The metaphorical Renaissance

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has once again acquired cognitive status and, moreover, has tended to become the name for figurative language in general and even, emblematically, for the rhetorical or rhetoricity as such. Where the power of rhetoric to reshape cognitive meaning and even to reinvent, or at least reconfigure, reality was once again recognized as irresistible throughout all the realms of discourse, the source and unity of this power seemed to require a name, and more often than not metaphor—on account of the transformative, inventive power associated particularly with it—has been adopted to serve this purpose.

Today, under the aegis of metaphor, the power of figurative language, arguably the originating power at the source of all language and even of an articulated world as such, has newly become an object of research and general theoretical speculation. This extension of the concept of metaphor is bound up with a renewed view of figurative language in general as not only a substantive bearer of the content of discourse, but also as ontologically constitutive of the world, as operative at the origins of things and their identities. It has become possible to view all language as being metaphorical, and accordingly metaphorical operations of transfer and redefinition have been recognized as being the very essence of language and of all that comes to articulation through it. Furthermore, as witnessed by burgeoning publications and conferences, metaphor has become a topic onto which practically all the classic philosophical problems of ontology and epistemology are projected and appear in a new, specifically linguistic, light.

This new ascendency of metaphor is certainly not uninflected or uncontested, even within the camps of the new rhetoricians. Genette, in “La rhétorique restreinte” (1972), resists the “inflation of metaphor” to become the trope of tropes and the figure of figures in a wide range of writers epitomizing modern poetics—particularly Marcel Proust, Roman Jakobson, and Michel Deguy (1969). Genette argues against reduction of all figures of analogy, not to mention figurativeness as such, to metaphor. Metaphor can be given a very precise technical definition as “an unmotivated figure of analogy without identification of the compared” (1972, 36). Nevertheless, the drive to apprehend the force of figurative language on the whole under the heading of metaphor, or under any other head, proves irresistible, as Genette’s own researches inadvertently demonstrate. He even admits that there is no denying “the essential metaphoricity of poetic language—and of language in general, which is evident [l’idée d’une métaphoricité essentielle du langage poétique—et du langage en général. Il n’est certes pas question ici de nier cette métaphoricité d’ailleurs évidente]” (36 and n. 1). Genette simply objects to the “reduction” of all other rhetorical figures to metaphor in some specifically delimited sense. No single definition could adequately capture all the varieties of rhetoricity, and Genette is certainly right that metaphor’s epitomizing essential aspects of all figures must not be allowed to become reductive. Indeed, if metaphor is capable of representing rhetoricity as such, it must be expanded and diversified so as to suggest something about what motivates all figures rather than bracketing out their differentiated inflections in the arbitrary elevation of any one specific figurative mode. Nevertheless, metaphor still seems to be the most appropriate term under which to theorize the striking kind of energy of invention and synthesis that figures of all different types share in common and release into the languages they transform.

Actually, the universalizing role of metaphor, its expanding to become coextensive with the sphere of figurative language in general, has been affirmed and reaffirmed all along in the rhetorical tradition. Aristotle’s original fourfold definition of metaphor in the Poetics (1457b6–9)—“Metaphor is the transfer of an alien name either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy”—already includes synecdoche (as substituting genus for species or species for genus) and metonymy (species for species), as well as the proportionate analogy that comprises metaphor in the more restricted sense that is most familiar today. Aristotle may thus be indicated as “the first to consider metaphor as the general form of all figures of speech.” Hence, Cicero’s comment, in De oratore (3.38), that the distinctions among the various kinds of figurative language were as yet unknown to Aristotle, “who called them all ‘metaphor’ [qui ista omnia translationes vocat],” that is, translationes, in the Latin translation of μεταφορά.

In the Middle Ages, Bede calls metaphor “the genus of which all the other tropes are species” (see Eco 1984, 141) and this unique privilege for metaphor reigns equally in the Renaissance in Emmanuele Tesauro’s Il canzoniere aristotelico, where metaphor is dubbed “regina delle figure [queen of figures]” (see Roussel 1953, 187). In the eighteenth century, Etienne Bonnot de Condillac explained metaphor’s inclusiveness of all types of figurative senses as implied in the word’s etymological meaning: “[I]f we consult etymology, all the tropes are metaphors: for metaphor signifies properly a word transported from one signification to another (à consulter l’étymologie, tous les tropes sont des métaphores: car métaphore signifie proprement un mot transporté d’une signification à une autre)” (De l’art d’écrire 2.6; qtd. in Derrida 1972, 280, n. 26). And even in the
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The concept of metaphor, as developed in the philosophy of language, is crucial in understanding how symbols and ideas are constructed in thought. Metaphor serves as a bridge between different domains of thought, allowing for the transfer of meaning from one context to another. In this context, metaphor is not just a figure of speech but a fundamental aspect of thought itself.

