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Living metaphor

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Abstract

The concept of 'living metaphor' receives a number of articulations within metaphor theory. A review of four key theories – Nietzsche, Ricoeur, Lakoff and Johnson, and Derrida – reveals a distinction between theories which identify a prior, speculative nature working on or with metaphor, and theories wherein metaphor is shown to be performatively always, already active in thought. The two cannot be left as alternatives because they exhibit opposing theses with regard to the ontology of metaphor, but neither can an impartial philosophical appraisal of the most cogent or defensible theory be made, since the status and conduct of philosophy are part of the problem. Two responses to the predicament from within 'living metaphor' theory are considered: (1) Lakoff and Johnson's ecological spirituality thesis which promises to make the contest redundant on the grounds that the origin of human concepts in our shared, embodied condition in the world removes all obstructions; (2) taking the lead from Nietzsche and Ricoeur, an approach based on the intersection of discourses, not as a resolution but as a gesture which allows the conflict to speak about 'living metaphor'. (1) is shown to be unsuccessful, but (2) results in 'living metaphor' emerging as an attentiveness to questions of what does and does not belong, inspired by tensions between 'is' and 'is not', 'from this perspective' and 'from that perspective', and 'is spoken about' and 'is spoken with'.

Living metaphor

The idea that metaphor lives or that we live metaphor occurs many times in different contexts within metaphor studies. Nietzsche asserts that human being exists as a series of creative leaps between one domain and another (Nietzsche 2000). Human perception, he writes, is ‘a movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms’ due to the *fundamentally* metaphorical nature of concept-formation, a series of creative leaps from nerve stimulus to retinal image (first metaphor) to sound as signifier (second metaphor) (Nietzsche 2000: 55). Furthermore, he regards being in general (of nature and the human subject – no distinction is made by Nietzsche 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 lying in the necessarily transpositional nature of the contest between perspectives. For Ricoeur, following the title of his book *La métaphore vive*, metaphor lives as an impetus to thought (Ricoeur 1978). Metaphorical discourse and speculative, conceptual, claim-making discourse intersect, with the former ‘forc[ing] conceptual thought to *think more*. Creative imagination is nothing other than this demand put to conceptual thought’ (Ricoeur 1978: 303). And this ‘thinking more’ is ‘ontologically vehement’; it applies to the world, to the way we live (Ricoeur 1978: 300). Lakoff and Johnson tell us (again with reference to a book title) that ‘the way we think, what we experience, and what we do everyday is very much a matter of metaphor’ because metaphors are the concepts which determine our everyday functioning (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3). With their subsequent focus on the body, Lakoff and Johnson claim we live by metaphor in the sense that it is the mechanism which allows our thinking and perceiving to be informed by our physical and social experience (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). Finally, with Derrida, it is impossible for us to think about or even avoid metaphor without employing metaphor. It is, he writes, an ‘intractable structure [of tropical playfulness] in which we are implicated and deflected from the outset’ (Derrida 1998: 109).

The four accounts vary in the degree to which they consider the ethical implications of 'living metaphor', and offer very different interpretations. For Nietzsche, metaphor is a force for transposition sustaining his nihilism: a series competing drives which makes life the perpetual negotiation of tension between ways of being rather than adherence to an abiding essence. Metaphor as the prompt to 'think more' in Ricoeur's analysis ultimately works towards a rethinking of the creation of meaning, with discourse conceived 'as a universe kept in motion by an interplay of attractions and repulsions that ceaselessly promote the interaction and intersection of domains' (Ricoeur 1978: 302). For Lakoff and Johnson, the long-term aim of embodied philosophy is to combat the alienation characteristic of modern experience by cultivating an 'ecological spirituality': 'an aesthetic attitude to the world that is central to self-nurturance, to the nurturance of others, and to the nurturance of the world itself' (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 566). Metaphor can make this possibility tangible or 'passionate', they suggest, because it translates the aloofness or blandness of abstract possibilities into the immediate bodily realities of 'pleasure, pain, delight, and remorse' (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 567). Derrida does not make an explicit pronouncement regarding the ethical implications of the intractability of metaphor, but given that the observation occurs as part of his deconstruction of western philosophy, it can be surmised that it contributes to the deconstructionist project of displaying the constructed, contingent and intention-thwarting properties of language.

