

*Ole Fogh Kirkeby\**

## A metaphor called “Mozart”

### Abstract

In the following essay I shall venture on the ocean of metaphor, reducing the rashness of this project by the use of the well-worn boat of philosophy. I shall ask four questions: 1. Is it possible to realise metaphor through thought, action or emotion? 2. What is the opposite of metaphor? 3. Does an alternative to metaphorical thinking exist? 4. Does an alternative metaphorical thinking exist? However, should my project fail, perhaps the raft of metaphor itself might carry me safe to the island ruled by Ariel and Prospero, and where other shipwrecked once were met with soft music.

### 1. Tree types of metaphors

Let me begin with three examples of the phenomenon of metaphor, the two first ones originating in philosophy, the last one being an invention of my own:

The german philosopher, Hans Lipps (of great inspiration to K. E. Løgstrup), spoke about “Sicht” (“sight”), which both refers to optics and to shooting, meaning the anticipated, imagined or intended content of perception.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, it is relevant to remind about the fact that Plato, in his dialogue “Cratylus”, remarks that the concept of **doxa**, “meaning”, often, “not-demonstrative”, “uncertain” knowledge, originates in a metaphor from archery, **toxon** - anyhow, if we are prone to believe in Socrates. This is also the case with the concepts of “intention”, **boule** α, “wish”, **boulesthai**, as well as “plan”, **bouleuesthai**; they all derive from **bole** α, “shooting”.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the metaphor of “sight/aim”, to

---

\* *Ole Fogh Kirkeby*  
*Institute of Management, Politics and Philosophy*  
*Copenhagen Business School*

<sup>1</sup> Hans Lipps: *Die Verbindlichkeit der Sprache*. Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, Zweite Auflage 1958. Hans Lipps: *Untersuchungen zu einer hermeneutischen Logik*. Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann (1938), Vierte Auflage 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Plato: *Cratylus*. The Loeb-Edition. Transl. by H. N. Fowler. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press. 1926/1996. Op. cit. 420B-C.

indicate the anticipation of the meaning of experience through intentionality, was already conceptualised by Plato. Similarly the metaphor of the Stoic philosophers would be “tonos”, “tension”, and “skopos”, “aim”. But “skopos” would be contrasted with “telos”, the latter relating to an aim of the person which is realised through the very wish of doing the good, while the former relates to a kind of realisation where an actual change in the “real world” is necessitated. “Telos” is an ethical concept concentrating on the state of mind only, “skopos” involves the effects of the good act.<sup>3</sup> So, the latter would converge with the concept of “intention” in Husserl’s theory of intentionality - while “tonos” would answer to “intention”.

In “Philosophical Investigations” Ludwig Wittgenstein says that “the word watches us”: it is just as alien, strange, full of secrets, like a picture, and to a high degree, not anything that belongs to us.

“Though - one would like to say - every word has a different character in different contexts, at the same time there is **one** character it always has: a single physiognomy. It looks at us. - But a face in a **painting** looks at us too.”<sup>4</sup>

The fan is a special kind of metaphor. Inside the fans of the baroque and the rococo ages pictures were painted or texts written that emerged in different, but wonderful ways, when the fan was opened in front of the face, almost a “mobile”. This is a metaphor of reflectivity. Also, the outside of the fan differed from the inside - like the structure of human experience. But at the same time the fan is a prolongation of the arm, it is an instrument of gestures, of the possible grace in hiding and uncovering, of more than a functional tool for cooling the passions that emerge on the outside of the face, on the skin. So in a way, a fan is an interchangeable tattooing, substituting the skin and usually being just as transparent and light in its bottom colour as this arch-human clothing. But most of all, perhaps, it is a projectionable eyelid and hence a widening of sight?

---

<sup>3</sup> One should, however, be careful in simply identifying “telos” and “skopos” with deontologic versus utilitaristic positions. See: M. Förschner: Die stoische Ethik. Über die Zusammenhang von Natur-, Sprach- und Moralphilosophie im altstoischen System. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1995. p.223-224.

<sup>4</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein:(1989) “Philosophische Untersuchungen”, Teil II. Werkausgabe, Band I. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, p. 501. The paragraph sounds, in the translation by G. E. M. Anscombe from 1974: Part II, vi, p.181.

The Nazis were supposed to make not only lamp shades, but fans, of human skin, too. Can one realise a metaphor? Does this possibility belong to despotism and/or madness? Or is this only an absurd example of something utterly important, not only to the use of language, but to living?

A metaphor has got all these metaphorical qualities mentioned: it is an image controlling intentionality, and hence, investing the word with the sensual marks of experience. It is a mixture of word and image alien to us, to such a degree, that it can function almost like an object, and hence “watch” us, in the way not only Wittgenstein, but Maurice Merleau-Ponty, too, claimed that the things were watching the painter painting them.<sup>5</sup> A metaphor is a fan, unfolding a world of sense, a sensitive world, inviting us to the mating dance like the feather-fan of the peacock, and at the very same time concealing this world, the place, and its birds’ face, close to a mask.