Metaphors are created from the interaction of different elements, often combining concrete and abstract concepts. They are essential in shaping our understanding of the world and how we perceive it. Metaphors like 'time is a thief' or 'life is a journey' provide frameworks through which we can view and interpret experiences.

In the realm of science, metaphor can be seen as a powerful tool for simplifying complex ideas. For example, Charles Darwin's metaphor of 'survival of the fittest' revolutionized the understanding of evolution. Similarly, the metaphor of 'the brain as a computer' has been instrumental in shaping modern neuroscience.

The philosophical exploration of metaphor reveals its importance in various fields, from literature and art to philosophy and psychology. It is through the use of metaphor that we construct narratives and narratives that construct us.

Metaphor, therefore, is not just a linguistic device but a cognitive process that shapes our perceptions and understandings. It is a dynamic and changing concept, reflecting the ever-evolving nature of human thought and expression.
origination of the very world of individuated things and properties that language first brings into the focus of human ("geistige") experience. In order for a thing to be anything in particular, it must have defined properties, that is, it must be qualified by some qualities as something. Yet properties, as universals, are not simply given in the nature of things but originate first through language. It is only through a linguistic process, irreducibly analogical or metaphorical in character, whereby particulars are assimilated to one another to form general categories, that there can be identification of any particular beings at all. This sort of ontological role of metaphor then determines its status as "originary" in many of the currents of thought that have recently renovated our whole understanding of metaphor.

Such thinking takes place not only on a level of philosophical abstraction. Perhaps in every age, the way that the most originary articulation and signifying of beings by language is ultimately metaphorical in character has been most clairvoyantly divined and most pregnantly expressed not by theoretical speculation, but by poetic imagination. Contemporary with its most recent revival, the essentially metaphorical nature of the primordial transaction between words and the world is intimated, for example, in William Carlos Williams’s "A Sort of Song." Although certainly not a philosophical statement in any proper sense, any more than it is properly a song, it nevertheless turns out to be a sort of manifesto poem for Williams’s poetry and for a good part of modern poetry to boot, with its compressed vision of words—and perhaps things too—as metaphorical all the way down:

Let the snake wait under
his weed
and the writing
be of words, slow and quick, sharp
to strike, quiet to wait,
sleepless.

—through metaphor to reconcile
the people and the stones.

Compose. (No ideas
but in things) Invent!
Saxifrage is my flower that splits
the rocks.

(1963)

This poem initially wishes to assume a clear separation between the order of things and that of words: let the snake stay in his natural habitat, and let writing acknowledge itself to be made only out of words, an artificial me-
dium, and not anything more natural or real. And yet these words are themselves precisely snake-like, alert and ready to snap into action. This slithering suggestion in the first verses already questions—through metaphorical likeness—the stated sequestering of language as separate from things. For the poem says that language lies waiting to strike with the force of a living thing. Moreover, far from remaining confined to the category of the merely linguistic, metaphor wields a peculiar power to unite, to "reconcile" real things, even things of mutually exclusive categories such as the animate—generically "the people"—and the inanimate, "the stones"—than which nothing is more lifeless. Of course, metaphor does this by rhetorical artifice, by "composing." And yet genuinely poetic metaphor, however contrived, belongs inherently to the things themselves: "No ideas / but in things." Although certainly an invention (asserted with imperative force: "Invent!"), metaphor is an "invention," not only in the sense of "making up," but also in the etymological sense of "coming into" ("in-venire") and finding. Hence, the even stronger assertion that the flowers of rhetoric have real power to change reality, to penetrate it through and through, to "split rocks." This is in fact the etymological meaning—literally "rock-rupturing"—of the name of the flower, saxifrage, chosen here by the poet as "my flower" to represent the flowers of rhetoric. The word is compounded of saxum (rock) and frangere (break, shatter), an etymology to which Cicero draws attention at the conclusion of his theoretical discussion of metaphor in De oratore 3.41.167 with his reference to saxifragis as a "made word" (factum verbum).