Any puzzlement at the thought of how a poetic device can have such far-reaching application soon disappears once it is recognized that the thinkers above take metaphor not to operate solely within a narrowly-conceived domain of poetry or literature but, instead, to be a process of cross-domain mapping or conceptual transposition, with the transpositions occurring between the concepts we use to live our lives. In other words, metaphor is understood to be a concept which is fundamental to thought or life. My interest in this paper is: what happens when metaphor is made fundamental to human life? What differences are there in the way this fundamental status is understood? Will it matter that this understanding will itself invariably be metaphorically stated, will involve metaphor talking about metaphor? How will our lives or how should our lives be different as a result of this knowledge? I show that the four accounts outlined above

lead to a distinction between theories which identify a prior, speculative nature working on or with metaphor, and theories wherein metaphor is shown to be performatively always, already active in thought. The two cannot be left as alternatives because they exhibit opposing theses regarding the ontology of metaphor, but neither can an impartial philosophical appraisal of the most cogent or defensible theory be made, since the status and conduct of philosophy are part of the problem. I consider two responses to the predicament from within 'living metaphor' theory, and demonstrate how one leads to 'living metaphor' emerging as an attentiveness in all areas of life to questions of what does and does not belong.

One approach which ought to be addressed at the start is to ask whether 'living metaphor' and 'life is metaphor' or 'I live metaphor' *are themselves metaphors*, and if so, what this means for the concept of 'living metaphor'? Yes, they are metaphors. In the first, 'metaphor' is the tenor and 'living' the vehicle, to adopt Richards's terminology (Richards 1936). We are asked to think of metaphor, a poetic or cognitive principle, as something which lives, which can enjoy the activity, vibrancy and reach of an animate being. In the second and third metaphors, the roles are reversed: 'life' is the tenor, 'metaphor' the vehicle. Life is presented as something which displays the leaps, interactions and exchanges of metaphorical language, a life which is open to transformation, to allowing one thing to become something else. Having acknowledged they are metaphors, what does this mean for the concept of 'living metaphor'? The implication is that, by recognizing these phrases as metaphors, we can approach them in a certain way, according to an agreed sense of what a metaphor is. Which field of metaphor studies should we turn to for this agreed sense: the linguistic, the cognitive, the poetic, the philosophical? For example, is the concept of 'living metaphor' just a poetic phrase? But what is 'just' doing here? While there might not be complete agreement between the four accounts of metaphor above, there is nevertheless some recognition of the cognitive and philosophical dimensions of metaphor. Given that the very nature and scope of metaphor are at issue in my paper, the question of the consequences of a sentence being a metaphor cannot be asked without creating a vicious circle. The idea that 'living metaphor' is itself a metaphor is a form of the intractability identified by Derrida: discourse about metaphor cannot be articulated

without metaphor. I shall return to what this predicament might mean for 'living metaphor' later.

A key difference between the four accounts is over how 'living metaphor' is stated and positioned. This is an aspect of the kinds of ontological claim made for metaphor in the four accounts, and the kind of writing which is used to display the meaning or state the claim. In short, do we live metaphor or does metaphor live us, or does metaphor actually force us to reconsider how qualities are assigned between 'us' and 'metaphor' problematic? To say 'we live metaphor' or 'we live metaphorically' implies that there is a 'we', a community of subjects in possession of a nature *first*, who *then* either necessarily or contingently adopt cross-domain mapping or conceptual transposition as a way of being. Ricoeur and Lakoff and Johnson arguably take this approach, with speculative thought and the body being the respective prior natures. Thought in Ricoeur's analysis, as Stellardi makes the point, 'never risks its own point of foundation, because [quoting Ricoeur] "speculative discourse has its necessity in itself, in putting the resources of conceptual articulation to work. These are resources that doubtless belong to the mind itself, that are the mind itself reflecting upon itself"' (Stellardi 2000: 103; Ricoeur 1978: 296).

With Lakoff and Johnson, metaphor takes place *in the body*. 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) (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 45). This happens, they affirm, when neural connections between parts of the brain dedicated to sensorimotor experience and parts dedicated to subjective experience are coactivated. As regards the kind of language they use, in keeping with their interest in the prior natures which come into contact with or underly metaphor, Ricoeur and Lakoff and Johnson *refer* to metaphor and make claims *about it* because, on their views, there is another form of discourse – speculative with Ricoeur, and scientific with Lakoff and Johnson – distinct from metaphor which can individuate and understand metaphor.