## 2. The essence of metaphor

In this essay I am going to present some thoughts - the word “argue” would be too pretentious - transgressing the vague (and extremely common, post-modern) notion that metaphor were nothing but a postponing of meaning, by playing a game where concrete and abstract significances are shifting their place by turns. A fact everybody seems to know since Derrida<sup>6</sup>: the impossible game of the basic meaning, of the  $\text{arche } \alpha$ -sense. A game, however, already suggested by Aristotle when he presents us to three related functions of this pragmatic figure in *Art of Rhetoric*:

1. A metaphor is exactly the alien, strange (*xenikon*) word in the comforting sequence of the known-all-too-known speech. Aristotle phrases it so beautifully:

“It is metaphor above all that gives perspicuity, pleasure, and a foreign air, and it cannot be learned from anyone else;”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *L’Oeil et l’esprit*. Paris: Gallimard. 1964.

<sup>6</sup> J. Derrida: *La voix et le phénomène*. P.U.F. Paris 1967. And J. Derrida: *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris 1972.

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle: *Art of Rhetoric*. Loeb-Udgaven. Transl. by R. H. Freese. London: Harvard University Press 1994(1926). III, ii, 8-9, 14051a).

2. But metaphor is not only the foreign bird in the duck pond, just for a while concealing the “Heimat” of its devouring beauty, it is more than the imagery of the shy peacock, a legible bird, for all that. It is far more than that, because it casts the shadow of Otherness, in which the secret of words is preserved:

“And generally speaking, clever enigmas furnish good metaphors; for metaphor is a kind of enigma, so that it is clear that the transference is clever.”<sup>8</sup>

3. However, a metaphor stands in the middle of our being-together, exposing its beauty, expropriating the beauty of sound, i.e., of the word, and the beauty of what it might mean, or the smell and the taste of this word. A Venus born, not by the sea, but a creature of saliva and smelly breath.

“Metaphors therefore should be derived from what is beautiful either in sound, or in signification, or to sight, or to some other sense.”  
(*ibid.*).

How is one to summarise?

An alien, an enigma, beauty, passing the rose or the hand grenade for ever and ever, escaping into dreams, and into dreams of dreams, a “rotunda”...coming terrifying close to a *circulus vitiosus*; the never ending figure of the never ending figure, of the... Let me give a little example:

The word “blank”, meaning “bright”, is a Low German word that, when borrowed by the French language, comes to mean “white” (*blanc*), and hence, in the English, acquires the sense of “clean”. One may ask: is it the touch of fingertips, or the scrutinising eye, through which the lack of something is observed? Or does it happen to be the lack of letters, of signs, of any trace of the human, *vestigium absentum*. Are “clean”, and “bright”, and “blank”, and “white”, positive qualities, or do they testify to a lack? The lack of fingerprints, is that brightness? This is already a metaphorical expression, is it not? Because so many other things could lack on a surface? And if we proceed to the SHARPNESS of the bright, then we are definitely already inside the realm of the figurative!

However, the bottom seems hard to reach: “white”, they say, “is the fusion of all colours.”

---

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* III, ii, 13.

From a rather naive, objectivist point of view, we must be able to observe the concrete “first”, from which the transference to the abstract level must proceed - following the usual definition of “metaphor” as a transference of a “name” from one field to another,<sup>9</sup> most often from the concrete to the abstract, and rarely without the use of images.

However, in order to answer this question, we should be able to explain how the connection between the word, as a sound, as the practice of voice, and that towards which the sound is directed, is established. But the latter is the articulation of sense, of all the senses, that bundle of gestures reaching towards the world. Voice, then, and hence, sound, has to imitate (*mimēsis*) these other dimensions of experience. So, unless some intrinsic criterion of deep union is presupposed, the voice is metaphoric in its very essence, i.e., it cannot mean what we hear.

The origin of language in the onomatopo(i)etic relation, in a depicting sound - the Stoic version -, and hence, in insistence on a deep familiarity between sound and world, cannot be generalised. If language might be thought of as directly connected to being, this notion is soon abolished by small powerful words like “and”, “not”, “therefore” and “perhaps”. But in this void between sound and world, occupied by the force of convention, “*xyntike α*”, as Aristotle named it, metaphor is the only money to pay the bill of denotation.<sup>10</sup> However, the price is the need to exchange. So far, as there exists no Bretton Woods agreement in the realm of sense, and hence, no gold of significance, the metaphor floats.

So, there is no sense in seeking for the authenticity of metaphorical expression - as even Nietzsche still seemed to believe.<sup>11</sup> The senses let

---

<sup>9</sup> Aristotle uses the following definition in his “Poetics”: “A metaphor is the application of a word that belongs to another thing: either from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or by analogy.” Poetics. The Loeb-Edition. Translated by S. Halliwell. Cambridge, Massachusetts., London: Harvard University Press 1995. 21, 1457 b.

<sup>10</sup> The gesture of indication, of using the index, of pointing, “*deiknymi*”, and, hence, the pronouns related to place, embrace a genuine figurative structure, as revealed by commands in the imperative mood: the one commanding, is pointing to the place as if the commanded were already there, and hence, as if the event wished for had already happened. A metaphorical gliding from place to time can be seen.

<sup>11</sup> F. Nietzsche: *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinn*. Werke in drei Bänden. Herausgeb. von Karl Schlechta. München: Carl Hanser Verlag 1956.

us down, precisely because they in their blossoming benevolence create, due to a transcendental co-operation, the very image of a mutual catalysis, **the real**, which they then are summoned, against justice, one by one, to confess to, on their own.

The metaphor is too “creative”, too “keen” on reality: either it anticipates it, and at the end proves unable to render it as anything else but its own “aim”. The pray was the work of shadows. Or it cannot help to substitute itself for the reality to which it did refer with so many promises. In the end it has to fold up the fan, because the act was finished.

But when the search for the soundness of meaning by hand of metaphor is in vain, is there any option left?