The poem, then, expresses a view of metaphor as rhetorical artifice, as composition and invention with words, but also as "natural," in the sense of a snake-like force insinuating itself into the making and changing of a real world. That the apparently most artificial form of language, metaphor, should nevertheless somehow be found lurking within the very nature of things, splitting apart their hard centers of self-enclosure and claiming their innermost reality as already penetrated by the flower-power of rhetoric, constitutes precisely the sort of insight most characteristic of the new, modern vision of metaphor that the present essay will now further examine as it is elaborated in the new wave of rhetorical theories.

Stimulated by the general rethinking and philosophical investigation of metaphor in recent decades, many more focused theoretical inquiries by literary specialists attempt to understand aspects of this uncanny onto-linguistic power we call metaphor. The vision of metaphor as the radically originary principle of all language, and thereby of the articulable world itself, has been glimpsed by most modern treatments of the subject from the vantage point of one of three principle theoretical paradigms: (1)
WHILE DEFINING ELECTRICAL MEASUREMENTS AS PHYSICAL QUANTITIES OF ELECTRICITY, ELECTRICITY MEANS AN INSTRUMENT OF A MEASURED CONCEPT, A MEASURE OF A MEASURE OF A MEASURE.

WE CADEED TO THE CONCEPT OF MEASUREMENT, WE ARE将自己的 метрологическую систему. В этом случае, метрологическая система — это система измерений, которая определяет определенные параметры электрических величин. Невозможно представить электрическую систему без измерений. Измерения — это основная составляющая метрологической системы. Важно подчеркнуть, что измерения — это не просто регистрация результатов, но и анализ и интерпретация этих результатов.

Важно помнить, что метрологическая система — это не только измерения, но и все, что связано с ними: создание, применение, хранение и передача результатов измерений. Метрологическая система — это комплекс различных процессов и методов, которые позволяют обеспечить надежность и точность измерений.

Важно также отметить, что метрологическая система — это не только электрическое измерение, но и измерения других параметров. Важно учитывать, что метрологическая система — это не только измерение, но и анализ и интерпретация результатов измерений. Метрологическая система — это комплекс различных процессов и методов, которые позволяют обеспечить надежность и точность измерений.

Итак, метрологическая система — это комплекс различных процессов и методов, которые позволяют обеспечить надежность и точность измерений. Метрологическая система — это не только измерение, но и анализ и интерпретация результатов измерений. Метрологическая система — это комплекс различных процессов и методов, которые позволяют обеспечить надежность и точность измерений.
whole extent of language. That is precisely what Richards's contextual theory of meaning expressly maintains. Weinrich attempts to characterize metaphors as against “normal words” (“Metapher, im Unterschied zu Normalwörtern . . .”) as words that can under no circumstances be freed from their contexts. Metaphors have no context-free, constant, core meaning that could then be applied differently in different contexts. Their meanings are completely context-dependent and, in effect, context-created. Yet to assume that this is not the case with all words is to mistake a difference in degree for a difference in kind. Granted, the counterdetermination of context becomes starkly evident in the obvious examples of metaphor. But can a word’s meaning ever be fully severed from its context, and, if not, does the context then not inevitably impinge upon and somehow qualify and counterdetermine this meaning? Does not the context always determine the word in some particular way that colors and to this extent negates its merely abstract, generic meaning? In context, is not tree, for example, or table, always some at least minimally specific kind of tree or table? If not as beech or willow, tree occurring in any given context will be determined as standing indoors or outside, in England or China, as imaginary or real, as perceived or not, or in some way that makes it not simply identical with an absolutely indeterminate tree. Weinrich has attempted to give a semantically precise definition of metaphor as a discrete linguistic phenomenon, but, in the end, his thought may instead suggest a universal metaphorical dimension to words in their contexts in general.

This train of reflection leads inevitably in the direction of making metaphor no longer a reflex of and derivation from some other proper sort of meaning, but original and absolute, and hence toward a conception of “absolute metaphor” (“die absolute Metapher”), such as that propounded by Blumenberg (1960, 7–142, 301–3). Blumenberg defines absolute metaphors as metaphors that reveal the substance of thought, assuming thereby a kind of resistance to conceptual explanation, which can never exhaust them (“Daß diese Metaphern absolut genannt werden, bedeutet nur, das sie sich gegenüber dem terminologischen Anspruch als resistent erweisen” [11]). Metaphor accordingly asserts itself as an autonomous and irreducible dimension of language and thought.