In contrast, there is arguably no prior nature with Nietzsche and Derrida. While they might write *on* or *about* metaphor and its relation to thought and life, metaphor's relation to thought and life is more *shown* than *stated*. That is to say, metaphor lives *performatively* through their texts. Even though Nietzsche tells us that human perception is 'a movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms', the metaphorical nature of human being is not left as a thesis – conclusion reached, job done – but is enacted in a number of ways through his writing. As Kofman argues, rather than referring to a concept of metaphor, namely philosophy's concept of metaphor, Nietzsche's writing *performs* metaphor by making one term *then another* the agent in an ontology which configures being as a series of intersecting or competing forces, for example, perspectives, wills to power (Kofman 1993: 17, 82). Secondly, he writes in epigrams, issuing thoughts in fits and bursts rather than in the form of linear, continuous enquiry. Arguments are not ready-made, 'on the page' but dispersed across contrasting voices and are only brought into being as discrete arguments once they are interpreted as such or subject to opposition by another reader, another will.

With Derrida, deconstruction is not an analytical, reductive breakdown or 'destruction' of a text into its constituent claims but a form of writing which tries to acknowledge that, although operative metaphors and binarisms can be identified, they and the differential web of which they are a part nevertheless remain intact to reconstruct the critic's own claims. In relation to metaphor, Derrida finds that he cannot address it without using it:

I am obliged to speak of [metaphor] *more metaphoric*, to it in its own manner. I cannot *treat it (en traiter)* without *dealing with it (sans traiter avec elle)*... I do not succeed in producing *a treatise (une traité)* on metaphor which is not treated with *(traité avec)* metaphor which suddenly appears intractable (*intraitable*).

(1998: 103).

Thus we have two approaches to 'living metaphor': one involves reference to a prior nature which intersects with metaphor or is the process which enacts metaphor (speculative discourse with Ricoeur and the body with Lakoff and Johnson), while the

other is performative in the sense that metaphor is something always already active in us, through us or even *as us*, present in the actions we take and the statements we make (Nietzsche and Derrida).

But I don't think it is simply a case of accepting these as two alternative approaches to living metaphor which can sit side-by-side. They are competitors, with the contest being driven by opposing ontological claims and by different discourse or subject commitments. The two issues – ontology and discourse – are linked. Is discourse an autonomous realm which can refer to metaphor as an external or distinct object of study, or is it part of the world, including human being in the world, constructed or saturated by metaphor, meaning metaphor can still be referred to but not as an external or distinct object. Ricoeur and Derrida have themselves had this debate. Ricoeur takes issue with what he perceives to be Derrida's attempt to undermine a philosophy of metaphor by demonstrating that it is itself metaphorical. It is Derrida's propensity in his essay 'White Mythology' for raising or revivifying the dead metaphorical roots in concepts, Ricoeur argues, which enables the deconstructionist to reduce speculative, philosophical discourse to aporias, for example, that the theory of metaphor is itself metaphorical (Ricoeur 1978: 287). On Ricoeur's understanding, metaphorical discourse intersects with speculative discourse, so there is always a second component, the speculative, something other than metaphor, available to offer independent, theoretical judgment. However, Derrida is surprised by the way his study is read by Ricoeur. In his second essay on the relation between metaphor and metaphysics, 'The *Retrait* of Metaphor', Derrida finds that Ricoeur levels charges against himself which he (Derrida) in actual fact supports and, more perplexingly for Derrida, where indications of his support are already before Ricoeur in 'White Mythology': 'it is because I sometimes subscribe to some of Ricoeur's propositions that I am tempted to protest when I see him turn them back against me as if they were not already evident in what I have written' (Derrida 1998: 107). Confusion arises, Derrida thinks, because Ricoeur takes Derrida's statements to be assertions which he is defending when in fact they are statements which Derrida is 'putting into question' in what he terms ('for the sake of speed') 'a deconstructive mode' (Derrida 1998: 108). That is to say, Ricoeur misses the deconstructive 'twist' which redirects statements from being outright assertions to being

performative encounters or negotiations with ‘the intractable structure in which we are implicated and deflected from the outset’ (Derrida 1998: 109).

Why does the ‘autonomous, prior’ v. ‘always, already performative’ distinction matter? What follows from it? As stated above, it is not just the case that we have two alternative approaches to living metaphor which can sit side-by-side. They are competitors. However, it is not the job of this paper to argue for one side or the other, or to develop an alternative position. It is sufficient to point out that, as a contest between two modes of discourse, it will be impossible to make an impartial, discourse-independent advance. Any attempt to arbitrate will be made from the perspective of the discourse in question – either a speculative, claim-making utterance, saying how things are, or a performative intervention which *shows* rather than *states* – leaving the contest in a permanent state of oscillation.

