Metaphor and Continental Philosophy
From Kant to Derrida

Clive Cazeaux
Over the last few decades there has been a phenomenal growth of interest in metaphor as a device which extends or revises our perception of the world. Clive Cazeaux examines the relationship between metaphor, art, and science, against the backdrop of modern European philosophy and, in particular, the work of Kant, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. He contextualizes recent theories of the cognitive potential of metaphor within modern European philosophy and explores the impact which the notion of cognitive metaphor has on key positions and concepts within aesthetics, epistemology and the philosophy of science.

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Clive Cazeaux

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Metaphor and Continental Philosophy

From Kant to Derrida

Clive Cazeaux
For my father, Victor Roy Cazeaux
Contents

Acknowledgments x

Introduction 1

1 Kant and Heidegger on the creation of objectivity 13

2 The power of judgment: metaphor in the structure of Kant’s third Critique 35

3 Sensation, categorization, and embodiment: Locke, Merleau-Ponty, and Lakoff and Johnson 56

4 Heidegger and the senses 80

5 Conflicting perspectives: epistemology and ontology in Nietzsche’s will to power 104

6 Cutting nature at the joints: metaphor and epistemology in the science wars 133

7 Opening and belonging: between subject and object in Heidegger and Bachelard 150

8 Metaphor and metaphysics in Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Derrida 175

Notes 199

Bibliography 205

Index 214
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Introduction

There has been a phenomenal growth of interest in metaphor as a subject of study in recent decades. While literature and the arts, as far back as Plato, have always recognized metaphor as a source of poetic meaning, this new interest in metaphor is part of a shift in thinking which asserts that the metaphorical creation of meaning holds significance for the way we understand the construction of knowledge and the world. The following works give a good indication of the scope of metaphor research, and contain extensive bibliographies: Barcelona 2000; Gibbs 1994; Knop et al. 2005; Kövecses 2002; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Ortony 1993; Ricoeur 1978a; Sacks 1978. However, despite the large volume of material published on the cognitive potential of metaphor, little has been done to assess how claims made within the field draw upon continental philosophy, or how continental philosophy might contribute to our understanding of the cognitive reach of the figure. These omissions are addressed in this book. The continental tradition from Kant to Derrida, I maintain, provides arguments which not only inform and support existing claims for the cognitive value of metaphor, but also extend the significance of the figure to the point where it becomes an ontological tension, operating in between the fundamental distinctions of philosophy.

How is it that metaphor, the description of one thing as something else, has become so important for questions of knowledge and cognition? There are, I suggest, a number of reasons. Firstly, the linguistic turn in the humanities – following the work of Saussure (1983), Frege (1952), Wittgenstein (1922; 1953), and Whorf (1956) – has foregrounded awareness of the role our linguistic categories play in the organization of the world into identifiable chunks. This position can be regarded, to some extent, as an elaboration of Kant’s thesis that concepts within the mind of the subject are responsible for determining the nature of reality. A key question for this view is how objectivity can be confirmed given that the task of organizing the world has been assigned to subjective consciousness. As several commentators have observed, metaphor itself raises this question (Black 1979; Hausman 1989; Ricoeur 1978a). An original, freshly minted trope (the argument runs) is an instance of creative, subjective language yet,
far from producing nonsense, a new metaphor offers insight on its subject and, as such, could be said to be objective or to contain an objective component. If the world is in some sense determined by the order and distribution of human concepts, then metaphor, as the creation of new combinations of concepts, would appear to be a mode of thinking in which human creativity constructs an objective world. Therefore, to confront metaphor is to confront one of the central themes of Kant’s epistemology and the linguistically inclined humanities.

It is not just in the humanities that these questions have arisen. Science too has begun to explore the notion that human concepts construct the world rather than merely correspond to a pre-determined reality. Two related developments are significant here: the ‘science wars’ and recognition of the role metaphor plays in science. The ‘science wars’ refers to a series of debates involving scientists, cultural theorists, sociologists, and philosophers in dispute over the status of scientific knowledge (Collins and Pinch 1993; Franklin 1996; Levins 1996; Martin 1996; Rose 1996; Shapin and Schaffer 1985; Snow 1964; Sokal 1996). Is science a disinterested reflection of the world as it really is or a discourse whose findings are heavily influenced by the interests and prejudices of those who work within it? The orthodox view of science merely ‘reading off’ knowledge from a mind-independent reality is challenged on the grounds that it is primarily political, ideological or economic interest which determines the course of science and, therefore, which determines what counts as new knowledge about the world. Metaphor bears on this because of the role it plays in the formulation of scientific theories and models. Do the scientific concepts derived from metaphors actually refer to entities in the world or are they merely heuristic terms, coined to facilitate investigation? The debate occurs as part of the mid- to late twentieth-century challenge to positivist philosophy of science, and its preoccupation with determining the conditions for the identification of entities and the verification of claims. What emerges in the wake of positivism is a renewed commitment to broader questions of epistemology and ontology, including the Kantian ‘linguistic’ thesis that concepts do not just refer to reality but also shape it. The science wars are fought against this backdrop, and theses on metaphor as the generator of scientific concepts are advanced by realists and anti-realists alike (for example, Boyd 1979; Kuhn 1979). I return to this contest below.

