Rootedness – Anchoring – Mooring: Reviving Metaphors

DEBARBIEUX, Bernard

Abstract

French-speaking academic literature makes abundant use of the notions of anchoring and rootedness when dealing with dwelling and residential practices. Though the metaphoric origin of these notions can be evoked, and even exploited by the authors, it is generally glossed over. This article seeks to revive the metaphorical dimension of these terms by adding two others – mooring and docking. Our goal is twofold. First, we demonstrate that by taking the terms seriously, it is possible to have them designate different types of relationships to place, which directly use underlying images. Second, we discuss how these images participate in the poetics of knowledge that distills the effects of truth, whose motivations must be sought out in the major epistemological options that have been adopted.

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Abstract.—French-speaking academic literature makes abundant use of the notions of anchoring and rootedness when dealing with dwelling and residential practices. Though the metaphoric origin of these notions can be evoked, and even exploited by the authors, it is generally glossed over. This article seeks to revive the metaphorical dimension of these terms by adding two others—mooring and docking. Our goal is twofold. First, we demonstrate that by taking the terms seriously, it is possible to have them designate different types of relationships to place, which directly use underlying images. Second, we discuss how these images participate in the poetics of knowledge that distills the effects of truth, whose motivations must be sought out in the major epistemological options that have been adopted.

AnChoring, dwellinG, metaPhor, poEtic, ROOTEdnESS

Résumé.—Enracinement—Ancrage—Amarrage: raviver les métaphores.—La littérature académique de langue française fait un usage très abondant des notions d’ancrage et d’enracinement quand elle traite de l’habiter et des pratiques résidentielles. Si l’origine métaphorique de ces notions est parfois rappelée, sinon exploitée, par les auteurs qui y ont recours, elle est souvent passée sous silence. Cet article propose de raviver la dimension métaphorique de ces notions, en les complétant de deux autres—mouillage et amarrage—dans une double intention: d’une part, en montrant qu’en les prenant au sérieux, il est possible de leur faire désigner différents types de rapport aux lieux qui exploitent directement les images sous-jacentes; d’autre part, en rappelant que ces images participent d’une poétique du savoir qui distille des effets de vérité dont les motivations sont à rechercher dans les options épistémologiques majeures adoptées.

AncrAge, EnracinemEnt, habiter, MetaPhore, poétique

“Metaphor presents itself as a strategy of discourse that, while preserving and developing the creative power of language, preserves and develops the heuristic power wielded by fiction”

Metaphors and ambivalence in academic writing

Social science vocabulary is full of – or should I say, “stuffed” with – metaphors. This is especially true when science discusses the relationship between places and individuals or collective groups or their mobility: the notions of rootedness or attachment use a range of images – roots, anchors, attachment – that convey a personal, somehow ontological, link to a specific location. These organic or mechanical images are common in various languages, even if some are more or less frequent: In French, the word “ancrage” belongs to this category, whereas its English counterpart, “anchoring” has a different metaphorical meaning. Meanwhile, terms such as “pénularité” (commuting) and “navetteurs” (commuters), which have been adopted in French academic texts to describe the near daily trips of individuals, use other images that have been borrowed from the lexicon of mechanical watches for the former and looms for the latter.

The recurrence of these metaphors suggests they meet a need expressed by geographical writing, or more precisely that this repetition offers the figurative potential of a language to this form of writing in order to account for the geographical dimension of social reality. What need would it satisfy? Some time ago, Isabelle Lefort (2003), while studying the writings of the French geographer, Roger Brunet, had already asked the question: «Does this trope (metaphor) use the aptitudes of pedagogical language or more fundamentally does it constitute an operational and heuristic figure?» And if the figure is operational, is it at conception – at the risk of being confused with analogy – or when expressed – with the risk of being confined to an aesthetic form? The question is important. If we re-examine the corpus of texts that employ the metaphors mentioned above, it is clear that most authors resist justifying and explaining their use of this figure. In other words, the actual metaphorical dimension of a term, manifest when initially adopted to designate something other than its usual signified, is rarely acknowledged as such in scientific language.