The ‘autonomous, prior’ v. ‘always, already performative’ contest could be construed merely as a matter of a difference in style: Ricoeur’s claim-making speculative discourse versus Derrida’s ‘putting into question’ deconstructive mode. Except that, given the topic of this paper, style cannot be dismissed simply as an idiosyncrasy, an individual approach to writing. Rather, it is a mode of behaviour, of being in the world, which affects how knowledge and enquiry are conducted within ‘living metaphor’.

Epistemologically, the difference is between a theory which states that thought can be about a subject through reference and claim-making, and another which states that thought can be about a subject or *contribute to a subject* by altering its own mode (e.g. adopting a ‘deconstructive mode’ with Derrida) and upsetting accepted ways of thinking so that what is said is not taken at face value but is recognized to perform a kind of question or challenge. (‘Contribution to a subject’ is added, italicized, to the latter theory because the theory does not exercise what is arguably the conventional, transitive, object-directed sense of a text being *about* a subject.)

But this epistemological difference does not simply sit within philosophy conceived as a single, uniform subject; it is not a contest between discourses upon which philosophy as a single, uniform subject can arbitrate. Rather, the difference is itself a manifestation of

competing discourses or institutions, involving different conceptions of philosophy and the distinction between science and philosophy. A key aspect of the continental–analytic distinction in philosophy is the attitude with which language is approached, with the difference in attitude crystallized in the ‘science versus metaphysics’ contest between Carnap and Heidegger in 1929 (Friedman 2000). Based on the scientific conception of the world as a domain that is open to view and to exact description, Carnap’s analytic conception of language sees it as an instrument for referring to objects and for enabling the formulation of clear and precise statements which can go on to become the basis for logical analysis. However, in Heidegger’s view, this is language stripped of the depth, texture and resonance which it carries as part of human being in the world. Science represents a forgetting of metaphysics, Heidegger argues, since, in focussing on what is given and measurable in experience, it fails to address all the aspects of human life which elude classification and the structures beyond experience which allow experience to come into being in the first place. Language, for Heidegger, is something in its own right; it accompanies us in our activities, and is to be experienced and lived. This attitude to language finds expression in continental philosophy in a number of ways. (1) As already indicated, philosophy can be written performatively, where the point to be made is shown or displayed *through the writing*, rather than being explicitly stated or described *by the writing*. (2) Writing does not just describe the world but can construct it through the perspectives and concepts that are chosen. Writing is a series of choices, and as such makes an ethical demand upon us. What is written is offered as a view, as a way of rethinking the world. (3) We can write to stretch or create an idea, to extend what is possible. Why devote lots of energy in writing exclusively to making language fit the world or the world as you see it, when it might be possible to create something transformative or emancipatory?

What has been established so far is that the four competing accounts of ‘living metaphor’ permit a distinction between ‘autonomous’ and ‘performative’ ontologies, that these ontologies entail contrasting theories of knowledge, with these in turn being expressions of competing discourses, competing modes of constructing knowledge and understanding how knowledge sits in or impinges upon the world. Two predicaments arise from this. (1) We are put in a position where we have to choose between

discourses, the performative or the speculative, and given the milieux in which they operate, to choose between cultures of art or science, and continental or analytic philosophy. (2) In deliberating upon our choice, we need to acknowledge that one route will involve the scope of the 'our', what we think belongs to 'us', and the notion that we have a foundation or ground or essence being challenged. Either there is a prior nature to which we can turn for some sense of foundation or ground, or we are implicated within and sustained by metaphor operating at a fundamental, ontological level, its cross-domain transformations ensuring that there is never a domain we can call 'home'. The dilemma is not one which only affects those on the 'performative' side of the division; it is something that any engagement with 'living metaphor' needs to consider due to the fact that performativity is posed as a challenge to speculative epistemology's treatment of metaphor, and because it is part of the choice, part of what has to be taken into account when choosing a discourse.

Is the difference posed by the choice of discourse so decisive? There is the possibility that the ethical implications of one or more of the theories of living metaphor might make the differences redundant. For Lakoff and Johnson, the ethical ambition of 'living metaphor' is to combat the alienation characteristic of modern experience by cultivating an 'ecological spirituality': 'an aesthetic attitude to the world that is central to self-nurturance, to the nurturance of others, and to the nurturance of the world itself' (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 566). Thought and perception are embodied, they suggest, in the sense that the concepts we use for thinking and perceiving are derived from the concepts 'that optimally fit our bodily experiences of entities and certain extremely important differences in the natural environment' (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 27). Nurturance of self, others and world might follow, they reason, if we become mindful of (a) the connection which our ideas have with our sensorimotor engagement with the environment, and (b) that this thought–environment condition is something which is universally shared. Metaphor can make this possibility tangible or 'passionate', they suggest, since it translates the aloofness or blandness of abstract possibilities into the immediate bodily realities of 'pleasure, pain, delight, and remorse' (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 567). According to Lakoff and Johnson, we live metaphor on account of the embodied condition of our concepts, the transition from bodily to abstract or