It is another area of science, however, which has seen the largest growth of interest in metaphor. Since the 1970s, cognitive science has become increasingly aware of the dependence of concepts and reason upon the body, and the extent to which conceptualization relies upon metaphor and imagery. This is in contrast to the view of thought, held by ‘first generation’ cognitive science, as a process which can be formalized in purely functional or symbolic terms, away from any bodily or cognitive context. As a part of this new awareness, cognitive linguistics emerged, using the discoveries of ‘second generation cognitive science to explain as much of language as
possible’ (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 496). For cognitive linguistics, metaphor denotes one of the mechanisms (if not the principal mechanism) whereby thought and perception are generated from our condition as physically embodied beings (Gibbs 1994; Johnson 1987; Knop et al. 2005; Kövecses 2002; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999). This embodiment is manifest, according to Lakoff and Johnson, in the derivation of the concepts we use for thinking and perceiving from concepts ‘that optimally fit our bodily experiences of entities and certain extremely important differences in the natural environment’ (1999: 27). Hence, concepts we use to describe relations and values have a spatial origin, such as ‘happy is up’, ‘intimacy is closeness’, and the concepts we assign to objects and events in general (‘starting’, ‘stopping’, ‘running’, ‘grasping’) derive from bodily movement and action (1999: 38–39). Thus, the importance of metaphor for cognitive linguistics lies in the fact that it represents the territory to be explored in order to achieve a fuller understanding of the transpositions which draw the structure of thought and experience from our physical being.

Finally, the popularity of metaphor is also evident in the questioning of boundaries – between subject areas and between the wider concepts of the moral, the political, the epistemological, and the aesthetic – that has arisen from the tension between modern and postmodern thought. Principal concerns in these debates are the status of knowledge and the way in which concepts of truth and objectivity are understood. Philosophy has been under attack on this score with its history of ‘universal truths’, e.g. Descartes’s cogito, Kant’s table of categories, and Hegel’s Absolute Consciousness. The main arguments against this universalism invoke metaphor on two related accounts: (1) the fact that key epistemological concepts have metaphors at their root, for example ‘mirroring’, ‘correspondence’, ‘sense datum’, is taken as evidence of the contingent, communal, subjective basis of knowledge, and (2) because metaphor (as a form of dislocated or dislocating predication) works by testing the appropriate with the inappropriate, it is seen as a means of challenging the boundaries whereby one subject defines itself in relation to another.

This book locates the recent interest in metaphor, including all the debates outlined above, within the tradition of continental philosophy from Kant to Derrida. As I have already indicated, Kant’s critical philosophy lends itself to being a framework for the theorization of metaphor on account of it representing experience as the subjective determination of an objective world. The idea here is that metaphor is something creative and subjective which nevertheless produces meaning that has the characteristics of being objective and a discovery. Ricoeur (1978a, 1978b) and Hausman (1989), in constructing their theories of objective metaphor, both suggest that Kant’s epistemology may, in some way, be able to explain the subjective creation of objectivity. Philosophers in the continental tradition after Kant, I would argue, work within the ontological space opened up by him, to devise (alongside Kant) structures and relations which challenge the dualisms of
orthodox, Cartesian metaphysics, and to demonstrate (beyond Kant) how these new structures and relations work upon, challenge or transform experience and our conception of what is possible within it. In describing philosophers after Kant as working within the space ‘opened up by him’, it is not my intention to make them footnotes to Kant. The space which he opens up, I maintain, is the region of possibility which emerges once one departs from dualistic thought, i.e. thinking which remains within the boundaries created by oppositions, such as mind–body and subjective–objective. Without the comfort of these neat oppositions, the work of building new theoretical structures which can articulate the textures and complexities of experience is a daunting prospect, and a philosophical endeavour which cannot be reduced to a footnote, as my ‘beyond Kant’ indicates. The relevance of philosophers in this tradition – I concentrate upon Nietzsche, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Bachelard, Ricoeur, and Derrida – lies in that they either identify metaphor as one of these ontological structures working within experience or introduce arrangements whose operations parallel the transpositions and cross-conceptual mappings of metaphor.

This is also the reason why I am examining metaphor in relation to continental, as opposed to analytic, philosophy: continental thought has more to say on the ontological implications of metaphor, whereas analytic accounts invariably examine the figure within the confines of the philosophy of language (for example, Cooper 1989; Davidson 1978; Guttenplan 2005; Kittay 1987). There are exceptions within the analytic tradition, however, and, interestingly enough, all the clues they give to ontological metaphor point towards theses developed at length within continental philosophy. Black asserts that metaphors can create new yet objective meaning and, to explain his thinking, he adopts images of a Kantian nature (Black 1979). Metaphors, he declares, are like ‘cognitive instruments’ in that they create new perspectives on objects, allowing us to see things in a new way, as in the case of the first cinematograph ‘creating the aspect’ of a horse appearing to gallop in slow-motion (1979: 39); the Kantianism here, I suggest, lies in the notion that a different appearance is determined for reality by our new cognitive, conceptual perspective on it. Another exception within analytic philosophy is Kittay (1989). Although she explores the cognitive potential of metaphor in purely linguistic terms – her debatable reason for doing so is that ‘our present understanding of language exceeds our understanding of any other expressive medium’ (1989: 15) – she nevertheless acknowledges Nietzsche in her final chapter as a philosopher who might afford some insight into the fundamental nature of metaphorical truth, but the link is not pursued (1989: 327).

Chapters 1 and 2 consider the importance of Kant for an understanding of metaphor. Chapter 1 examines the metaphorical creation of objectivity in relation to Kant’s epistemology and, in particular, Heidegger’s retrieval of the schematism. As indicated above, both Ricoeur (1978a, 1978b) and Hausman (1989) suggest that Kant’s philosophy may, in some way, be able
to explain the subjective creation of objectivity. Unfortunately, gaps or uncertainties are left in the ontological claims they make as part of their explanation of objectivity. The key element in Kant's epistemology for Ricoeur is the schematism – the process which ensures that the structure of experience meets objectively with the content of experience – but the contribution which he sees this making to his theory of metaphor is not spelt out. To make matters worse, the schematism is that part of Kant's critical epistemology which he notoriously dismisses as 'an art concealed in the depths of the human soul’ (1929: A 141, B 180–1). However, Heidegger’s retrieval of the schematism in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, I argue, can assist both Ricoeur’s and Hausman’s theories. This is because the ontology that Heidegger constructs in order to retrieve the schematism articulates a mode of encountering the world which does not repeat the conventional opposition between subjective structure and objective content. For Heidegger, we encounter the world as a series of possibilities, and it is his claim that any one concept anticipates a range of possible appearances which enables the resolution of the uncertainties left by Kant, Hausman, and Ricoeur, and the completion of Hausman’s and Ricoeur’s theories of objective metaphor.

