displays the user's horizons, the modal verbs, specifically the use of deontic modality (obligation and necessity) shape the specific positions of the speakers. Centrally, these tools serve the purposes of exposing the inequality and spell out the domination. The glosses of examples from Temptation, particularly, the choices of modal auxiliaries subsume the attitude/meaning and/or confidence in the proposition the discourse participant. Similarly, the metaphors chosen by the discourse participants signal their location of the viewpoint. The method used for the study is the collection of the metaphors and modal resources, categorization of them for finding the analyzable patterns in them. The methodological thread is, obviously, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that exposes the inequality and promotes resistance with the mandatory modesty. Through the study, the suggestive conclusion has been drawn that the play deploys the modal verbs- ought to and must, and also the metaphors- comedy, virus, brochures, hand, solitary soldier, two birds with a stone, unfortunate seed and Bluebird for the enactment of domination and resistance to it.

Keywords: *Discourse, domination, metaphors, modal resources, resistance*

Introduction

In this paper, I have discussed some of the tools for the discourse representation. Basically, I choose the use of metaphors as they carry one person's thinking maps. Also, the modal verbs one uses show the intentions of their speech. Selecting these two aspects of the ideological stances, I have analyzed Czechoslovakian playwright Vaclav Havel's play

Temptation. The modal resources chosen for the analysis are – ought to and must. These two verbs by the Director of the institute and Foustka show how these micro-elements carry the means that are so much associated with the overall theme of the play. The metaphors used by Director-comedy, virus, brochures, and hand show how authoritative he wishes to remain. Foustka deploys the metaphors like solitary soldier, two birds with one stone, unfortunate seed and Bluebird for staging his resistance to the authority. The scrutiny of these selections provides a ground to expose the inequality maintained in the discourse, also, the selection shows how the resistance takes place through these micro-level linguistic devices.

Statement of the Problem

This study is triggered by an interrogation-- how do the micro-level linguistic devices like modal verbs and metaphors play powerful roles in representing the overall theme of the text? The texts and talks contain the ideological stances. The glossification obviously involves the viewpoints. With that assumption at the backdrop, the purpose of this study has been to investigate the purposes that the modal verbs and metaphors serve in the text.

Discourse

Discourse is not an esoteric concept for every one of us has the particular viewpoint about the life and its surroundings. Top of Bottom of Form Terry Locke generalizes the meaning of discourses as the “ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, hinting, believing, speaking” (7). This means that our life constitutes of the discourses, the ideologies and the representations of various aspects.

Studies of discourse have roots in a range of theoretical traditions that investigate the relations between language, structure and agency. The notion of 'discourse' is the subject of heated debate. It has become one of the key critical terms in the vocabulary of humanities and social sciences. Discourse studies is the discipline devoted to the investigation of the relationship between form and function in verbal communication. Paul Gee concurs with my proposition:

... these activities[with language] and institutions have to be continuously and actively rebuilt in the here and now. This is what accounts for change, transformation, and the power of language in-action in the world. We continually and actively build and rebuild our worlds not just through language, but through language used for actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies, and distinctive ways of thinking, valuing, feeling, and believing. (11)

Language as an aspect of discourse offers us both a representational vehicle and an experience in itself. That is, language can communicate something external to it (or something that we perceive as external); but reading and comprehending, the work of communication, is itself a linguistic experience.

Fairclough further mentions that there is the necessity of democratization of discourse for the inclusive approaches. He clarifies that “democratization' of discourse is the removal of inequalities (237). It shows that discourses are conflictual and are largely political in nature and every group who possesses a particular ideology intends to propagate its ideology. Van Dijk mentions:

It is in discourse that we need to explicitly explain that such discrimination occurs “because she is a woman,” “because he is black,” or “because they are socialists.”

Thus, it is largely through discourse that political ideologies are acquired, expressed, learned, propagated, and contested. (732)

Discourse plays a fundamental role even in the daily expressions and reproduction of ideologies. It can be a site of both power and resistance, with scope to evade, subvert or contest strategies of power.