Perhaps, to reverse the order of epistemological necessity: to ask for the realising of metaphor.

But what could this mean?

### 3. **Beauty as liberation from the rule of metaphor**

A **realised metaphor** is “ein Unding”, because the realised seems to cancel symbolism. Of course, a realised dream might still be metaphorical, in so far as the island in the stream and the daiquiris might be interpreted to refer to something beyond the sun, the breeze and the baffling - if we want to save the author from hedonism, from escapism, or even from a not unusual kind of existential stupidity. “Realise”, originating in the term “realitas” during scholasticism, shall not be interpreted in the spirit of Greek or modern thinking, as if it meant “essentia” or even “existentia (ens)”, in the abstract. It just and simply means “res”, “thing”, and hence **through this thing** indicating a possible essence and existence. The name sounded here, is John Duns Scotus, “Meisterdenker” of the scholastic period, who coined the term “haecceitas” (later borrowed by Peirce and Heidegger - the latter re-named it “Faktizität”), meaning “a reality of that which is inaccessible to conceptualisation” - the opposite of Thomas Aquinas’ concept of “quidditas”. The thing presents itself through the grid of language by its name, and due to this very name, the sound or the letters, it is able to conceal itself. So, “das Konkrete” might be a metaphor, after all. But of what, then? Of itself!

Then, “realitas”, and, hence, the realised metaphor, might suggest metaphysics, because the non-metaphorical is approaching us. I do not mean as a language in the sense of Hilbert, without anything but con-

tingent symbols, or a language of the mind, consisting of mental states of signification's immune to linguistics advances - like the epistemological dream of Husserl and some perplexed souls within Cognitive Science. I am hinting at something quite else. In "Le diable et le bon dieu" by J.-P. Sartre, from 1951, the central characters, Goetz and Catherine, exchange the following words:

Goetz: Je prendrai la ville.  
 Catherine: Mais pourqui?  
 Goetz: Parce que c'est mal.  
 Catherine: Et pourquoi faire le Mal?  
 Goetz: Parce que le Bien est déjà fait.  
 Catherine: Qui l'a fait?  
 Goetz: Dieu le Père. Moi, j'invente."<sup>12</sup>

God and the Devil, the arch-metaphors of Western culture, but something emerges beyond triviality, the Evil as an invention. God inhabits the symbolic realm, St. Augustine testifies to that, when he speaks of his "verbum mentis", in his "De trinitate", "word of the mind", "the real aim", the true "telos", whispered by God. However, inventions are new, they are something that never were in this world before, so we can presuppose that they do not already have to be caught in the bands of analogies, emulations...<sup>13</sup> If the thing, even the thing in itself, the abstract "thing-ness", cannot function as the straightforward negation of metaphor, could it then be thought of that the NEW thing were able to challenge metaphora? No, because the brand new thing is a genuine metaphor - how else, on earth, should we be able to conceive of it, if not by analogy? An absurd "deduction" (or is it an "abduction") from thing to concept, and from concept to thing. We have to anticipate it through an aiming, a "Sicht", "bule  $\sigma$ ", "tonos" an intentionality. And no intentionality without "intentio" and "intantum", the game between "tonos", "tension" and "skopos", "the aim" - both concepts necessarily existing as moods in a mind - however blurred the conception of this aim might be. In addition to these philosophical reflections, it might be noticed that the brand new thing is almost bursting of promises, brave new

<sup>12</sup> Gallimard, Paris 1951.

<sup>13</sup> M. Foucault describes the transforming of the Middle Ages to the baroque as a breaking of the overwhelming realm of metaphor, in: *Let mots et les choses*. Engl. transl. "The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences. New York: Vintage/Random House 1973.

worlds, invocations of victories and of happiness, metaphors of a life lacking a serious concept of “living”.

The Devil, then, has to have a function - Goethe taught us that - to make thought real, to transform thinking into action, to transfer dreams to life; and in this connection his task must be to make it possible to realise metaphor. But to realise metaphor is to lead it out of the symbolic realm. However, what is outside this realm but the things without essences? Not, exactly, the things in this world without names, what Democrit called “*νόμνυμον*” - like a face only shaved at the one cheek - this scornful shaving that the master-thief did to the drunken guards in the story by Herodot about the king’s treasure -, or an outburst of laughter while you are crying. What concerns us here are the things without “*ousia*”, not only deprived of essence, but without what we in acknowledging its widest possible connotations call “substance”. This must be the only reason of a metaphor to sell itself to the devil. But I am afraid that in order to find such an exemplar we have to listen to the favourite victims of the Devil, and turn to the things that are breathing and sweating. We must turn to the human beings. Because every inorganic thing steals its essence from the word that denotes it, and even more, the more it tries to resist this denotation.

So far, the line of thought went like this: in search of the strictly non-metaphorical, the conditions, of course, to talk about metaphor at all, we descended to the bottom of the earth (searching for the “groundedness” of thought, thought coming close to a game with metaphors), looking into Limbo, and met the Devil who presented us to the what did appear as the only notion left: “a thing without essence”. Finally, we learnt that this had to be a human being - because animals, indeed, have souls.