In Chapter 2, metaphor is shown to have significance for Kant independently of Heidegger's interpretation when I assess the structure of his argument in the *Critique of Judgment*. Kant returns to the area of the schematism, except he faces it here in moral as well as cognitive terms. The first *Critique* asks how (supersensible) pure, transcendental concepts can accommodate (sensible) empirical intuitions cognitively, and the second *Critique* asks how a (supersensible) universal moral imperative can serve as a principle for showing us how we ought to act in (sensible) particular situations. These lead to the central question of the third *Critique*: how is it possible to reconcile the supersensible basis of nature with the supersensible basis of our freedom to act independently of nature? The answer: through metaphor. As I show, it is through a series of nested analogies and ultimately the ‘density’ of metaphor itself that Kant is able to hold nature and freedom united (to demonstrate the possibility of their interaction) yet distinct (to maintain the object-directedness of experience) at the same time. This means that Kant relies on metaphor to the extent that (a) his philosophy cannot be rendered systematic without it, and (b) metaphor is situated as a condition of possibility of judgment. Tracing the analogies within the third *Critique* also affords a perspective on a number of recent studies of the structure of Kant’s theory of judgment. I assess the impact which my reading has on accounts from Derrida, de Man, and Lyotard.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 consider metaphor as an ontological principle in Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, and Nietzsche respectively. Metaphor can be seen to occur for the three thinkers as a relation or process whose operation is responsible for determining the structure of experience, where this structure is prior to and constitutive of the human subject, the world, and the
interaction between the two. In addition, this position on metaphor unfolds for all three from a reappraisal of the nature of the senses and human embodiment. Quite why there should be this tie between metaphor and the senses becomes apparent once it is recognized that the concept of metaphor has, in this context, been broadened to represent a process of interaction or transposition out of which ordered, intelligible experience arises. It is therefore being considered as a process which works within the same cognitive space, so to speak, as the senses, as the sensory transmission of material from the world to the mind. Except, of course, that this describes the senses in empiricist terms, when, within the theories of Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, and Nietzsche, they are theorized in a quite different way. Common to all three is the view that the senses operate not as receivers of impressions but as transformative creators of experience and the world. The place which this metaphorical structure of transposition occupies in the ontologies of Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, and Nietzsche is examined in these three chapters.

Metaphor is often associated with the senses on occasions when we try to describe a sensory experience, and find ourselves drawing upon other senses in order to determine the character of the experience, for example, ‘a bitter, lemon yellow’, ‘tinselly, stream-like percussion’, and ‘the sound of a trumpet is scarlet’. These descriptions might loosely be called ‘synaesthetic’ in that they combine different sensory modalities. They are, strictly speaking, distinct from neurological cases of synaesthesia on account of their involving active metaphorical association, in contrast to involuntary neurological combination. I do not address synaesthesia as a subject in its own right, but I do show, in Chapter 3, that the history of classification, including the classification of the senses, is bound up with the distinction between literal and metaphorical language. The customary division of the senses into five channels, I argue, is indicative of those theories of knowledge in the history of philosophy which understand truth as a one-to-one correspondence between categories and things in themselves. I focus on Locke’s epistemology as an example, since it lets us see the relationship between arguments for the individuality of the senses and those for the existence of individual essences, epistemic access to which is gained through ‘correct’, literal language. In contrast, post-Kantian philosophy theorizes sensation as the ‘generation’ or ‘brining into being’ of certain forms of appearance, for example, colour, sound, texture. Of particular relevance to this area is Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, since it presents metaphors of the type ‘bitter, lemon yellow’, ‘tinselly, stream-like percussion’, and ‘the sound of a trumpet is scarlet’ as paradigm forms of the conceptual and sensory transitions through which we organize the world. I draw out the differences between Locke’s and Merleau-Ponty’s understandings of the metaphor–sensation relation, and show how Locke’s concept of the relation prompts him to condemn metaphor as an unreliable form of description, whereas Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of the relation positions metaphor as a fundamental condition of our embodied being.
Chapter 3 also gives me the opportunity to compare my notion of ontological metaphor with the theory of embodied metaphor given by Lakoff and Johnson. The comparison is made because Lakoff and Johnson cite Merleau-Ponty as the forerunner of their ‘embodied mind’ thesis in *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999: xi). Leading metaphor theorists in the field of cognitive linguistics, Lakoff and Johnson situate basic bodily acuities as the foundation of a theory of knowledge, and present metaphor as an extension of the process whereby the human body deals with the world through adaptation and articulation. Most metaphors, they argue, involve conceptualizing a subjective experience in terms of bodily, sensorimotor experience, e.g. understanding an idea (subjective experience) in terms of grasping an object (sensorimotor experience) (1999: 45). However, despite Merleau-Ponty’s influence, their concept of embodied metaphor is the inverse of his: whereas ‘metaphor is embodied’ for Lakoff and Johnson, I argue that ‘embodiment is metaphor’ for Merleau-Ponty, on account of his redefining the body as the ontological schema which structures human being in the world through transposition.

Although Heidegger does not provide an explicit, systematic account of the senses, the redefinition which they undergo as part of his rethinking of metaphysics nevertheless provides a revealing insight into the direction of his thought. Indications as to how the senses are transformed by Heidegger can be gleaned from the occasional references he makes to them. The relevance of these for us is that his transformation of the senses implicates metaphor. In Chapter 4, I consider the relation he constructs between human being and truth as *aletheia*: Da-sein (human being) and *aletheia*, he asserts, are related ‘in terms of the temporality of existence’, and fathoming this arrangement is the ‘central problematic’ of *Being and Time* (1996: 357; original emphasis). His concept of temporality is in fact introduced in my first chapter. It is the process which opens up a world for human being as a realm of possibility. This is time conceived not in the ordinary sense of a sequence of moments but as an ontological structure which creates the ‘space’, so to speak, in which reality can appear before the human subject. This action, for Heidegger, is also a form of truth as *aletheia*. Instead of referring to the correspondence between statement and world, as truth is conventionally understood, *aletheia* denotes the process of disclosure which allows a world to come into being in the first place. The senses are located within this temporal articulation of disclosure, and metaphor’s role is to be the process which allows this articulation to take place.