There may be two main reasons for this: either the primary meaning is coupled with a secondary one, a figurative meaning whose use, because it has been incorporated into ordinary language, no longer needs justification; or the metaphorical value is present in the author’s intentions and expectations concerning the intended readership, but implicit and deliberately under-exploited. In the first case, the metaphor, all the while remaining vivid in rhetoric and poetry, displays all the signs of clinical death, as the corresponding words obediently enter the academic lexicon. In the second, the authors, perhaps under the remote influence of Hobbes, Locke, and the Enlightenment, renounce taking full advantage of this vivacity due to a certain form of prudence, if not suspicion, concerning the ill-controlled effects of a certain form of aestheticism in writing. In both cases, the execution, or the induction of a prolonged coma, of the metaphor is the price to pay in order to help the corresponding term attain the status of analytical category or concept (see notably Lakoff, Johnson 1985, c. 25 and 26).

However, it must be noted that the obliteration of the original metaphor almost never leads to this result. Furthermore, why should we sacrifice the living metaphor to achieve such an end? Let’s examine two terms cited in the first paragraph: rootedness and “ancrage”. The use of both terms has skyrocketed in recent decades. A quick analysis of French language papers that use them shows us three things. First, the vast majority of these texts do not explicitly acknowledge the metaphorical potential of
these terms, or only in a very allusive manner, with quotation marks for example, and in any case, without an analysis of the added value that such a dimension could represent. Second, in the majority of cases, the words “enracinement/rootedness” and “ancrage” are used indiscriminately, even though their literal meanings are quite different, as we will see further on. Third, most of these texts have abandoned the metaphorical value of words, without seeking to offer them a different status, be it categorical or conceptual. Thus, the growing interest in these two words remains unjustified, or at the very least, the motivations governing their use remain unclear.

However, in the last twenty years, there have been notable exceptions in social science publications. Authors have commented on the use of the image of roots and rootedness in works by philosophers and in the human and social sciences. Certain (i.e. Genestier 1989; Malkki, 1992; Arnould, Mangin, 2000; Silverstein, 2003; Dorin, 2006; Walter, 2004) have suggested a historical, and often critical, analysis of its use in the academic world. More recently, others, perhaps influenced by the criticism penned by the first group, preferred to adopt the metaphor of the anchor. Though some did not explain their choice (i.e. Agier 1996; Authier, 2000; Stock, 2004 and 2006a and b; Thomas, Pattaroni, 2012), others have expressed their desire to free themselves of the ideological connotation of the concurrent metaphor of rootedness (including Sencébé 2006; Ortar, 2011; Duchène-Lacroix et al, 2013).

Given these clues, I would like to discuss the uses of the concepts of “ancrage” and rootedness, and other related terms, with a particular emphasis on the diversity, the potential, and the implicitness of their uses. To do so, I will review – while furthering and discussing their vocabulary – the debate opened by the authors mentioned above who have studied the question. Specifically, this text will proceed along two paths. The first suggests that the metaphorical meaning, when referring to the relationship between places and individuals or collectives, far from threatening the lexical purity of scientific rhetoric can instead contribute to the debate on the concepts and categories in the making. The second path suggests that the use of these metaphorical concepts, in addition to characterizing human thought and action in general (Lakoff, Johnson, 1985), also contribute to the “poetics of knowledge” (Rancière, 1994). In other words, it participates in the often implicit production of effects of truth and, as such, it accounts for the paradigmatic and epistemological issues and cleavages. In conclusion, this text suggests that these two paths lead to different perspectives.

Keeping metaphors alive

On the metaphor of rootedness, much has been said and for over a century already. Originally, the image was of the rooted plant, which draws its resources from the soil in which it is stuck. Then by semantic shift, it designates humans or human groups that although devoid of roots in the original sense of the term, are thought, or believe themselves, to be born of the soil, nourished by the soil that conditions their individuality. The metaphor of rootedness owes much to that of uprooting. We can easily imagine a plant dying quickly should we tear (by hand) it from the earth in which it thrives, uprooting it. Some can be transplanted, but we imagine they will remain stunted or marked by the trauma. Many have said that if humans are torn (by exile or forced migration) from the soil on which they thrive, if they are uprooted, they would decline too. The risks and the cost of transplantation have in this case led to speculation as well.

4. Notably among this list are the authors who position themselves in the current of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on tree and rhizome images in thought. While these figures are certainly exciting, I have chosen to avoid addressing them here to maintain a reasonable scope for this article.