Metaphors

Metaphors involve so much of suppression in between the word used and the representation it is expected to hold. Zoltan Kovecses, a metaphor theorist, necessitates the knowing of metaphor as the knowing of the relation between the tenor and the vehicle (10). The arresting similarities between the two aspects of metaphors (tenor and vehicle) reveal what the audiences need to discern about the tenor. Zoltan Kovecses adds that the understanding of the target concept involves the highlighting and the hiding (94). Although there are similarities between the new home of the word compared, in fact, it involves many differences. For instance, an ass as the metaphorical home for stupidity suppresses many dimensions between the new home- stupidity and the ass itself. Is it so accurate to say that ass is all about stupidity? Is not ass as animal so useful and supportive to human beings? There is so much of hiding in between the tenor and the vehicle i.e. word and the association the word is provided with.

Despite the suppression between the tenor and vehicle, the knowledge of metaphors is useful for multiple reasons. Raymond W. Gibbs cites Kovecses uses the example of Oedipus. Oedipus was asked a riddle by Sphinx-which is the animal that has four feet in the morning, two at midday, and three in the evening? Oedipus' answer as the animal is man comes because of his knowledge of metaphor. Oedipus, at least in this occasion, is saved in part because of his knowledge of metaphor (11). In sum, the use of particular metaphor reminds us the user's ideology.

Modal Verbs

Modals are used to convey and modify the perspectives. Modals are tenseless auxiliaries that take no subject-verb agreement and no infinitive to before the following verb (Mauricia and Freeman 138). According to Mauricia and Freeman "When English speakers use a modal, they interject their own perspective and view a proposition more subjectively than when they simply use present or past tense. John is a teacher.- John may be a teacher. (141)." In this example, the first sentence does not contain the modal verb while the latter does. The latter sentence has a different perspective- the first shows the certainty while the second shows some sense of the probability.

The modal verbs can modify "the strength of performatives and of speech acts in general (Mazzon 52)". The study of performative verbs is influenced by its co-occurrence with the modal verb. Gabria Mazzon gives an example, " a) I can promise you that we will be there on time. b) I have to promise that we will be there on time (55)". The meanings of these two sentences are different because of the differences of the modal verb. The modal resources, thus, are deployed for expressing the intentions or/and improving the gravity of expressions.

Moral Obligation and Domination through Modal Auxiliaries in *Temptation*

The play covers a conflictual interaction between the scientist, Foustka and the Director of the Scientific Institute. Their hostile relations can be understood through the micro-level

analysis of the modal verbs. The list below is a glimpse of the modal verbs. This section analyzes the use of the modal auxiliaries – ought to and must. The textual evidences that include the use of ‘ought to’ and ‘must’ show how they have been purposefully used. In fact, they spell out the enactment of the domination and the interrogation to it.

Scene 1

Director	Foustka
Will (1285)	Could (1282)
Must (1286)	Ought to (1284)
Would (1287)	

Scene 5

Director	Foustka
Would (1309)	Will (1308)
Will (1309)	Won't (1312)
Might (1310)	Wouldn't (1312)
Can (1310)	Will (1312) and (1313) -7 times
Must (1310)	Might (1313)
Would (1310)	
Can't (1312)	
May (1312)	
Will (1312)	
Couldn't (1312)	
Would (1313)	
Must (1313)	

Scene 7

Director	Foustka
Can (1322)	Maybe (1322)
Could (1322)	Would (1323)
Could (1322)	May (1324)
Will (1322)	Would (1324)
Must (1323)	Might (1325)
Would (1324)	
Can't (1325)	
Would (1325)	
Might (1325)	
Can (1325)	
Can (1325)	
Would (1326)	
Can (1326)	

Scene 10

Director	Foustka
Will (1335)	Ought to (1338)
Would (1335)	Will (1338)
Will (1336)	Wouldn't (1339)

Will (1336)
Might (1336)
Might (1336)
Will (1340)
Shall (1340)
Would (1341)
Can (1341)
Must (1341)
Will (1342)

This corpus, the collection of modal auxiliaries in the play, demonstrates the abundance of modal resources in the play. The perusal of 'ought to' and 'must' has the deliberate purpose in this paper. This selection is stimulated by the thematic concern of the play i.e. the play itself comes to us as the explicit site of power and resistance.