Now, we shall meet Don Giovanni and Sarastro, and Mozart and Schopenhauer, dancing, the one with a magic flute, the other with a magician’s pug. But let us, just on the threshold of these universes of heavenly music, quote Immanuel Kant:

Immanuel Kant introduces the concept of thinking as magic, because magic shall arise **passion**, magic is a play with passion. In “*Kritik der Urteilskraft*”, his “*Aesthetics*”, his last great work (however, not in his earlier epistemology, nor in his moral philosophy), in Paragraph 21, he reduces the concept of reality, the common sense, to a “*Gemeinsinn*”, a

“collective sense” the core of which is emotion: because emotion only, guarantees the possibility of communication:

“If insights (“Erkenntnisse”) should be able to be communicated (“mitteilen lassen”), then it must also be possible to communicate the **mood** (“Gemütszustand”), i.e., the emotional motivation (“Stimmung”) of the faculties of knowledge towards an insight (“zu einer Erkenntnis”) at all, and hence in that proportion needed to such a conception (through which we are able to conceptualise an object), in order thereby to create knowledge; because without this (emotional motivation. OFK) as a subjective condition of knowledge, this knowledge would not be able to emerge as an effect.”<sup>14</sup>

Immanuel Kant also speaks, in Paragraph 40, about three kinds of reasoning:

1. Autonomous thinking
2. Empathy: to be able to think as if you were any other person.
3. At any time to be able to think in harmony with yourself.

So, then, let us use, for a moment, the metaphor of “harmony” - striking Plato’s use of the word “skopos” in “The Sophist” (228C),<sup>15</sup> where the Elean Stranger says :

“Then we shall be right if we say that wickedness is a discord and disease of the soul.”

And where he continues:

“But if things which partake of motion and aim at (“skopon”) some particular mark pass beside the mark and miss it on every occasion when they try to hit it, shall we say that this happens to them through right proportion to one another, or, on the contrary, through disproportion?” (ibid.).

Let us listen to this great Western metaphor of the right mental aiming (“skopon”, ibid.), of “Einstimmigkeit”, and go right to the core: if there can exist discord and disproportion within the mind, then a mind without sound at all might exist too. So, the thing without an essence which we are searching for, might be a human being without a mood,

---

<sup>14</sup> “Kritik der Urteilskraft”. Herausgeg. von W. Weischedel. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag 1974. p.157-158. My translation from the German. OFK.

<sup>15</sup> Plato: The Sophist. The Loeb-Edition, Transl. by H. N. Fowler, Cambridge Massachusetts., London: Harvard University Press, 1921/1996.

without a tune, i.e., without any possibility of being in harmony with himself. This lack of essence of the “thing” cannot consist in thinking, nor in the thinking of thinking, “*noē ousis noē ouseo ous*”, as Aristotle called it in “*De anima*”, thought devouring itself from its tail like a starved snake. Because man is permanently absorbed “in” some kind of thinking, because he is permanently absorbed in perceiving. The thing without a mood is a person that thinks without emotions. The empty place can only be the place from where man comes to action, from his heart.

“*Mi par che abbiate un’anima di bronzo*”<sup>16</sup> says Leporello to Don Giovanni. And Don Giovanni is fetched to the underworld by a statue, a figure of stone, “*Venne un colosso...Guisto là, il diavolo sel trangugiò*”.<sup>17</sup>

But the very last words of Leporello are: “*Vero è l’evento*”, (what did happen was true). So, we are left to believe that Leporello is the author of the story, and, more important, that Don Giovanni is his metaphor.

“*Voglio fare il gentiluomo, e non voglio più servir.*”<sup>18</sup> Don Giovanni is Leporello’s heart of stone. So, perhaps the notion of the empty soul does refer figuratively after all, not freeing us from metaphor.

But what about Papageno? Very differently, I should think, because while Leporello is the demiurg, the half-god, creating the place where any humanity ends, making even the reconciliation of music vain, Papageno is the innocent witness. He is the drunken voice in the midnight choir, the choir of Aristotle’s tragedy, the ever commenting voice. But the voice needed to create “harmony” (*Einstimmigkeit*). But is Papageno a human being.

“*Tamino: Sagt mir, du lustiger Freund, wer bist du?*”

Papageno: *Wer bin ich? Dumme Frage! Ein Mensch, wie du.*”

And immediately after that, Papageno asks Tamino:

“*gibt’s ausser diesen Bergen auch noch Länder und Menschen?*”

“*Viele tausende...*” answers Tamino: “*das Fremde*”, “the foreign”, “*allotria*”, “no *xenos*”, the world invoked by metaphor, following Aristotle. And the enigma that Sarastro incorporates, the labyrinth to freedom from gender and social identity, the liberty to be “*ein Mensch, der*

<sup>16</sup> “I think you have a heart of stone”.

<sup>17</sup> “and just there, the Devil dragged him down”.

<sup>18</sup> “I should like to play the role of a gentleman, and not serve any more”.

den Menschen liebt”); the right to take possession of a heart.

Then, if discord and disproportion, emptiness, even a void in the soul can exist, the accord, concord, harmony, seems to be able to exist too, and, finally, beauty, the handshake of Amadeus: the beauty. But what beauty? The beauty of what? The beauty of the beautiful soul, combining passion, mercy..., “Unless I be relieved by prayer; Which pierces so, that it assaults Mercy itself, and frees all faults. As you from crimes would pardon’d be, Let your indulgence set me free.”