5. I would like to underline – should there be need – that this text focuses exclusively on academic writing and its ability to take on a form of metaphorical reasoning. It leaves out the proposals of authors who are interested in the use of metaphorical thought in individuals and groups (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980), especially when these authors study the relationship of these individuals and groups in relation to space, for example Pockoke (1986), Debarbieux (1995), Cresswell (1997), and even Tuan Y. F. especially when he links the metaphor to the imagination of the populations he describes. “Rootedness in the soil and the growth of pious feeling toward it seem natural to sedentary agricultural peoples.” (Tuan, 1977, p.156).

6. André Gide, in his polemic with Maurice Barres at the end of the nineteenth century, using his horticultural knowledge to support his arguments, vainly refuted this, particularly for poplars (1898), but nothing changed. Decidedly, metaphors need no empirical validation to spread.
On the metaphor of the anchor, very little has been said. Its dual nature complicates the analysis somewhat. In French, the idea of ancrage refers to two things, as does its English counterpart, “mooring”: first, a ship’s anchor that is “thrown” to prevent it from drifting and that is “raised” in order to continue the journey. More precisely, the word mouillage is used in French to designate both the throwing of the anchor as well as the spot chosen. Let’s call it “anchoring” in English to keep the explicit reference to the anchor. Secondly, it also refers to a fixed device, driven into the ground or into a wall, to which a docked boat can be attached. The idea is reflected in the French word amarrage. We could call it “docking/mooring”. Let’s call it “mooring” in English even if the word is also commonly used to refer to throwing an anchor. In the case of the anchor thrown into the sea, the mobile object carries with it the weighty object of its fixation. In the case of docking, it borrows the object of fixation from the ground or the wall it is attached. Metaphorically, saying someone is throwing or raising anchor, evokes the movement the person is interrupting or resuming, but also, more deeply, it means he is temporarily choosing a spatial position, which he then surrenders. This position is one that can ensure rest, access to nearby resources, or the boarding and exchange (peaceful or belligerent) with others who share the position. Metaphorically too, when we say that someone has one or several anchorings or moorings, we are referring to the fact that he or she is symbolically attached, successively or simultaneously, to several pre-existing places.

When the metaphors of rootedness, of anchoring, and mooring talk about places, they are referring to a variety of places: a nurturing place for the rooted; a temporary place whose quality depends on the relational resources, whose access is given to whoever throws anchors there; and a place of temporary dependence on local resources for those who moor there. These three metaphors evoke different ways of being in a place: an (allegedly) organic dependence, vital for rooting and a physical, mechanical contingency for anchoring and mooring.

The metaphorical analysis of rootedness, anchorage, and mooring suggested so far has remained literal. Under what conditions can it contribute to a specifically geographic debate? Under what conditions can the concept or category develop from the metaphor without destroying it? The analytical value of the terms can be compared using two examples. The first is classic and already mentioned above, covering the emotional value attached to places by individuals. The second is less common, and focuses on the localization of businesses.

A first illustration: the concept of place attachment has been the subject of numerous publications in environmental psychology and social psychology (Proshansky, 1978; Felman, 1990; Altman, Low, 1992; Andrew, 1998; Gustafson, 2001; Hidalgo, Hernandez, 2001; Lewicka, 2011). It has also been frequently used by geographers, from the moment they invested – alongside architects – the phenomenological concept of sense of place or when they dealt with spatial and territorial identity issues (i.e. Amin, 2004 or Barcus, Brunn, 2010). These concepts are intended to reflect the emotional ties that can link individuals with singular places and to understand how these relationships are constitutive of personality or the current state of the person. However, though this type of research does not ignore the virtues of metaphorical language – the attachment metaphor rivals with those I will distinguish in terms of symbolic force – it does not normally use different metaphors to account for the differentiated forms of attachment.
Yet, we can easily admit that there is a significant difference between at least three types of place attachment. The first is a rooted type, by which people consider themselves (or are considered by others) as fundamentally constituted, by which a place is conceived and experienced existentially (or conceived analytically) as a constantly reactivated template of individuation. The second is an anchored type by which people would consider a psychic and social investment of a period of their lives (the period from the time they drop the anchor to the moment they raise it). The third type is a mooring by which people conceptualize a localized investment through one of the activities that sustains them (using one of the many locations in their lives, examples being a second home or a recreational area).