Ought to, in general, is used to show the duty one has to fulfill, it carries the sense of obligatory position of the discourse participant. The play is, in fact, a discourse event, between the Director of a scientific institute and the employee, the scientist. In it, the scientist is blamed to have been involved in the black magic while the Director aims to control him to remain scientific. Foustka, the scientist, does not find science scientific enough. He feels that he has to remain open even to the magical aspects. The play has this conflict at the center. Foustka, the scientist, feels that he has the responsibility to serve the humanity by remaining open to all sorts of knowledge available:

FOUSTKA: I simply felt that if you start something you are obliged to finish it, and that it my civic duty to put my theoretical knowledge in the service of the practical struggle... (1324)

Further, Foustka deploys 'ought to' for asserting his position. In a speech event, not with the Director, he uses the modal verb- ought to:

FOUSTKA: She called to say that her bus broke down. But apparently she managed to get a taxi and ought to have been here very soon. (1284)

While Foustka was talking to the Deputy about Vilma's delay to the meeting, he has used this modal verb. This shows that Foustka's choice of this verb is not coincidental. He is a character with the civic duty to challenge the oppression. Next time again, Foustka uses this verb:

FOUSTKA: You ought to get back-they will help you-everything will be all right... (1338)

When Marketa spoke against the Director and the Deputy Director, Foustka said to Marketa not to speak so blindly. She would find it difficult to get a job if she was fired from the Institute. So, here again, Foustka uses this modal verb to show Marketa's obligation, that too, the moral obligation. Foustka is very conscious to use the modal verb. This linguistic choice is appropriate to his political philosophy. Even though Foustka is against the Director, he partially feels that he needs to be loyal to his Director. For that end, he uses the modal verb-ought to, to mean that one should be dutiful.

While Foustka deploys the modal- ought to, the Director is fond of the modal verb- must – this choice can be interpreted as the love of the conformity. Not surprisingly, Foustka does not use this verb rather Director uses this as many as five times. For instance:

DIRECTOR: We're simply beginning to feel more and more pressure to start taking the

offensive...we must finally start confronting- (1286)

The director conforms saying that the Institute has to be offensive and they must confront someone who goes against the norms of the institute. Similarly, when the director has to publicize the name of Foustka as deceiver to them, he uses 'must':

DIRECTOR: Yes, with deep sorrow, bitterness, and shame, I must say precisely that. We have a scientific worker...confirms his two-faced nature, been involved with various so called occult disciplines... (1310)

While using the modal verb, 'must' the director is in the mood of imposition. He says that he must say the name of the scientific worker and says that the worker is two faced and engaged in 'the occult disciplines' that is so much against the science. The director, another time, contends:

DIRECTOR: The truth must prevail, come what may! (1313)

The director asserts that no matter what the consequences are, no matter what punishments Foustka has to face, he is ready to execute that because for him the 'truth' established by the institute is more important than any individual in and around the institute. In course of asking various questions to Foustka about his involvement to the occult disciplines, the director chooses to ask:

DIRECTOR: ...how do you explain the fact that on the one hand you claim to have a scientific viewpoint, and consequently must know that black magic is sheer charlatanism?... (123-124)

The use of 'must' here shows that a scientist must take occult philosophy as 'sheer charlatanism' and nothing else. This viewpoint of director with the use of 'must' again shows his illiberal worldview. When it was clear that it was Fistula who had spied the information of Foustka's involvement in occultism and informed to the authorities of Institute, the Director and Deputy Director never like to question on Fistula's status. Rather, they force Foustka to accept that he cannot serve two masters at a time.

DIRECTOR: Fistula is right, as ever. You can't serve two masters at once.... You simply must take a side. (1341)

The director's imposition of his kind of truth comes as the Damocles' sword to Foustka. But, as it is evident from other instances, he will not be in the mood to swallow the truth that the institute has prepared. He shows his commitments not to succumb to the available truth of the institute. His abiding commitment can be understood from his use of modal verb 'will' continuously for seven times. The repetition of this modal verb is the indicator of Foustka's unflinching, and unwavering commitment to liberalism, flexibility, democratization that is so parallel to Havel, the author of the play itself.