Heidegger does not actually use the word ‘metaphor’ in this context, but he does refer in *Being and Time* to ‘something as something’ as the relation which coordinates the disclosure of any object (1996: 359), and he arguably reinforces its metaphor-like nature in *The Essence of Truth* when he refers to it as making ‘something out to be what it is not’ (2002: 184). What this ontological as-structure does, I argue, is institute a latticework of possible similarities and differences, and this provides the coordination necessary for
the continuous, coherent disclosure of an object. The generation of sensibility as world-disclosure has metaphor play a constructive role in the formulation of a new ontology, an ontology distinct from Cartesian metaphysics. Its latticework of similarities and differences promotes a realm of possibility which does not conform to the oppositions of conventional metaphysics. This idea of metaphor as metaphysically transcendent though is at odds with Heidegger’s confinement of metaphor within Cartesian metaphysics in *The Principle of Reason* (Heidegger 1991). Conventional metaphysics, he argues, has cut certain divisions into reality, for example, the Cartesian split between mental thinking and physical hearing. Thus, metaphor ‘only exists within metaphysics’ because the conjunctions it makes always start from or are in terms of concepts shaped by metaphysics (1991: 48). I consider this discrepancy in Chapter 4 and again in Chapter 8.

Nietzsche is the philosopher who most explicitly formulates perception as a metaphorical process. In the fragment ‘On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense’, he describes cognitive judgment as a series of metaphorical leaps from nerve stimulus to retinal image (first metaphor) to sound as signifier (second metaphor) (Nietzsche 2000: 55). Our perception, he argues, can never correspond to things in themselves because it is formed through a series of transformations which ensures that ‘there is no causality, no correctness, and no expression’ connecting the first stage (the stimulus) with the last (the concept) (2000: 58). This metaphoricity though, for Nietzsche, is not merely perceptual. Arguably, in his view, it defines human being entirely. I say ‘arguably’ since this is an extrapolation from his epistemology to his will-to-power ontology. In contrast to the orthodox ontological scheme of subjects confronting a world, Nietzsche presents being in general (of nature and the human subject – no distinction is made at this point) as a set of competing perspectives or wills to power, out of which emerges human experience of an external world. The metaphorical dimension of this lies in the necessarily transpositional nature of the contest between perspectives. No one will to power exerts itself in isolation; rather, power in Nietzsche’s ontology is always asserted against a rival or an opposite, where the ‘assertion against’ is realized not as annihilation of the other viewpoint but as the capacity to see from it. On this understanding, metaphor is not a structure of world-disclosure, as I have claimed with Heidegger, but a network of transpositions, where any individual item, any individual identity, be it a person, an experience or a meaning, occurs as a tensional interaction between competing forces.

Chapter 5 explores the idea that the will to power is metaphorical in nature. I challenge Kofman’s opposition to the idea, and argue that the metaphorical nature of the will-to-power ontology makes certain conceptual resources available which can remove the paradoxes generated by this ontology. To give one example: all things are wills to power or perspectives, Nietzsche affirms, including the perspective which grants me the knowledge that this is what the world is like. The paradox here is that Nietzsche’s assertion of
perspectivism appears to cancel or deflate itself as just another perspective: if it is the case, as Nietzsche tells us, that all things are perspectives, then his view is purely his perspective, with the same cognitive force as the next person’s. However, the paradox only stands because certain assumptions are made about what belongs to or is available from a perspective. What the notion of a metaphorical will brings to the debate, I argue, is the recognition that something belonging to or being intrinsic to a category, including the category of perspective, cannot be taken for granted, with the consequence that the individuation of perspectives as items with equal cognitive force – the key claim within the paradox – cannot proceed.

Chapters 6 and 7 consider metaphor in relation to epistemology and the science wars. As announced above, the ‘science wars’ refers to a series of debates in which the status of scientific knowledge is contested by scientists, cultural theorists, sociologists, and philosophers. The epistemological debate within the wars is akin to the contest between realism and anti-realism: the former is committed to the existence of a mind-independent reality underlying appearances which is either directly or indirectly knowable through appearances, whereas the latter asserts the Kantian view that it is our concepts which shape and determine the nature of reality. However, the realism–anti-realism contest is in danger, as McDowell puts it, ‘of falling into interminable oscillation’ between the concepts of a mind-independent reality and a mind-determined reality, due to the undecidability over whether order and the possibility of knowledge have a mental, subjective or an external, objective origin (McDowell 1994: 9). Chapter 6 argues that the oscillation between realism and anti-realism is attributable to the metaphors that are at work in the competing theories of knowledge. Two cases I cover in detail are ‘cutting nature at the joints’ and the concept of ‘world’ used as a metonym. In both cases, it is ambiguous whether what is being described is the (noumenal) world as it is in itself or the (phenomenal) world as it is accessed and made available to us through perception.