The empty heart might, for all that, not be the opposite of metaphor. Its real opposition could be a passion instead, but that kind of passion, which is **compassion**. Even a compassion with the foreign and strange. The aspects of metaphor incorporating a gesture of “a foreign air” of the “enigma”, as Aristotle mentioned, might be in accordance with the third parameter, with beauty, but with the beauty of the soul belonging to him that speaks in the right way: from the heart. Compassion could be able to reflect a harmony of the soul that as a state of emotion does not need any further interpretation. It might be quite the opposite of a hole in the soul, in might be a pouring over, an emanation. Hence, it might be a state of the mind without the difference between sign and signification that is presupposed by any metaphorical expression. But what would the criterion of such a mental state be?

#### 4. The realisation of metaphor

A criterion of the right mental aiming, of a harmony in relation to oneself, could be beauty. Beauty could be one key to the liberation from the despotic power of metaphor; one path towards the change of metaphor, not necessarily into its opposite, but into something else.

This is what Plato suggests in the dialogue “Phaedrus”:

“But beauty (kallous), as I said before, shone in brilliance among those visions; and since we came to earth we have found it shining most clearly through the clearest of our senses; for sight (opsis) is the sharpest of the physical senses, though wisdom (phronesis) is not seen by it, for wisdom would arouse terrible love, if such a clear image of it were granted as would come through sight, and the same is true of the other lovely realities; but beauty alone has this privilege, and therefore

---

<sup>19</sup> Plato: Phaedrus. The Loeb-Edt. Transl. by H. N. Fowler. London: Harvard University Press. 1917/1995. 250D-E.

it is most clearly seen and loveliest.”<sup>19</sup>

Beauty as a way of approaching truth that does not make you blind, or perhaps, makes you blind to the right things. A beauty that sets your mind right (“orthos logos”, the right thought). But beauty seems to be that which is seen in the place of something else. However, “in place of” does not mean “instead” (“anti-”, “stellvertretend”) invoking an unreal world of shadows that we must be content with. Beauty is the way to perceive that matches sight. Seeing answers to beauty, as if it had a voice. Or perhaps: the sound of seeing is beauty.

But how can we identify Beauty, when we are not allowed to translate one word into others?

Because it seems practicable, no matter how strenuous, to point to gestures, approaching choreographies, in which the right actions usually moved themselves. So, beauty opens a horizon to the observer, or investigator, where peoples’ ways are staged like coloured silhouettes. However, through the concept of beauty we cannot be invested with a deduced framework of more and more minute concepts getting us closer and closer to a concrete phenomenon, called “the beautiful”. There is no grid, no network, only a dynamics of intangible emotions leading to an overwhelming, or it is perhaps just an “accurate”, question.

We can only visit the place.

So it is the task of the philosopher to seek honestly for the significance of a concept, the meaning of which so many seem to know. To seek for a logic of intention and extension that fails, for a concept that is abolished in the very process of its application. Beauty, then, might seem to hide itself behind the surface of what the fashionable, conceptual designers use to call “aesthetics”, but it is certainly not found there. More probable it shall seek refuge among the unimpressive, find a shelter in the very small things, or hide among the herringbone patterns of everything, grey, anonymous, but with a soft, hardly perceptible radiance, like jade inside velvet. But it can be seen by the alert eye. An immanent brilliancy hardly traceable as anything else but a soft smouldering, a spark blown off from the worldfire.

Not Vermeer, not LeCourbusier, not Karl Lagerfeld, not in those forms, but behind them. Not even Phaidias or Michelangelo, nor Botticelli or Hundertwasser, not even Moore or Giacometti, but behind

them. Ceci (la beauté), n'est pas la beauté. Not even Goya nor Picasso, nor "New Brutalism", not even with the mask of the hideous. They all manifest the power of the metaphor through their elaborate articulation of a style, because the phenomenon of style must necessarily be metaphorical by the figurative anticipation of the figure - as far as style incorporates the gesture of indicating (with the index, *deiknymi*).

So beauty summons the philosopher. To invent her as a state of mind shared between seeing and the seen. To look for a field of genuine expression where the thing and the mind of the body act in the same way.

In this acting, an acting out, they seem to obey the same urge.

## 5. A language of the heart

In a lecture in Odense, some years ago, Hans-Georg Gadamer once said that the reality of language is in singing, in the intonation, and that the reality of intonation is in the dance. Could music then, be the proper realisation of metaphor? Its antidote, and its new awakening? After all, it does not keep referring to another dimension of language games' semantics. It stops the transference by transforming the heart of stone to the genuine language of the heart - as Schiller spoke of in "Wallenstein". This would be the idea of Arthur Schopenhauer. The realisation of metaphor, and hence, of the concept of denotation, as far as "denotation" must be anticipated by intentionality, must then be in the body, but in the body **moving**. "But if things which partake of motion (*kine* κίνησις) and aim (*σκοπον*) at some particular mark pass beside the mark..." said the Elean Stranger, as quoted above, they shall reproduce "disproportion". And "disproportion" is a species of the genus "discord". But "discord" is not just the opposite of "harmony", it is the opposite of "concordia" (*homonoia*), of the true social emotion of mutuality (*pathos*).

But how then, must the body move, in order to reproduce social harmony? Because it is the movement of the body that realises metaphor, not the body as a "stasis", as an object, as a thing. The body must move in accordance (sic!) with beauty. But a beauty beyond conceptualisation. The beauty beyond conceptualisation is spontaneity. And the mode of spontaneity is **expression**.