A second illustration can be found in the business world. Economists and geographers interested in the spatial or territorial imprint of businesses have mostly distinguished two types of companies: those that are very heavily dependent on a specific environment – French-speaking economists often speak of “anchoring” in such cases11 – and those that are quick to change locations, including those that “relocate”. However, when speaking of “delocalization” for a company moving its production site, current vocabulary pretends to believe that location is not important to companies, when everyone knows that the company is in fact “re-localizing”12, as it weaves a new network of suppliers, customers, service companies and banks, employees, etc. Far from being indifferent to the chosen location, a company that “delocalizes” is in fact anchoring somewhere else, and perhaps will raise anchor again a few years later. Therefore, if the image of the anchor seems to suit companies whose production sites, and sometimes head office, move depending on opportunities and the changing framework of production conditions, would it not be more worthwhile that those who cannot or do not want to move, are described as rooted? When economists oppose “nomadism and anchor” in the types of relationships that “firms” have with “territories” (Colletis et al., 1997), shouldn’t they be opposing “anchoring” and “rootedness”? When other economists question “the degree of anchoring or the territorial roots of food production” (Cañada, Muchnik, 2011), shouldn’t they be distinguishing between “anchoring” and “rootedness” depending on the degree of dependency of the company or a sector in terms of a specific environment? When a writer speaks of “anchoring” for a production sector whose sustainability is largely “due to the characteristics of the territory in which it is located” (Frayssignes, 2001), wouldn’t it be more beneficial to use the metaphor of “rootedness” rather than that of a boat that drops anchor?

Though rapid and shallow, this first steps suggests that the analysis of the relationship to a place for two types of spatial actors can benefit from using the differences between anchoring, mooring, and rootedness. This distinction uses their respective metaphorical meaning, while paving the way for a form of conceptualization of each one. Anchoring refers to a temporary link between an actor in an environment and a given spatial position. Mooring refers to a link or set of links, also temporary, that an actor establishes in a simple or complex spatial configuration. Rootedness refers to a structural tie, one which is therefore stronger but also more capable of threatening the actor in question if the attributes of the environment and spatial configuration were to change or if the actor were to leave it.

10 (continued). Furthermore, the image of the anchor is sometimes used to describe other spatial ties than those that interest me in the context of this article. Examples are Turkey’s thwarted “anchoring in Europe” or the Basque country’s disputed “anchoring in Spain”.

11. Jean-Benoît Zimmermann (1998), for example, ties the concept of territorial roots to a “collective learning process localized in order to generate resources.” Mehdi Moalla and Amédeé Mollard (2011) associate anchoring to the production of goods and services linked to specific environmental cognitions.

12. This is an argument that was often developed by Roger Brunet in his criticism of the concept of “delocalization”; see for example, Brunet (1993).
Metaphor, paradigms, and poetics

It is always possible, and rather pleasant, to succumb to the subtle pleasures of metaphorical thought, and to clarify the meaning of images and concepts. This is what I have just done. However the exercise could be vain. Why should future users of these notions agree to the proposal? Furthermore, this exercise risks not capturing the true scope of the use of metaphor in social science publications. Indeed, is the latter truly there to convey the type of analytical meaning that I have just attempted to clarify? The question motivates the next part and thinking about it leads me to a whole new field, that of epistemology and the “poetics of knowledge”.

In 1973, Hayden White published a book that spotlighted the role of tropes in the writing of history. He demonstrated that the differentiation between the types of tropes – metaphor, metonymy, irony, etc. – allowed him to “analyze the deep structures of historical imagination” in the various schools that dominated nineteenth century historiography. With H. White, historiography became a research field in and of itself, which worked towards demonstrating how a historical text built a reference to the past and to truth.13 Twenty years later, Jacques Rancière (1992) developed the discussion further by expanding on the following idea: “The writing of history does not express the results of science, it is part of their production” (Rancière 1994). J. Rancière continued with an offer to talk of the “poetics of knowledge” in order to refer to “the ways of making truth” in the production of social science discourse. He argues the concept of poetics thusly, “Poetics […] oppose rhetoric.” The latter is the art of discourse that should produce a specific effect on a particular type, talking under specific circumstances. While the former, poetics, are “a discourse that […] implies there is not simply an effect to be produced, but rather a relationship to truth” (ibid, 1994).14 Finally, though no geographers have explored this field with as much determination and depth, there are certain texts that suggest the writing of geography owes much to the use of metaphors. Anne Buttimer (1982) has suggested that each of the main epistemological positions of modern geography, especially when dealing with the city, is built on a root-metaphor: maps, organizations, mechanics, and the stage.