My intention though is not to accuse metaphor of disrupting the passage of rational thought but, rather, to suggest that we look to metaphor to find an alternative theme whose imagery can avoid the oscillation. In Chapter 7, I argue that Heidegger and Bachelard do just that. In different ways, they configure the encounter between subject and world as an opening, which is to say that subject and world meet each other not as two pre-formed components but as entities who acquire their being through their mutual participation in or as an opening. What this achieves, I argue, is a new application of the concept of belonging within epistemology. I say ‘new application’ because the concept is already active in epistemology, encouraging us to think in terms of what belongs to the subject and what belongs to the object. However, the new application presents ‘belonging’ as a question. Rather than being something that can be taken for granted, with the subject possessing some qualities and the object possessing others, belonging is left as a question, on account of knowledge being theorized as a process in
which mind and world are mutually sustaining. The state of having something left permanently as a question might seem inadequate or vague but this, I argue, is an epistemological adjustment which Heidegger and Bachelard invite us to make in order to express the openness of the tensile relation between subject and object. As such, it is also an epistemological arrangement which avoids the oscillation between realism and anti-realism. There are differences between Heidegger’s and Bachelard’s positions, and Bachelard even constructs his poetic ontology as a response to Heidegger’s ‘language of agglutination’, the network of prefixes and suffixes in his vocabulary which, on Bachelard’s interpretation, only serves to reinforce the very ontology which Heidegger claims to overturn (Bachelard: 1969: 213). I draw out the differences in their accounts, but find that their shared interest in metaphor as the generator of the openings within their ontologies means that the differences cannot be too sharply drawn.

The final chapter examines the various ways in which metaphor and metaphysics are interwoven in the work of Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Derrida. The ‘interwoven’ metaphor is deliberate, since in Ricoeur’s and Derrida’s responses to Heidegger’s metaphysics, and in Ricoeur’s and Derrida’s responses to each other, there is a dense network of agreement and disagreement over what the relations between metaphor and metaphysics might be. Discussion follows Heidegger’s declaration, noted above in the context of Chapter 4, that ‘the metaphorical only exists within metaphysics’ (Heidegger 1991: 48). According to Ricoeur, there is a ‘theoretical core common to Heidegger and Derrida, namely, the supposed collusion between the metaphorical pair of the proper and the figurative and the metaphysical pair of the visible and the invisible’ (1978a: 294). But Derrida is surprised by the way his analysis in ‘White Mythology’ is read by Ricoeur. He finds that the criticisms of his position made by Ricoeur are statements which he (Derrida) in actual fact supports and, more surprisingly for Derrida, are views which (he thinks) are already evident in ‘White Mythology’.

I explore the ways in which ‘intersection’ and ‘entanglement’ operate as concepts in the relations of metaphor and metaphysics drawn individually by Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Derrida, and argue that these concepts determine how the three thinkers stand in relation to one another. While Ricoeur presents his theory of the intersection of discourses in contradistinction to Heidegger’s ‘metaphorical within the metaphysical’, Derrida traces the ways in which the metaphorical themes in Heidegger’s text cross over, entwine, and generally exceed any ‘X within Y’ containment relation. What comes to light here is that one of the contradictions Derrida finds in Heidegger is the very same contradiction which Heidegger uses to create the as-structured opening of truth as aletheia in The Essence of Truth. That is to say, what Derrida finds as a textual contradiction in one context is put to work by Heidegger as a coherent ontological condition in another. The possibility that Heidegger and Derrida might intersect at the point of relying upon ontological or transcendental structures is considered by Gasché (1986).
However, whereas Gasché ultimately dismisses the possibility of their intersection on account of the discourse–experience distinction, I assert that the two philosophers do in fact meet as a result of the opposition between discourse and experience being removed by Heidegger’s ontology. Their meeting on these terms, I argue, also brings them closer to Ricoeur’s interactionism, but their proximity to one another should not be mistaken for unity.

My study of metaphor in continental philosophy takes the figure from being a creative and objective poetic device, through being a mode of cognition, to being the structure of belonging and transposition which constitutes the possibility of experience and the world. I emphasize ‘and the’ because epistemology conventionally distinguishes experience from the world, creating two distinct regions: the world, and our experience of it. In contrast, I present the two as conjoined within metaphor. This is not to say that they are seamlessly fused together or that experience is all there is. Rather, it is to assert the claim (from Chapters 5 and 7) that metaphor can serve epistemology as a structure whose internal transpositions articulate the distinction between experience and the world that is normally, and problematically, expressed in terms of regions, domains, and other spatial metaphors. In different ways, Nietzsche (Chapter 5), Heidegger (Chapters 4 and 7), Merleau-Ponty (Chapter 3), and Bachelard (Chapter 7) show that what is conventionally regarded as the content of subjective experience, for example a datum, a quale, a manifold, occurs because it is constructed by ontological relations which take it beyond itself, which allow it already to include a reference to the condition responsible for objectivity.

The passage described above, from poetry, to cognition, to ontology, does not run in a straight line through the book. Rather, the categories cross over and intersect throughout, each drawing upon the other. For example, ontology is brought to poetry in Chapter 1 in order to explain the capacity of poetic metaphor to be creative yet objective. And in Chapters 4 and 7, poetry is applied to ontology as part of Heidegger’s formulation of truth as disclosure. Here, poetic metaphor, the creative conjunction of something as something else, generates an arc of possibility between the two somethings, opening a space in which an object can appear. This intermingling of subjects could give the impression of circularity: metaphor is explained by ontology which then, in turn, is explained by metaphor. I comment on this at several points, since the impression of circularity relies upon an image which needs redressing. Circularity represents the idea of leaving and then returning to a certain point or, in our case, a certain concept. Yet to think that we leave a point and then return to it is to reason in spatial terms, to assume the existence of an item with a boundary, which is departed from, and an external region in which we make our circular journey back to the starting point. However, metaphor’s ontological bearing, I maintain, derives from its upsetting conventional notions of belonging, notions of what belongs on the inside and what belongs on the outside. Impressions of circularity are checked by the claim that, in moving from poetry to ontology
and from ontology to poetry, we are not leaving spaces to return to them but (to adopt an image from Merleau-Ponty) moving between facets on a diamond, where each facet is visible in the face of the other (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 207). For judgment, experience, meaning, or anything which we regard as having identity or content, is shown at various points within continental thought to be constructed by transformations between terms, where the terms function not in isolation as units in themselves but as interactive components in a complex of cross-referral and implication.