Influential philosophers like Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty defi-

ned the origin of language in the child's gesture of expression. Using the concept of Humboldt, "Articulation", as the core function of language, a function relatively independent of the voice(sound), we can confront **expression** and **articulation**.<sup>20</sup> "Articulation" then, is the symbolic level of language encompassing the three levels of linguistic faculties, or "three distinct relations within the proposition", presented by Gilles Deleuze in "Logique du sens": "denotation", "manifestation", and "signification". Where "denotation" is "the relation of the proposition to an external state of affairs (**datum**); "manifestation" "concerns the relation of the proposition to the person who speaks and expresses himself. Manifestation therefore is presented as a statement of desires and beliefs which correspond to the proposition. Desires and beliefs are causal references, not associations." And where, finally, "signification", is "a question of the relation of the word to **universal or general** concepts, and of syntactic connections to the implications of the concept." And Deleuze continues:

"From the standpoint of signification, we always consider the elements of the proposition as "signifying" conceptual implications capable of referring to other propositions, which serve as premises to the first."<sup>21</sup>

The concepts of "signification" must, of course, be the level of metaphorical reference. And the attempts at realising the metaphor would fail at the level of "denotation" - as was showed -, but, less obvious, on the level of "manifestation" too.

When metaphor cannot be realised through "manifestation", it is due to the fact that desires and beliefs have to be interpreted too, and, hence,

---

<sup>20</sup> Following Humboldt, writing as a media does only need the sound and gestures as an intermediary, demonstrated by the ability of the deaf-mute to read and to lip-read. Hence, language can liberate itself from the sound, if necessary. This marks the autonomy of the level of **articulation**. This autonomy is needed in order to manifest a "definite significance", because "die Darstellung eines Gedachten macht allein den articulierten Laut aus, und es lässt sich nichts andres angeben, um seinen Unterschied auf der einen Seite vom **thierischen Geschrei**, auf der andren vom **musikalischen Ton** zu bezeichnen." (Paragraf 10). "**Expression**, on the contrary, cannot escape voice and gestures, in short, the body. It does not incorporate "die Gewalt des **Geistes** über die **Sprachwerkzeuge**,". Wilhelm von Humboldt: Über die Verschiedenheit des Menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluss auf die geistigen Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts." Fakimile-print after the First Edition. Bonn: Ferd. Dümlers Verlag 1968.

<sup>21</sup> Gilles Deleuze: The Logic of Sense. Transl. by M. Lester. New York: Columbia University Press 1990 (1969). p.12-14.

put into words.

Deleuze admits that himself when saying:

“Desire is the internal causality of an image with respect to the existence of the object or the corresponding state of affairs. Correlatively, belief is the anticipation of the object or state of affairs, insofar as its existence must be produced by an external causality.”(ibid.).

“Images” as well as “anticipation” are semantic entities of the cognitive system, implying conceptualisation through words and intentions.

Contrary to these three levels of **articulation** one can find **expression**. “Expression” is a gesture that refers to itself. It does not fall victim to any **mimēsis** in the Aristotelian sense (Poetics). It does not refer to a personal dimension of inner urges, needs, or notions in the shape of images. Neither does it anticipate a grid of concepts, nor any framework, be it synchronic or diachronic, in order to realise a significance. On the contrary: it enforces the one listening to invent a meaning that can only be his. One might claim, with caution, that such a process would be the opposite of interpretation, of the hermeneutic effort, because this effort must always be directed towards the message, be a “herméneuein”, an effort of translation.

Merleau-Ponty says the following about expression as the foundation of meaning:

“Mais déjà, avec notre premier geste orienté, les rapports infinis de **quelqu’un** avec sa situation avaient envahi notre médiocre planète et ouvert à notre conduite un champ inépuisable. Toute perception, toute action qui la suppose, bref toute usage humain de corps est déjà **expression primordiale**, - non pas ce travail dérivé qui substitue à l’exprimé des signes donnés par ailleurs avec leur sens et leur règle d’emploi, mais l’opération première qui d’abord constitue les signes en signes, fait habiter en eux l’exprimé par la seule éloquence de leur arrangement et de leur configuration, implante un sens dans ce qui n’en avait pas, et qui donc, loin de s’épuiser dans l’instant où elle a lieu, inaugure un ordre, fonde une institution ou une tradition...”<sup>22</sup>

The act of primordial expression anticipates any articulation. One could also speak about a “mimetic arch-gesture” here, a gesture that does not preclude the word as in the pantomime, but waits for it. However, the

---

<sup>22</sup> The essay “Le langage indirect et les voix du silence” from the collection of essays: “Signes”, Paris: Gallimard, 1960. p.84.

subject of mime  $\alpha$ sis here is unknown to the body, it is the very mimetic movement itself.<sup>23</sup> The Stoics thought in this way, too:

“Die Vertreter der Ansicht, dass die Sprache natürlichen Ursprungs sei, machten schon in Platos Zeit geltend, man dürfe die Nachahmung durch die Stimme nichts anders beurteilen als die Gesten, mit denen der Mensch ohne Worte die Dinge bezeichnet. Einen unmittelbaren Zusammenhang zwischen beiden stellte auch die Stoa fest (...)”<sup>24</sup>

But perhaps the real foundation of meaning does rest on one figure more, the figure of silence, a silence arrived at **after** the event of meaning by hand of articulation?

Derrida suggests in his essay “Sauf le nom”,<sup>25</sup> dealing with the topic of “negative theology”, that there might exist two languages of mysticism, one referring to an original experience, and another, exhibiting the character of a string of words only, an absolute formalisation, with neither denotative, manifestative nor significative qualities. To chant this litany of non-sense - a meditation at the level of sound only - might lead to “speaking oneself” into the possession of an unknown sense. This movement, disentangling the kerygma from the kenosis, the latter being the Christian word for the notion of a “personal dimension”, a “human dimension” of experience in Christ, of “ein Menschwerden”, might not only reveal something about mysticism to us, but also something about the opposite of the metaphor.