Without the pretense of competing with the subtlety of Jacques Rancière and Hayden White’s analyses or with the broad scope of Anne Buttimer’s proposition, I am tempted to suggest that the use of root and anchor metaphors, and even mooring, alongside the explicit rhetorical effect sought by some, can participate in a poetics of knowledge. In other words, such metaphors can contribute to the production of a “truth effect” that reveals the epistemological expectations of the authors who submit to them.

To acknowledge this poetic dimension, let us take a look at the authors, in particular the historian François Walter (2009), who have focused on analyzing the use of the image of roots, rooting, and rootedness in the writing of the humanities and social sciences. This image has been primarily used to shape the paradigm by which individuals and peoples on the one hand and the soil, landscape and territory on the other have mutually constituted each other over the long term. The paradigm can be retraced at least back to the writings of Johann Gottfried von Herder and to the beginnings of anthropology. In this regard, James Clifford has helpfully pointed out that the notion of culture, and its double meaning – agricultural practice and a symbolic system – was in the early days of anthropology, conveyed by “an expectation of roots,
of a stable territorialized existence” (Clifford, 1988, p.338). It is also possible to recognize the influence of this paradigm in Friedrich Ratzel’s work, at the very source of a geography determined to be scientific (Steinmetzler, 1956). In 1900, the geographer published an entire article on the relationship between the state and the soil in which the root metaphor was omnipresent. Though Lucien Febvre (1922) strongly criticized F. Ratze’s thesis and considered many of his formulas simplistic – especially “the state’s entire life has its roots in the earth” (Ratzel, 1900, p. 12) – the Annales school, which Febvre illusiously represented, has used the paradigm that enables this metaphor, which the historian Biagio Salvemini (1997) would much later dub the “botanical paradigm”. Just as it extends beyond the scope of scientific disciplines, the metaphor also extends beyond disciplinary schools. Indeed, Jacques Rancière has illustrated his reflection on the poetics of history with this feature. He explains that the writing of history among historians as different as Michelet and Braudel proceeded with a “territorialization of meaning” (Rancière, 1994), that is to say by inquiring a “territorialized subject” – the Mediterranean for the latter, France for both of them – at the expense of individual subjects. The image of the root has much to do with the concept of territory and the idea of territoriality of populations as they are conceived by geography and the human and social sciences up until the mid-twentieth century, at the same moment – unsurprisingly – when nationalist ideologies were quick to put this form of poetics at the service of what Lisa Malkki (1992) suggested naming a “national meta-physics.”

The root image is far from being an exclusive prerogative of so-called classical geography, or a form of history and proto-anthropology combined with geography. Far from disappearing with them, it percolates throughout the twentieth century when addressing social issues and the colonial question. Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, a number of authors have tried to differentiate social groups that made up young, modern nations according to their ability to be rooted and therefore patriotic.

In the second half of the twentieth century, this same figure of rooting was used to question the effects of the rural exodus and industrialization, as well as the effects of colonization on the lifestyles of indigenous peoples, including authors, such as Pierre Bourdieu, who would later become highly critical of the “normal science” of their time.

The metaphor of rootedness has thus, for decades, penetrated (irrigated?) very different disciplines and schools, as if it did not offer any real foothold in epistemological controversies. Criticism mostly came from literary and political fields. Comparatively, critics of this metaphor and its epistemological relevance came later, probably because the metaphor itself was localized (rooted?) deep within the mindset of the production and relevance of knowledge of the social sciences on issues of territoriality. Therefore the questioning of the metaphor’s appropriateness actually intervened with the installation of alternative paradigms, even those that allowed certain authors to promote, often in an equally implicit manner, the metaphor of the anchor as a substitute.