The main ontological shift which results from my continental articulation of metaphor is that judgment becomes a question, a questioning of what belongs to the judgment. I use ‘judgment’ here in the Kantian sense of ‘judgment of experience’, i.e. to include the conceptualization or determination of experience. This is, in effect, to claim that my articulation of metaphor leads to experience becoming a question, a questioning of what belongs to experience. The emphasis on belonging derives from metaphor: its juxtaposition of remote or unrelated subjects, and the reassessment we are invited to make of the properties which belong to its two subject terms. Turning judgments and experiences into questions might seem an unsatisfactory outcome, given that questions are generally regarded as incomplete, in need of answers. But on the ontology presented here, incompleteness is not a gap left through an oversight but a property that is integral to the process of drawing in judgments from other perspectives, of leading our current standpoint towards others in the world. Assigning metaphor this ontological value means I take the view that everything arises out of metaphor, but this is not the same as saying ‘everything is metaphor’. The latter locates everything within metaphor, has everything belong to metaphor, whereas the former, with its action of ‘giving rise’ to entities, grants us the room to question what belongs to metaphor.
1 Kant and Heidegger on the creation of objectivity

Both Ricoeur in *The Rule of Metaphor* (1978a) and Hausman in *Metaphor and Art* (1989) draw on Kantian ontology to explain how a metaphor can create new yet appropriate meaning. Hausman, on the one hand, explains new metaphorical meaning by the direct proposal of an ontology. This is made up of unique, extraconceptual particulars akin to Kant’s things in themselves which, Hausman maintains, stand as the referents of inventive metaphors and, therefore, as the items which guarantee their appropriateness. Ricoeur, on the other hand, turns indirectly to ontology via an allusion to Kant and the transcendental functioning of the mind which determines, prior to experience, the ontological order of the world. Ricoeur suggests that new metaphorical meaning is achieved as a result of the tension between creative and claim-making discourses where the operation of the latter proceeds ‘from the very structures of the mind, which it is the task of transcendental philosophy to articulate’ (1978a: 300).

The appeals to ontology are made by Hausman and Ricoeur in order to overcome a paradox. The paradox is that, on their interactionist understanding of the trope, a strong metaphor creates a meaning which is in some way objective or truthful, yet this meaning is new, which is to say that, prior to the metaphor, the independent subject terms could neither suggest the new meaning nor signify the concepts which would support it. If the meaning is new, what is it that supplies the feeling of appropriateness?

The relation between metaphor and Kant is not merely the product of a coincidence of reference in the two scholars’ work. The phenomenon of inventive metaphor is a concentration of the problem faced by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1929). One of the premises adopted by Kant is that experience, to be experience, must be experience which belongs to a subject. From this premise, he attempts to determine the principles of organization which the subject must apply a priori in order for intelligible experience to be possible. The problem to which this arrangement gives rise, however, is how to secure objectivity given the investment of the possibility of experience within the subject. Kant does not want to assert that the mind creates its own, subjective reality, but that it merely supplies the conditions which enable experience of an objective reality to be
possible. He has somehow to project himself out of his self-made subjective prison.

Heidegger is relevant here. His contribution is to suggest ways in which structures already present in the *Critique* allow Kant to confirm the objectivity of experience (1962b). Kant asks how it is possible for *empirical* intuitions to be subsumed under pure, *ontological* concepts, and introduces the notion of a schema as the mediating condition (1929: A 137–38, B 176–77). Unfortunately, the manner in which a schema reconciles the two natures is not clearly defined and, ultimately, Kant dismisses the possibility of their subsumption as ‘an art concealed in the depths of the human soul’ (1929: A 141, B 180–81). I explicate Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant and, with supporting material from the *Critique*, show that what Kant perceived as an incongruity is in fact the tension in virtue of which the categories receive objective application. It is this tension between the ontological and the empirical, I argue, which consolidates both Ricoeur’s appeal to transcendental philosophy and Hausman’s notion of a *unique* metaphorical referent.

A third author, Kirk Pillow, has also recently turned to Kant to develop a theory of objective metaphor (2000). Pillow takes his lead from Ricoeur and, in particular, the position assigned to Kant’s doctrine of aesthetic ideas within Ricoeur’s theory. Although Pillow addresses questions in Kant’s epistemology and aesthetics, he does not approach metaphor through the creation–discovery paradox, as Ricoeur and Hausman do, and so I shall not dwell on his account here. However, I shall refer to it at the end of this chapter to indicate how I think it compares with the ontology I extract from Heidegger’s Kant.

**Interactionism in Hausman and Ricoeur**

Both Hausman and Ricoeur work from the perspective of the interactionist theory of metaphor developed by Black (1962, 1979). In contrast to the comparison theory, which asserts that a metaphor simply makes explicit what was already implicit, interactionism promotes the creativity of metaphor by stressing the trilogistic nature of the trope. A metaphorical expression is made up of two subjects: (in Black’s idiom) the primary subject, the word used literally, and the secondary subject, the word used non-literally. The third element which completes the metaphor is the interaction which occurs between the two subjects. (The rival, comparison theory does not acknowledge this third element. Rather, it presents metaphor as a condensed simile and claims that the significance of a trope can be explicated by listing the ways in which its subject terms are alike.)

Central to the interactionist account is the idea that interaction provides the condition for a meaning which neither of the subject terms possesses independently of the metaphorical context. The primary subject is coloured by a set of ‘associated implications’ normally predicated of the secondary
subject (Black 1979: 28). From the number of possible meanings which could result, the primary subject sieves the qualities predicable of the secondary subject, letting through only those that fit. The interaction, as a process, brings into being what Black terms an ‘implication complex’ (1979: 29), a system of associated implications shared by the linguistic community as well as (or so Hausman thinks) an impulse of free meaning, free in that it is meaning which was unavailable prior to the metaphor’s introduction (Hausman 1989: 82–83). Somehow, interaction admits a meaning that is not already deducible from or present in the lexicon of a community.