At the outset of his “Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie,” Blumenberg points out that, if Descartes’s methodological program for a new science had been successfully executed, all rhetorical figuration would have been rendered obsolete. Logically clear and distinct concepts would have replaced all provisional “ways of saying things” as their fully adequate and objective expression. Concepts would thus have shed their history, with all its dark derivations, and acceded to an immediate, transparent adequacy to their objects, which would be made fully evident and intuitively present in these conceptions. In the eighteenth century, the view that metaphors could not be eliminated in this way was argued by Vico, who, against Descartes, developed a logic of fantasy. Vico recognized that language has a history that cannot be completely mastered and sublimated into the totally present consciousness of the concept. Metaphor expresses a penumbra of meaning, incalculable in its associations and suggestions, that cannot be exhaustively distilled into any purely logical concept. And this irreducibly linguistic level of meaning is what continues today to reassert itself in reassessments of metaphor as absolute.

Gerhard Neumann, in “Die ‘absolute’ Metapher” (1970), distinguishes between the real meaning (“das eigentliche Gemeinte”) and the improperly said (“das uneigentliche Gesagte”) and suggests that in modern poetry such as Stéphane Mallarmé’s and Paul Celan’s the two are no longer hierarchically ordered—by subordination of the improperly said to the really meant—but come to coincide with one another. Absolute metaphors come about when the referent that is being metaphorically signified is not itself identifiable by any other, proper terms, and so “the ground of the proper lies in darkness [. . . ihr Eigentlichkeitsgrund im Dunkeln liegt]” (210). In this way, rather than declaring dogmatically that there is no proper meaning and cannot be, it is possible simply to point out how proper meaning is not independently identifiable and isolable so as to be able to serve as a foundation. Proper meaning can itself be defined only relatively and metaphorically from within a linguistic matrix and not in terms of any absolute frame of reference.

Metaphor has, moreover, a key role in expressing what exceeds conceptualization altogether. With poets and sometimes with mystics, too, metaphor, beyond being a necessary component in all concepts and in their functioning to grasp items in or aspects of a world, opens up a realm all its own, a sphere of the purely linguistic. In “Ausblick auf eine Theorie der Unbegrifflichkeit” (1979) Blumenberg discusses metaphor in relation to the ineffable, particularly to Wittgenstein’s observation in the Tractatus that the class of the unsayable is not empty (“daß die Klasse des Unsaubaren nicht leer ist”) and his insistence on the impossibility of articulating the sense of the world (“der Sinn der Welt”). The sense of the world must lie beyond the limits of the totality of facts that make up the world and that can be articulated in straightforward, fact-stating language saying how it is, for this sense of the world relates to the fact that it is (Blumenberg 1979; quotations from rpt. in Havercamp 1983, 444). Accordingly,
The metaphysical meaning of metaphors and the meanings of the metaphors that we use in everyday language can be quite complex. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. The metaphor is not meant to be taken literally, but rather to convey a deeper meaning or to make a connection to something else.

According to William Franke, the necessary nature of metaphor is to be understood as a kind of meaning that is not literal but relational. In other words, metaphor is not a literal representation but rather a way of relating one thing to another. For example, when we say that a book is "an open door to a world of ideas," we are not suggesting that the book literally opens a physical door, but rather that it provides a window into a different world of thought and understanding.

Franke emphasizes that metaphors are not just figures of speech, but are essential to the way we think and communicate. They help us to make sense of the world around us and to express complex ideas in a way that is both concise and evocative. Metaphors are not just a way of saying one thing when we mean another, but rather a way of seeing the world from a different perspective.

In conclusion, the metaphysical nature of metaphors is not just a matter of language, but an essential part of the way we understand and experience the world. Metaphors are not just figures of speech, but are fundamental to our ability to communicate and make sense of the world around us.
is the result of mutual determination by words and their contexts, then
metaphorical shifts of meaning in and through context are intrinsic to lin-
guistic meaning as such. Meaning is essentially a determination by shifts
in application of words in ever new contexts.