Indeed, when it was not targeting the political and ideological uses of the “unwieldy root metaphor” (Dorin, 2006), criticism mainly resulted from the questioning of the territorial paradigm that has long dominated the social sciences. For anthropologists, this was notably triggered by Arjun Appadurai (1988), Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1992), as well as James Clifford (1997) amongst Anglophone writers and Joel Bonnemaison (1986-1987) and Jean-Loup Amselle (2000) amongst Francophone writers. Anderson prosecuted the “incarceration” process by which his...
Discipline has grown accustomed to dealing with native people and the “metaphysical attachment to physical places” (Appadurai, 1988, p. 33) it tends to attribute to them. As for Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, they have promoted the “de-territorialization” (Gupta, Ferguson, 1992) of cultures, the understanding of each other resulting from mutual interactions rather than an endogenous, rooted deployment in a given environment. Therefore, should there be rooting, it is less likely to be found in the geographic reality of the populations to whom we would unduly assign such a characteristic, but rather in the “anthropological imagination” (Appadurai 1988) itself and the public policies based on it. 20

A similar criticism has existed in geography for some time already; Denis Retaillé is one of the spokesmen within the French-speaking world. He readily recalls that Western heritage has bequeathed us “a sedentary form of knowledge” (2011, p. 71) that addresses in a secondary if not marginal form issues of mobility and movement. A heritage of geometric space, physical matter, maps, borders and territories therefore, has made it difficult to understand the types of places and spaces with which certain populations come to terms. These people do not fall under the primacy of territoriality, Sahelien Africa in particular, and perhaps also societies of contemporary globalization. Hence the – sad – conclusion of geography’s ongoing triumph over that which is “rooted in the ‘ground’”; an image that, in passing, he describes as having “a heavy metaphorical meaning” (Retaillé, 2009, p. 102). Amongst Anglophone geographers, many authors have carried out a comparable epistemological critique. Doreen Massey is one of the most militant representatives. She has constantly defended over the past twenty years a conception of place that aims to free itself of any reference to the image of the root. “This is a notion of place where specificity (local uniqueness, a sense of place) derives not from some mythical internal roots nor from a history of relative isolation – not to be disrupted by globalization – but precisely from the absolute particularity of the mixture of influences found together there.” (Massey, 1999, p. 18)

This generation of particularly stimulating authors has pointed out the origin of the reference to the root, not in any form of geographical and anthropological reality, but in geographical and anthropological imaginations that have guided the production of scholarly knowledge for decades. In response, they tended to favor a “circulatory paradigm”, which is based on debates on movement, the various forms of flow (humans, goods, information, etc. in Appadurai), “connections” (Amselle), and even “mobile space” (Retaillé, 2009 and 2011). Thus, the question of practices aimed at establishing individuals, groups, and social interactions in places appears as secondary, or more specifically, contingent. To account for this contingency, these authors usually reinvest well-established notions such as place (Retaillé), locality and neighborhood (Appadurai), the sense of place (Massey), etc. However, they neglected the field of metaphors. 21 Maybe because by rejecting the metaphor of rootedness, they were tempted to reject all forms of metaphor, all the risks of polluting their reasoning with images that could have potentially devastating effects.

In contrast, other authors from the following generation, who also distanced themselves from the territorial paradigm, have made other choices. They deliberately adopted another image, that of the anchor, to indicate the change in paradigm and provide an alternative to the image of rootedness. When reading them, the reference to the anchor, though never distinguishing anchoring and mooring contrary to what I suggested above, allows them to carry out several things:

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19. For example, the context of the very controversial commentary, already mentioned above, which opposed André Gide and Maurice Barres in France in the 1990s. See in particular Stéphane Dorin (2006).

20. As in the case of the establishment of Indian reservations, which the States of the American continent justified in the name of so-called special relationship that indigenous peoples have established with their land.

21. These authors have undoubtedly used metaphorical concepts discussed here, but without really associating a precise and stable meaning.
Reformulate the ties to place in the context of increased attention to mobility practices. “Mobility is not the opposite of anchoring, it cannot be analyzed solely in terms of uprooting because it is frequently presented as a possible re-rooting, be it real or symbolic. Mobility can be a form of anchoring.” (Ortar, 2005) It is in the context of “widespread uprooting” that emerged the possibility of contemporary individuals to develop new “anchor points”, “key places” that are highly symbolic and with a collective importance (Louis, 1990).

Consider the plurality of locations that a person uses to define himself or his own spatiality: “Humans are geographically plural, that is to say, they are involved in multiple places,” which enables a wide range of modalities in terms of the construction of links to places that range from the “accumulation of identitary places over time to the transfer of anchoring from one to the other, by way of the updating of several places of identity anchoring” (Stock, 2006). The author here is clearly suggesting the use of a single metaphor to discuss two types of relationships to places, which I would like to respectively associate with anchor-anchoring and mooring.