Interactionism proposes to explain how metaphors create new significance rather than merely discover significance latent within a system of predetermined meanings. The question which Hausman wants to answer is how the meaning created by metaphor can be significant. If metaphors create meaning which is significant, what is it that makes it so? What allows metaphor to be more than the attempt to strain intelligibility from a seemingly nonsensical combination of subject terms? Hausman calls this predicament the paradox of creativity, and in order to reconcile the concepts of new yet significant meaning, he introduces the notion of a metaphorically created referent:

A metaphorical expression functions so that it creates its significance, thus providing new insight, through designating a unique, extralinguistic and extraconceptual referent that had no place in the intelligible world before the metaphor was articulated. (1989: 94)

Uniqueness and extraconceptuality or extralinguisticality (the last two terms are synonymous for Hausman) are the two conditions which the referent of every creative metaphor must satisfy, and it is their conjunction in a single expression which gives metaphor its cognitive value:

Uniqueness is necessary to the idea that the referent of a creative metaphor is new and individual. Extralinguisticality is necessary to justify saying that a creative metaphor is appropriate or faithful or fits the world . . . [And] it is the joining of these two conditions that is special to metaphors. There is something to which the expression is appropriate, some resistant or constraining condition: yet this condition is new. (1989: 94)

Whereas Black presents the meaning of metaphor as a complex of associations, i.e. the exchange or interaction between them, Hausman wants to theorize this process as an object, a unique, objective referent. The metaphor ‘Juliet is the sun’ can serve as an example (Hausman 1989: 103). Both the referents of the primary and secondary subjects are familiar; ‘Juliet’ and
‘the sun’ each have a straightforward meaning which is understood prior to the metaphor. The effect of the metaphor though is not, as Black would have it, to colour ‘Juliet’ with some of the relevant associations from ‘the sun’; neither is it simply to admit that Juliet shares certain qualities with the sun, such as radiance, brilliance, the fact that she makes the day or that she gets up every morning. Rather, Hausman extends Black’s account so that the senses of both subjects interact not only to create a new meaning but also to create a new referent. In short, a brand new signification is injected into the reader’s cognitive awareness. The expression’s meaning does not remain as a complex of associated implications but comes to fruition as a particular, intentional object. The referent carries the feeling of there being something more which gives the expression its cognitive value.

There is some ambiguity though in Hausman’s account concerning the precise nature of the extraconceptual object. It wavers from being something there, actual but unknowable, to being a conceptual provision posited to exceed the limitations of a linguistic community. To label these extremes, we can say that the status of the extraconceptual condition is either material or verbal respectively. The discord is contained by the question of whether or not the ‘extra’ refers (materially) to another realm or (verbally) to something more than is conceptually available at the time. At some points, Hausman says of the condition that it ‘adds an ontological dimension to the uniqueness’ condition (1989: 107). Similarly, extraconceptual objects are said to ‘constitute a dynamic, evolving world’ (1989: 117). ‘Extraconceptuality is necessary to justify saying that a creative metaphor is appropriate or faithful or fits the world’ (1989: 94). However, these admissions of material status are all countermanded by Hausman assigning verbal status to the condition. ‘What the extraconceptual condition adds to uniqueness’, he claims, ‘is not substantiality but, rather, a controlling factor, a locus for the senses . . . Its function is to constrain certain senses and resist others’ (1989: 108, my emphasis). Extraconceptual objects, he continues, ‘are intelligible complexes of meaning which gain extraconceptuality’ by offering resistance or constraint (1989: 193, my emphasis).

Hausman inadvertently brings Kant’s thing in itself to mind by explicitly denying that it has anything to do with his extraconceptual object. He disassociates his theory from transcendental idealism on the grounds that the thing in itself is an unknowable existent which cannot possibly ‘bear a direct, dynamic relation’ to the world (1989: 186). The difference between the two concepts, as Hausman sees it, is that extraconceptuality, unlike the thing in itself, plays an active role in determining its knowable counterpart; it represents the way in which new, extralinguistic experiences are created by existent meanings drawn from the conceptual repertoire of the linguistic community. If language did not open onto these events then the collective awareness of the community would be limited to the arbitrary associations of the idealist. Hausman takes the irremovable presence of a mind-independent world, there each time we open our eyes, as evidence of this condition
(1989: 216). Other examples which he suggests amplify the required sense are the counterpressure we experience upon lifting an object and our surprise at a sudden clap of thunder. The inescapable or unpredictable nature of the metaphorical referent cannot be consumed, but this, Hausman maintains, does not entitle us to dismiss it as a thing in itself, unknowable and unintelligible.

My claim is that extraconceptuality and all the ontological difficulties which come with it (as distinct from an ontological perspective per se) are unnecessary for a definition of his metaphorical referent. Hausman’s intention is to give an account which resolves the paradox of metaphor. For him, the thing in itself is definitely a material consideration: something which is there in a realm of some description but which is unknowable because it is never directly encountered in experience. However, I submit that if he had been aware of the noumenon’s more defensible role as a limiting concept in Kant’s critical system, he could have fulfilled his intention and successfully defined the metaphorical referent solely in terms of the uniqueness condition.¹ Just how Kant’s epistemology assists Hausman’s project I shall discuss later.

Ricoeur in actual fact anticipates Hausman’s creativity paradox. In *The Rule of Metaphor*, Ricoeur asks:

Does not the fittingness [of metaphor] … indicate that language not only has organized reality in a different way, but also made manifest a way of being of things, which is brought to language thanks to semantic innovation? It would seem that the enigma of metaphorical discourse is that it ‘invents’ in both senses of the word: what it creates, it discovers; and what it finds, it invents.