## 6. Music and metaphor

Let me summarise: the opposite of metaphorical articulation is a genuine expression unable to be interpreted inside the network of semantics laid down by language games, and their possible meta-languages. Anyhow, this mode of expression cannot be totally empty of meaning, it must in some way relate to our cognitive, conative and emotional system. The way such a mode of expression relates to us can only be through our body as a place where sense happens. It could itself be

---

<sup>23</sup> See my book “Secunda philosophia”. Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur. August 1999.

<sup>24</sup> Max Pohlenz: Die Stoa. Geschichte einer Bewegung. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 1992. p.41.

<sup>25</sup> J. Derrida: Sauf le nom. Editions Galiléé. 1993.

metaphorically expressed as the transformation of a heart of stone into a heart of passion.

The obvious aporia here, in speaking about the non-metaphorical by hand of metaphor, can be dissolved, however, because there is a mode in which metaphor itself is conquered by expression: music. Music, thus, can be seen as the alternative media of articulation in relation to metaphor as a deeply rooted linguistic mode, as the secret of the **phō nē** α, of voice; or even as the fusion of the levels of articulation and expression.<sup>26</sup>

This is not meant to elevate music to an ideal-language, nor to a universal language, but to point to the fact that in music something is at play, transgressing performance. Music might testify to a core of speaking, in speaking, to a power in the living voice in which significance is carried from person to person in a way beyond conceptualisation. Of course, already mentioned philosophers like Lipps, Løgstrup and Merleau-Ponty were aware of that, but postmodernism seems sometimes to have forgotten it when it transforms a necessity into a virtue by raising writing, and hence, text, to the centre of language. In the text metaphor shall dominate, of course, because articulation dominates, and is pressed to its limit.

If this necessity of writing and text consists in the computer and the information society, then it might be of some use to compare the voice hidden behind the text on the screen, and the voices hidden within the text of the libretto.<sup>27</sup>

However, such a comparison, and the implied criticism of the information society, is condemned to balance at the edge of the banal, the more the computer becomes integrated into **koinē** α **aisthē** α **sis**, into common sense through its promotion to the dominant **technē** α.

## 7. The power of metaphor after all, event, narrative, and the computer

The libretto is realised through the performance - which, of course, can be recorded and thus kept - but this performance is meant to be unique.

---

<sup>26</sup> We do not need to concede that music functions figuratively here as a non-metaphorical field.

<sup>27</sup> I do not involve the phenomenon of a libretto available on the computer. It shall not contribute to a deepening of the matter.

This implies that the meaning that it passes on to us shall keep a fraction of the invisible and inaudible. The art of the director can be interpreted, but the experience of the event is the final judge. Expression, so to speak, overrules articulation. Could that be true about the dialogue, too?

The composer rarely makes up his own libretto totally on his own - with exceptions like Wagner, of course - so he accompanies his own words, reinforcing the function of intonation in speech, because he has to conquer the words from another, make them into his own. So, it is, and it is not, the composer that speaks. He incorporates the concord of speech, testifies to the social passion. Because his body is present in the voices, he can withdraw, hovering like a gesture always already interpreted by the hearts, and hence, making interpretation by thought superfluous.

You can ask: shall it be said in this way, with this emphasis? You can ask: must I sing it like that? You can say: must he really move in that way. These modes are about the secrets of expression, no doubt.

In comparing the libretto to the dialogue it is important to notice that as far as the dialogue relates to a libretto, this cannot appear, of course, as already written, but must be emerging during speech. However, in searching for the words, and we do actually search for words, be it in our own mind, or “out there”, between us, we can to a certain degree be said to create a libretto. However, this libretto must in some way have been written already, this is the secret of the real dialogue: because it wraps itself around a story, binding us together in its transcendent immanence within the lines.

Even if Aristotle’s three parameters of the metaphor are presented in his *Art of Rhetoric*, and not in his *Poetics*, they might refer to the hidden narrative, however, through the example of the forensic speech, in a wider sense, to which the narrative naturally belongs<sup>28</sup>. The narrative invests the moral perspective in any dialogue:

“And the narrative should be of a moral character, and in fact it will be so, if we know what effects this.”<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> *Art of Rhetoric*, III, xiii, 3,5, and III, xvi.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* III, xvi, 8

Aristotle mentions the “Socratic dialogues” here as an example of the moral, narrative structure. Furthermore he adds:

“the narrative should draw upon what is emotional by the introduction of such of its accompaniments as are well known, and of what is specially characteristic of either yourself or of the adversary...”<sup>30</sup>

And he continues:

“Such details produce persuasion because, being known to the hearer, they become tokens of what he does not know.”

A few lines later he says:

“And you should at once introduce yourself and your adversary as being of a certain character, that the hearers may regard you or him as such; but do not let it be seen. That this is easy is perfectly clear from the example of messengers; we do not yet know what they are going to say, but nevertheless we have an inkling of it.”<sup>31</sup>

Finally Aristotle comments on the **die opge oësis**:

“If there is anything incredible, you should immediately promise both to give a reason for it at once and to submit it to the judgement of any whom the hearers approve;”<sup>32</sup>

It is rather obvious that there is a game here, behind the words of Aristotle. The narrative is given the parameters of the metaphor earlier presented by him: the foreign air, enigma and beauty, and these parameters are questioned. Persuade the hearer through that which he does not know, emphasise emotion, refer to a message not yet deciphered, and present yourself in order to anticipate any alternative presentation by the mouths of others. Control the emotional impact of speech, i.e. the moral and the beauty, but do not play too openly with the enigma of words.