This elucidates how the absolute metaphor has no foundation in a proper
sense that would be simply "turned" in some new direction. The absolute
metaphor is itself the origin and foundation of the significance that it con-
veys. Meaning is not presupposed as established before the use of lan-
guage, either in standard ways and with proper senses or in deviant ways
creating metaphors. Rather, linguistic meaning in general is understood to
be interactive in nature, that is, to first arise out of the shifting of meanings
of words as they are applied in always new and particular contexts. This
movement in which meaning itself arises becomes patent in cases of met-
aphor. Metaphor is absolute to the extent that it is not a deviant case but the
originary nature of language as coming to mean something by the context-
ual interaction of words, their meanings being reciprocally established.
It is precisely by becoming a working of context, unlimited, therefore, from
any outside, since everything that impinges on and so makes sense can be
absorbed into the context of sense, that metaphor can dissolve all limits
and isolation and assume status as "absolute."

Of course, contexts work in producing sense always only for certain indi-
viduals and from certain points of view, that is, for some particularizing
perspective that metaphor is especially apt to express. To this extent, the power
of metaphor to remake its own context and in this sense to become absolute
is manifest in its ability to implicitly address its reader (or receiver in gen-
eral). Challenged by a live metaphor, the reader is obliged to take the initiative
in redefining the word's meaning and so in defining a world of sense
that is constructed through reading or, more broadly, through interpretation.
Drawing out an important, quintessentially hermeneutic, consequence of the
new outlook on metaphor, Eberhard Jüngel has stressed how metaphor is
intrinsically addressed to its reader: "To metaphor's authentic and precision-
exacting way of speaking belongs the dimension of address. Metaphors ad-
dress and ought to address [Zur eigenlichen und präzisierende Redeweise
der Metapher gehört die Dimension der Anrede. Metaphern sprechen an und
sollen ansprechen]" (1974, 119). Jüngel argues that metaphorical discourse
is neither improper nor imprecise, but open to a dimension of address and so
different in kind from propositional, assertive discourse and its type of pre-
cision and propriety that is based on definitions of things that metaphor rather
sets free: "The metaphor sets free linguistically, whereas the definition lim-
its and fixes linguistically [Die Metapher setzt sprachlich frei, während die
Definition sprachlich begrenzt und festsetzt]" (119).

This intrinsic dimension of address is another feature that plausibly be-
longs to language as such and that metaphor brings out into the open. In
this way, too, with the impetus imparted by recent theoretical rethinks,
metaphor asks to be viewed as fundamental to the very nature of language,
indeed, as coextensive with the linguistic. It reveals language as always
addressed to someone in some particular situation and in specific contexts.
Metaphor thereby comes to coincide with human experience and a human
world as such, since this experience is inherently linguistic, rather than
being just an adventitious twist or deviation, an occasional phenomenon of
a rare sort of language found especially, if not exclusively, in poetry. It is
not uncommon today to hear, for example, from Joseph Campbell, that
religious experience, the most primordial experience of humankind, con-
stitutes simply in metaphors for the mystery of life.

What the new, hermeneutic theories of metaphor, taken together, show
is how metaphor, as absolute and "alive," affords a glimpse into the cre-
ative making of sense that makes perceptions and experiences into a world.
Metaphor assumes a transcendent-al-hermeneutic function and reveals the
world in the moment of its emergence as a linguistic creation or construc-
tion. Even from within the disciplines of language and literature themselves,
the primal metaphor, variously named die absolute Metapher, la metaphore
vive, la metafora inaudita, or infinite semiosis, has reopened the most ba-
sic ontological questions about language and its relation to the world on its
own new terms. Reality has shown itself in this new perspective as to be gras-
appable, if at all, only in and through metaphor. What are the ontological im-
plications of this mediation of all our language, and therefore of our very
knowledge and experience of the world, by metaphor? In other words, what
does unlimited metaphoricity, such as it has recently been rediscovered,
imply about the way things are and are known? These recently reopened
questions open the horizon of rhetoric in such a way that, far from accept-
ing being relegated to the status of a technical, adjunct discipline, it is
enabled to reassert its veritable vocation as first philosophy.

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Notes
1. For varied discussions of the recent revival of rhetoric, see Vickers (1982, 1988) and Simona
(1989, 1990). This revived interest takes on the form of a movement with the "fews school" and its
"rhetoric of inquiry," for which see Nelson, Megill, and McCloskey (1987). The renewed theo-
retical ferment over rhetoric has continued through the 1990s, as witness the ongoing stream of historico-
theoretical works such as those by Kastly (1997), Eden (1997), and Farrell (1997).