Focus on intentionality or voluntarism that would guide the identification of an anchoring place or mooring points and the enhancement of practices associated with them (Bourdin, 1998; Sencébé 2007). In the same vein, we have also identified an activist concern in promoting and “defending local anchoring” in the “ways of living an eco-friendly alternative in everyday life in Cevennes and Aveyron” (Pruvost 2013; see Debarbieux et al, 2008).

The metaphor of the anchor, as explicitly mobilized in this type of text, helps to circumvent the deliberate and temporary investment of a place (throwing anchor) or the equally deliberate but simultaneous investment of multiple locations (mooring points), by opposing both with the idea of an (unwanted) investment in a single location throughout a lifetime (rooting). To develop Jacques Rancière’s argument, these proposals would certainly illustrate the shift from one paradigm to another, thanks to the passage of one modality of poetics to another. In other words, this shift takes place thanks to the shift from one writing practice to another; from a practice that proceeds through the “territorialization of meaning” to a practice which could be said to proceed by the “subjectivation of meaning.” The change of metaphor here would thus serve to mark a paradigm shift, not only to report it, to signal the change, but more fundamentally in order to build an alternative “effect of truth” to the incriminated model.

Conclusion

The above analysis was not intended to lead the reader to a unique and indisputable end point. The key notion is that it is based on certain facts, and leads to certain perspectives.

Research literature in French contains a large number of publications that implicitly use notions of anchorage and rooting. In most cases, the original metaphoric dimension of these concepts is not emphasized by the authors, probably because the figurative meaning of each has taken over the metaphorical sense. Yet it is possible to take advantage of the metaphorical value to specify the variety of relationships to places created by individuals, rooting, anchoring, as well as mooring, can, through the force of their associated images, account for the different forms of these reports. In this case, the metaphorical value of these notions allows us to use them for a typology of relationships to places created by individuals, rooting, anchoring, as well as mooring, can, through the force of their associated images, account for the different forms of these reports. In 2008).

22. A similar argument can be found in Cédric Duchêne-Lacroix et al. (2013) and Clement and Bonvalet (2005) with a similar use of the image of the anchor.

23. Concerning this, the fact that mooring, anchor, or anchoring have been little used in English language research resulted in a reinvestment of the figure of roots. Since the 1990s, there has been a rise in the use of “rootedness” among authors who contributed to promoting bioregionalism, that is to say, the promotion of ecological entities as new territorial frameworks for action and collective identity (Sale, 1990). The theme of activist anchoring, mainly in an anti-globalization standpoint, is also found in the phrase “rooted-cosmopolitanism”, a particularly fertile picture. The image of attachment has helped defend the same theory. “The attachment to place seems less an unselfconscious association of habitual action and local ways of life, and more a strategy for resisting the alienation and isolation of modern life through the self-conscious creation of meaning.” (Entrikin, 1991 p. 64). In this vein, Tuan Yi-Fu (1980) when proposing to oppose a sustained sense of rootedness to an active sense of place, links the first concept to its proper metaphorical meaning.

24. “The term anchorage overcomes the opposition between mobility and physical inactivity by bringing together both the ties to a place and the potential for mobility of the boat between islands of an archipelago” (Duchêne-Lacroix et al., 2013, p. 64).
of the various ways in which we inhabit places. Moreover, in many cases, the use of these concepts does not seem innocuous as they participate in a geographic writing that conveys, under their influence and often implicitly, an epistemological posture. Hence the metaphorical value of these notions is part of a poetics of knowledge that distills the effects of truth, whose motivations lie in the great schemes of interpretation adopted by their users. In this case, metaphors cannot co-exist in the same proposal, because their interpretative powers refer to irreconcilable frames of analysis.

This conclusion leads to a need for clarification, a pre-requisite for any further discussion on the subject. In order for metaphors of anchoring, rooting, and mooring, and perhaps more generally any form of metaphor, to be taken seriously in scientific writing, we should probably clearly announce the path we each have chosen to follow. Are we working towards their explicit conversion into an analytical category or concept, by staying as close as possible to the metaphorical resource? Or are we working to explain and use their poetic characteristic in scientific writing? Both approaches are possible; but rely on two highly different prospects. The fork in the road reveals an unexpected space...

References