So, while you are speaking, you are creating a metaphor comprising both the very event of speaking, and the causes and ends of this event. This clandestine metaphor might be called the “libretto of the dialogue”. It has got many layers between the spoken and the unspoken, but it definitely plays with the notion of “an author”, because it applies an idea of sense, of meaning, of significance, and even of history itself,

---

<sup>30</sup> III, xvi, 10.

<sup>31</sup> III, xvi, 10-11.

<sup>32</sup> III, xvi, 11.

comprising the narrative inherent in the libretto present now in all its absence.

Then, expression, **pathos**, passion, render to us through their ways of occupying speech a new meaning of metaphor, creating in the very same movement the character of he who speaks, his right to speaking, the story **in** which he speaks, and **about** which he speaks, as an **enigma**. Speech invokes Otherness, transferring itself as a token of a foreign air, of Otherness (“heteros” in the language from Plato’s dialogue “Parmenides”), it presents us to an enigma, the enigma of the event of the dialogue, and - if spoken beautifully - it keeps us caught within the tension of this limit, enforcing us to balance on the borderline, to acknowledge ourselves as the secret: flesh that speaks. I, who speak, become the metaphor of a meaning never in its totality accessible to me. This should be obvious alone from the fact that every language in which we speak of our mental space has to be metaphorical - as testified so strikingly by Freud, Jung, and Lacan, but by the philosophers too (what is the datum of a “transcendental subject”, anyhow?) And even memories of events have got this metaphorical character, as Proust was so aware of, but in forming a metaphorical bond abolished in every moment by the presence of **my** flesh, and realised in every moment by **my** perception, being the application of memory through experience. Hence, experience becomes, through memory, an ethical concept.

The relation between the author and his work shall, of course, exemplify this more than so much else. So, the performance, the event, be it of a libretto, or of the hidden score of the emerging everyday dialogue, can be seen as the realisation of a metaphor which I am. A metaphor called “Mozart”! A metaphor called “Ole Fogh Kirkeby”! However, this metaphor is never deferred, because I enact it through **pathos**. I incorporate it, because it is my being here, my haecceitas.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> It is, of course, very complicated whether, or better, when, the personal pronouns do refer figuratively. Probably the use of “I” is genuinely metaphorical in every aspect of self-reference, but only potentially figurative in connection with verbs of acting or suffering. The “You”, however, is often related to an aggressive, social, use of metaphor - as Hegel showed in “Phänomenologie des Geistes” with the interchangeable concepts of “master” and “slave”. We have to liberate the “You” from metaphor, as suggested by Martin Buber and Emmanuel Lévinas. The personal name, anyhow, is always metaphorical, referring to deeds done and the range of actions to be expected. Unless the name is shaped so as to shake the figurative off its shoulders: J h w h.

On the contrary the computer delivers to us textual universes where nothing must be concealed. As a media of personal messages, brute facts, knowledge, entertainment and advertisement, its way of referring, its “interpretant system” in the concepts of Peirce, must be absolutely overt, i.e. its gestures of significance cannot be to any “Otherness”. It refers the reader to figures of permanent reference, because it either invokes the truth of the “datum”, the truth of (inter-)action, or the truth of consensus. But this double consent can only be figurative in so far as it defers the final answer, addressing a person constructed through an inference, the last resort of which is the platitudes. This dangerous play with an eternal presence of the person outside his flesh, this impious attempt to fill the voids of silence in speech, this “anabasis”, this raid into the continent of the invisible, sum up in the fashion word “construction”. Construction is very far from “invention”, because “intuition”(epibole $\alpha$ ) and fantasy(prole $\alpha$  psis) presuppose experience, and experience is a clandestine libretto.<sup>34</sup>

The enigmatic character of the computer, the concealed messages, the hidden attempts at power, is a threat. The enigmatic character of the dialogue is the only opportunity to freedom left, the only resort of Otherness in a world devoted to textual structures deferring themselves through a continuity of distance, carried by the intensification of digital holes called “persons”, verging on Nothing. A worrying aesthetic turn of experience disguised as the pasigraphy of the internet: a thrilling reversal of the “natura abhorret vacuum”. An immense palimpsest, a nightmare of repetitions with minor and minor differences. Let me remind about Plato’s warning in the “Sophist” with the words of Parmenides:

“Never let this thought prevail, saith he, that not-being is(einai me $\alpha$ nta);  
But keep your mind from this way of investigation.”<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> These two Greek concepts, the latter from Stoicism, presuppose an epistemology where perception has to be transformed into an experience controlled by **logos**. Hence, experience becomes an ethical concept - which of course is seen both in Don Giovanni and in Die Zauberflöte.

<sup>35</sup> Op. cit. 237A.

And let me conclude with Plato's superbly ironical comment:

“Stranger: “And he who says not something, must quite necessarily say absolute nothing.

Theaetetus: “Quite necessarily.

Stranger: Then we cannot even concede that such a person speaks, but says nothing? We must even declare that he who undertakes to say “not-being”(me  $\alpha$  on) does not speak at all?”<sup>36</sup>

The realized metaphor is silence.

---

<sup>36</sup> Op. cit. 237E.