(1978a: 239)

Ricoeur introduces the notion of intersecting discourses to explain the ‘enigmatic’ production of new yet appropriate metaphorical meaning. He avers that metaphor is the result of the interaction between metaphorical and speculative discourse. Metaphorical discourse is the domain in which new expressions are created but not conceptualized or translated; it is where inventive metaphors receive their first outing.² The combinations of subjects which take place in metaphorical discourse are *diaphoric* (to use Aristotle’s term) in the sense that they are unprecedented and unresolved (Aristotle 1996: 34–38).³ Instances of the discourse might be a poem, a narrative or an essay. Speculative discourse is the domain of the concept and, furthermore, the domain in which the concept can be predicated of an object. It is this discourse which focuses the play of meanings thrown up by metaphor into a proposition which revivifies our perception of the world. To adopt Aristotle’s contrast term, speculative discourse is *epiphoric* in that it combines subjects on the basis of rational, explicable similarity. As intersecting discourses, the metaphorical creates the utterance ‘*A* is *B*’ together with all the
‘nonsensical’ possibilities that it implies, and through its encounter with the speculative, the play of possibilities is resolved and A’s B-like nature is conceptualized.

The importance of the productive tension between metaphorical and speculative discourse for Ricoeur cannot be overstated. Metaphor ‘is living’, he proclaims, ‘by virtue of the fact that it [metaphorically] introduces the spark of imagination into a “thinking more” at the conceptual [speculative] level’ (1978a: 303). ‘My inclination’, he writes, ‘is to see the universe of discourse as a universe kept in motion by an interplay of attractions and repulsions that ceaselessly promote the interaction and intersection of domains whose organizing nuclei are off-centred in relation to one another’ (1978a: 302). However, despite this stress on interplay, speculative discourse is shown to be the principal element in Ricoeur’s theory, since it is the mode of discourse which resolves the ‘nonsensical’ possibilities of the metaphorical ‘A is B’ into appropriate, worldly meaning; that is to say, it is the speculative which assigns metaphor its ‘ontological vehemence’ (1978a: 300). The interpretation of metaphor, he adds, ‘is the work of concepts’ and ‘consequently a struggle for univocity’ (1978a: 302). Possibly because of its elementary status though, speculative discourse is the component whose origin is explained the least satisfactorily. We are told that it proceeds ‘from the very structures of the mind, which it is the task of transcendental philosophy to articulate’ (1978a: 300), and Ricoeur seeks to explain it through comparison with Kant’s doctrine of aesthetic ideas. Kant defines an aesthetic idea as ‘a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e. no [determinate] concept, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it’ (Kant 1987: 314). The production of aesthetic ideas forms part of Kant’s account of the genius of the artist in giving expression to rational ideas, concepts to which no sensory object or experience can correspond, such as the concepts of God and justice (I provide a detailed analysis of this aspect of Kant’s aesthetics in the next chapter). As such, one could be led into thinking that Ricoeur’s reference to aesthetic ideas is intended to demonstrate how the speculative within metaphor is capable of exceeding conventional thought. However, while he holds that metaphor in general does this, it is not the reason why he appeals to Kant’s transcendental philosophy.

What Ricoeur wants from aesthetic ideas is not the artistic capacity to exceed thought – this, in Ricoeur’s analysis, falls within metaphorical discourse; it is speculative discourse that we are dealing with here – but the capacity to exceed thought objectively. Aesthetic ideas strive to grant objectivity to rational concepts; in Kant’s words, they ‘try to approach an exhibition of rational concepts . . . [and thereby give them] a semblance of objective reality’ (1987: 314). Exhibition provides intuitions for concepts, demonstrates that concepts are not empty but adequate for cognition (Kant 1987: 314). All exhibition, Kant announces, ‘consists in making [a concept]
sensible, and is either schematic or symbolic’ (1987: 351). It is schematic exhibition that is important for Ricoeur. (Symbolic exhibition is not relevant here because, in Kant’s words, it ‘is an expedient we use for concepts of the supersensible, which as such cannot actually be ... given in any possible experience’ (1987: 351, n. 31). A concept is schematically exhibited when an intuition corresponds to it, that is, when an object is brought under a concept and judged to be of a certain kind. Explicating this process, Ricoeur thinks, will help to explain the objective ‘thinking more’ which speculative discourse carries out when it intersects with metaphorical discourse. He reaffirms the importance of the schematism in his essay ‘The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination and Feeling’ (Ricoeur 1978b):

I want to underscore a trait of predicative assimilation which may support my contention that the rapprochement [between heterogeneous ideas] characteristic of the metaphorical process offers a typical kinship to Kant’s schematism. I mean the paradoxical character of the predicative assimilation which has been compared by some authors to Ryle’s concept of ‘category mistake’, which consists in presenting the facts pertaining to one category in the terms appropriate to another. (1978b: 146)

However, Kant’s schematism is by no means unproblematic, and so the manner in which it informs the assimilation of heterogeneous ideas in a metaphor cannot be taken as self-evident. Unfortunately, the nature of this ‘kinship’ is not made explicit by Ricoeur. Nevertheless, the full relevance of the schematism, I suggest, can be brought out by examining Heidegger’s retrieval of Kant’s ‘Transcendental Analytic’. As I shall show, both the emphasis on possibility and the importance of the schematism which emerge from Heidegger’s study support Ricoeur’s treatment of metaphor.

The creation of objectivity in Heidegger’s Kant

Kant asks in the first Critique how it is possible for empirical intuitions to be subsumed under pure, ontological concepts. This difference in kind between the ontological and the empirical is, in Heidegger’s opinion, the Copernican Revolution condensed into one moment. Heidegger contests the traditional interpretation of the Critique of Pure Reason as being an enquiry into the conditions of the possibility of knowledge; the work, he claims, ‘has nothing to do with a “theory of knowledge”’ (Heidegger 1962b: 21). If the Critique does contain any positive, theoretical import, then, he thinks, it is towards evincing the conditions of the possibility of knowledge of the conditions of the possibility of knowledge. Given that experience is always already occupied with empirical objects, its principles of organization must be logically prior to experience; it is the conditions of the possibility of