FOUSTKA: Gentlemen, colleagues! I have complete faith in the objectivity and conscientiousness with which my case will be considered and I presume that at the right moment I will be given the opportunity to make an extensive explanation, and that certain circumstances with which I will acquaint you on that occasion will help prove my complete innocence. For that time being I will confine myself... will be impartially and fully directed... This will further not only my interest... (1312-1313)

Through this, Foustka reinforces his position. He believes and wants to believe that impartiality will prevail. The institute will turn the complete ear to his case. He states that he has the faith upon this humanitarian aspect of the institute.

The analysis of the deployment of 'ought to' by Foustka, the scientist, the employee of the institute and 'must' by the Director of the institute spells out the inequality. The opaque

relations are exposed and even the resistance is dramatized. This micro analysis of two modal resources demonstrates the deliberate choice of the linguistic devices for the macro level thematic portrayal.

Metaphors for Control and Challenge in *Temptation*

As with the abundance of modal resources analysis, the play is a site for the detection of metaphorical expression that can be associated to the thematic concerns of the play. Christian Hollis Moe connects this position: “*Temptation* provides a compelling metaphor for the place of the exceptional individual in a limited society (1547)”. The play, the title itself stands for one’s attraction to an evil; it could be suggestive to the temptation to the forbidden apple in Eden Garden.

As in the discussion of modal verbs, this section discusses the metaphors used by two opposites. Dissidence invites two parties- conformist and non-conformist. In this context, the metaphors used by Foustka to challenge the authority headed by the Director are elaborately discussed, on the other end of the stick, the Director’s metaphors to enact the domination too are be duly dealt with.

Director’s metaphors can be termed as the metaphors for the control. He, for instance, tells Foustka that whatever he was doing was a comedy.

DIRECTOR (sharply): I’m not interested in what you thought. I am not interested in your piece of paper; I am not interested in you. The comedy, my dear Sir, is ended. (1340)
The director has used the metaphor ‘the comedy’ to Foustka’s rigorous involvement in the occult philosophy. Perhaps, for Foustka, that was a demanding task but the director ridiculed his task calling it ‘the comedy’. Here, ‘the comedy’ is compared to the cheap work that has no any seriousness. This is how the director has attempted to control Foustka.

While the director was talking to his employees in his institute, he says that Foustka is a virus in the institute.

DIRECTOR: A serious thing has happened; a virus has lodged itself where one would have least expected it, yet in the very place it can do the worst damage-that is , in the very center of antiviral battle-indeed if I am to stick with this metaphor, right in the central antibiotic ware-house! (1310)

The director, desiring to stick to the metaphor-‘virus’ says that Foustka, the virus has entered the ‘central antibiotic ware-house’. Also, the virus is about to do the worst damage in the institute

Explaining and justifying his purpose of studying occult philosophy, Foustka tells the director that finally he had the plan to write a brochure in which he could present his findings. There, the director says:

DIRECTOR: ...our colleague Foustka is right about one thing, brochures have never won wars. (1324)

Here, brochures, broadly speaking, stand for findings of Foustka especially about the occult literature and its underlying mysticism. Through this metaphor, the director has undermined the research strategy of Foustka. For him, Foustka’s attempt of uncovering the mysticism of occultism is all but worthless. According to the director, the occult philosophy is all but untouchable and unapproachable.

While reproaching the acts of Foustka, the director uses varied metaphors. He calls his acts as Foustka’s taking of unnecessary benefits from the institute. He says:

DIRECTOR: But instead, you took the hand we offered you and spat on it in a despicable way, thus definitely sealing your own fate. (1340)

Here, the metaphor 'the hand we offered' and 'you spat' refers to the illicit advantage tried by Foustka. The director is so authoritative here to say that by taking the unnecessary advantage he has sealed his own fate. Further, Foustka's misuse of the institute is the beginning of his own fall. These metaphors- 'comedy', 'virus', 'brochure', 'the hand we offered' and 'you spat' are all the metaphors for control. Through these metaphors, the director has undermined, tried to dominate all the efforts of Foustka. Put simply, the activities carried out by Foustka are deemed useless, worthless and so demeaning acts.

