

Call for Papers PK#17 – September 2022

Metaphor. Between Thought and Experience

Submission deadline (abstract): **March 20, 2022**

Submission deadline (full paper): **June 30, 2022**

Ever since the philosophical discourse has established itself as the supreme form of knowledge, capable of giving account of itself and of its own methods, metaphorical thought has been regarded as an auxiliary proceeding to which one resorts when theory does not work as it should – i.e., when theory is not capable of thoroughly seizing what exists and what the subject experiences. Even if there have always been proponents of the ineradicable character of metaphors – i.e., scholars who claimed that the discursive space of philosophy could not be saturated by means of concepts alone –, only in the 20th century the philosophical discourse overcame the prejudice against figurative, iconic, and narrative elements as full-fledged components of the philosophical argumentation. The aim was not to dismiss conceptuality; rather, it became clear that the concept, in the very act of positing itself, also entails its alterity, which is well represented by the metaphor. The idea according to which metaphors serve philosophical reasoning exclusively when the latter is in distress has thus become obsolete. Four examples illustrate such a philosophical scenario, which lies at the core of the present call for papers.

Hans Blumenberg has shown that it is not possible to write a history of concepts without writing the history of the metaphors that run through the philosophical discourse. Moreover, he has offered a theoretical and systematic framework in which to understand the necessary entanglement between metaphors and concepts. Engendered by the need of keeping reality under control, reason (which co-evolves with *Homo sapiens* just as other human artefacts do) produces at the same time myths, on one hand, and rational models and scientific theories on the other. Reason produces both metaphors and concepts in order to ease adaptation, which is inherently precarious (according to Blumenberg, the very existence of the human species is the most unlikely event in the living kingdoms). As a result, it is possible to claim that metaphors should not be understood as a way of compensating for concepts' deficiencies, but rather that all rational preventive measures are enacted

with the aim of mitigating the complexity of reality and that they thereby are nothing but compensatory measures.

Jacques Derrida has shown that the very position occupied by the subject who considers the difference between metaphors and concepts represents, in fact, the blind spot of thought. It is impossible to account for those operations that explain the difference between metaphors and concepts precisely because said difference lies at the basis of every philosophical practice. The subjects of philosophical knowledge cannot observe themselves while they operate with and thanks to this difference. It is impossible to do philosophy without assuming a certain idea of the difference between concepts and metaphors. Nevertheless, it is such a difference that cannot be understood by means of conceptual tools only. A metaphorical residue, with its impurity, will always affect the purity of conceptuality.

Throughout the pages of his *La linea e il circolo*, Enzo Melandri offers a systematic path that restores the validity of the logic of analogy. Moreover, it shows how a theory of analogy helps in correctly locating metaphors within philosophical reasoning. Analogy has endless uses indeed, however, Melandri illustrates that its functions are very well-defined. Analogy has a heuristic function that concerns *inventio*, a synthetic function that concerns the pragmatic overcoming of the division between the different kinds of knowledge, and an evoking function, which can be observed when its intensional or connotative aspects gain autonomy at the expense of the extensional or denotative ones. By demonstrating under what conditions analogy becomes rationally possible both as a computable inference and as a conceptualization endowed with sense (which was Melandri's goal), it becomes apparent that analogy also has a transcendental function. Not only is it a matter of understanding in which sense empirical impurities always affect the purity of the transcendental dimension, or in which sense the genesis that leads to the emergence of the transcendental subject is always an empirical one; it is also a matter of questioning the very problem of foundation in dialectical terms, i.e., by making room for paradox and negativity. Questioning analogy entails questioning the incompleteness of the system of thought: it means showing how negativity (consisting in exteriority, alterity, repressed) reenters the system through paths that cannot be fully grasped by means of pure conceptuality.

In their text *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that metaphors are ubiquitous to everyday language, as well as to thought and action. By distinguishing between three different categories (structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors), Lakoff and Johnson offer a complex theory whose main claim consists in the idea that language is metaphorically structured because *thought* itself is metaphorically structured. They point out the ambiguous meaning of metaphorical language, which tends to emphasize a certain conceptual aspect by obscuring other aspects that are not related to the specific metaphor at stake. Metaphors' mechanisms are centered around embodiment, i.e., they are a function of our bodily interaction with the world: in this sense, metaphors mirror the structure of human perception and pinpoint a specific cognitive access to the world.

Some authors and scholars have been mentioned with the objective of delineating possible areas of thought, rather than with the aim of according them a privileged role. Otherwise said, these names serve to single out the thematic core of the present issue, which consists in investigating the oscillation between the transcendental and the empirical dimension by questioning the role of metaphors. Such an oscillation represents the thought of foundation.

The issue intends to explore the theme of the metaphor within the philosophical discourse by privileging the following aspects:

- the use of metaphor and analogy throughout the history of philosophy: uses, evolution, and objectives;
- the relevance of the analysis of metaphors in Hans Blumenberg's global thought, in particular with reference to the relationship between metaphor and *actio per distans*, regarded by Blumenberg as a primary form of adaptation to the world;
- the relevance of the difference between metaphor and concept within Derrida's deconstruction of metaphysics; the transcendental meaning of Derrida's argument on the impossibility of dealing with the entanglement between metaphors and concepts by resorting to conceptual tools;

- the relationship between metaphor and analogy in the work of Melandri; the analysis of the outcomes of transcendental argumentation when it dialectically opens up to metaphors and analogies;
- by taking the cue from Lakoff and Johnson's work, the analysis of the relationship between the metaphorical nature of thought and the cognitive activities that are enacted by an embodied subject, whose orientation in the world by means of narrative and conceptual constructions can gain objectivity if such narratives are rooted in embodied praxes;
- metaphor, analogy and modelling in scientific thought;
- the relationships between metaphors and the symbolization of inhabited spaces: meaning and phenomenology of the monumental dimension, intended as the epitome of metaphorical aspects in architectural language;
- the relationship between the functioning of metaphors from a rhetoric-semiotic perspective and the hermeneutics of metaphor as cornerstone of textual structures.

Accepted languages: English, Italian, French, and German.

To apply, please send an abstract of no more than 6000 characters to redazione@philosophykitchen.com by March 20, 2022. Abstracts should include a title, the argumentative structure of the paper, an essential bibliography and a short biography of the author. Proposals will be evaluated by the editors and editorial board; the authors will be notified by email by March 31, 2022. Selected papers have to be sent by June 30, 2022 for double-blind peer review. The issue is scheduled for publication in **September 2022**.