In a different light, Dr. Foustka's metaphors are employed for challenging the authority imposed by the director. Like director's, Foustka's metaphors for challenge have been chosen and discussed so as to show that Foustka is a dissident. He feels the responsibility to change the oppressive modes of the scientific institute.

Vaclav Havel was often tried by the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. He thought he would surrender to the totalitarian regime .but he spited the rumor by writing a play called *Temptation* .John Keane verifies it:

As if to pay penance for his brush with temptation to spite the authorities' rumor that the world famous playwright and dissident Vaclav Havel had accepted that his attempts to defy power were imprudent and ultimately futile – he wrote a new play called *Temptation* (1985). (320)

The play was written to embolden Havel's spirit as well as it was a blow to the regime. In fact, Foustka's spirit can be compared to Havel's spirit. But we know that both of these persons, eventually, do not give in to the authority. For maintaining such a spirit, other fellow companions might not be co-operating. So, Foustka says that he is prepared to carry on this journey alone:

FOUSTKA: In short, I decided to enlist as an inconspicuous and possibly solitary soldier in this silent war, as one might call it, because I arrived at the conclusion that my expertise put me under a direct obligation to do so.(1324)

Here, the metaphor 'solitary soldier' stands for Foustka's unaccompanied journey for proving his sort of truth. This metaphor is the metaphor for challenge. Foustka shows his abiding commitment to his act of resistance to the institute. By studying about the occult literature, Foustka wanted to do two things: a) prove critically that the occultism has wrong message, b) teach the authorities of the institute that science should not be blindly discarding the religion, even the religion might have some grains of scientific truth.

FOUSTKA: I was trying to kill two birds with one stone and, in this way, hoping to win over one person and at the same time to wound another. (1317)

The metaphor 'two birds with one stone' denotes the two achievements with a single effort. His efforts of intervening occultism have two aims as mentioned earlier. What is important here is: Foustka's challenge to the authority is indicated through this metaphor. He is deepened to go to the further knowledge. Foustka, in course of studying the banished knowledge, shared his association to this knowledge with Fistula. When Foustka knows that Fistula has informed the authority of the institute and the institute has misunderstood his position, Foustka speaks to Fistula metaphorically:

FOUSTKA: If you and your Jevial are really responsible for planting this unfortunate seed, then I curse you from the bottom of my heart! You are a devil and I don't want to have anything to do with you. (1316)

The misunderstanding between the authority of the institute and Foustka is really an 'unfortunate seed' in the sense that Foustka's intention is also to enhance the image of the institute to another better level. But unfortunately, Fistula's way of reporting to the director caused the serious misunderstanding between the two. The metaphor 'unfortunate seed' has challenged the position of Fistula, the spy of the institute. In another sense, challenging Fistula is the challenging of the institute itself. Denying the distorted reporting of Fistula, Foustka states:

FOUSTKA: I'm not so badly off as to need magic for help in my love life! I'm neither a weakling incapable of manfully facing the facts when he doesn't manage to win by his own efforts, nor a cad who would carry out experiments on innocent and completely unsuspecting young girls for his own sensual pleasure. Do you take me for some sort of Bluebeard or what Fistula?

The metaphor used here is 'Bluebeard'. It stands for a character who is willing to do anything that pleases oneself. Foustka mentions that he too has certain ethical grounds to conduct his life and behaviors. He is not the person of nothing. As he observes, he would not completely immerse himself in the magic, neither is he the cad to allow himself to the experiment on the girls for his sensual pleasure. Through this quote, Foustka emboldens his position and clarifies his case to Fistula that his case has no bad intention meant. It was only Fistula's reporting to the authority that has the harm intended.

The metaphors used by Director enact the domination while the metaphors by Foustka demonstrate the resistance.

Conclusion

This suggestive analysis, not the conclusive one, subsumes that the deployment of particular metaphors and the modal resources in Vaclav Havel's play *Temptation* reflect and reveal the discourse participants' intensity of their views. To be particular, the modal auxiliaries – must and ought to represent the totalitarian authority and obligations. The metaphors – comedy, virus, brochures, and the hand by Director denote to the oppression. Foustka's metaphors – solitary soldier, two birds with one stone, unfortunate seed, and Bluebird are deployed to resist the totalitarian state of the Director.

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