conceptual context being the mechanism of metaphor. To live metaphor in the interests of ecological spirituality would mean using metaphor to make the metaphorical, body–concept relation more vivid or ‘passionate’. This means the ethical, ecological ambition of ‘living metaphor’ for Lakoff and Johnson is to use metaphor to promote metaphor, where metaphor is understood primarily to function along the body–concept axis.

Does this make the difference posed by the choice of discourse redundant? Does it matter whether we think in terms of a prior, speculative discourse ‘living metaphor’ or of an always, already performative metaphor if the final destination is an ecological spirituality with an aesthetic attentiveness to interrelatedness? Surely the ‘we live metaphor’ versus ‘metaphor lives us’ distinction becomes otiose if we entertain an ecological ontology wherein ‘what belongs to us’ dwindles in importance as a result of an increased recognition of a thought’s sensorimotor foundation? But more attention needs to be paid to how ecology, and living metaphor’s part within it, are conceived. How will drawing attention to the universally-shared connection which our ideas have with sensorimotor–environment engagement promote community and world nurturance? Even if we accept that concepts arise from sensorimotor–environment engagement, it does not follow that the uses to which they are put are in the direction of nurturance. Lakoff and Johnson refer to an ‘aesthetic attitude to the world that is central to self-nurturance, to the nurturance of others, and to the nurturance of the world itself’ (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 566), but the concepts derived from shared sensorimotor–environment engagement do not necessarily promote communal understanding. Even concepts of aggression, division and conflict – being ‘set against’ another, trying ‘to get on top of’ or ‘suppress’ another – are semantic domains rooted in the body. The promise of a nurturing spirituality then, on Lakoff and Johnson’s terms, does not make the choice between speculative or performative discourse redundant because it is by no means certain that their concept of shared sensorimotor–environment engagement entails an ecological overcoming of ontological divisions.

Another problem for Lakoff and Johnson’s ecological thesis is that the ethical role they assign to living metaphor – metaphor as the promotion of body–concept metaphor – is arguably a restriction of metaphor, a concept of metaphor which does not

accommodate the scope it has acquired in the arena of competing discourses. Not all metaphors adhere to the body–concept axis. Metaphors can work at one metaphysical level, for example, body-to-body in ‘she is dancing with the bike’, said of someone performing some dexterous moves on two wheels. With metaphor in poetry, the ambition may be purposefully to upset metaphysical distinctions or to deviate from conventional language use, for example, ‘*La porte me flaire, elle hésite*’ (‘The door scents me, it hesitates’) from Jean Pellerin’s ‘*La Romance du retour*’, or ‘An enamoured man alone by the twigs of his eyes’ from Dylan Thomas’s ‘Because the Pleasure-Bird Whistles’. Lakoff and Johnson’s thesis that metaphor primarily operates as a device for rendering the conceptual in sensory form bears comparison with Heidegger’s declaration, in *The Principle of Reason*, that ‘the metaphorical exists only within metaphysics’ (Heidegger 1991: 48), that is to say, metaphor can only work with the metaphysical opposition between thought and sensation. Heidegger’s remark follows his warning to us not to be too quick in assuming that ‘thinking can be called a hearing and seeing only in a figurative sense’ (Heidegger 1991: 47). On his view, the senses are modes of access to a world which are intimately tied to human being, including our mental being, and which, due to this intimate involvement, become sources of meaning and possibility over and above any narrow, aesthetic or physical understanding. But as several commentators, including Ricoeur, have observed, Heidegger relies upon a narrow view of metaphor if he thinks it is bound to the divisions of metaphysics, when a wider sense of metaphor would actually support his interest in language as a lived, world-making dimension of human being or *Da-sein*.

If Lakoff and Johnson cannot assist with the problem of competing discourses, what about the other accounts on offer? One proposal can be found across the divide in Nietzsche, on the one hand, and Ricoeur, on the other. Both advocate the intersection of artistic and speculative discourses, except that it takes the form of argument and assertion with Ricoeur, while with Nietzsche it is both argumentation and performance. Is intersection an appropriate or defensible response? As we have seen, theorization of living metaphor leads to a choice between discourses, the performative or the speculative, and the corresponding cultures of art or science, and continental or analytic. Not just a question of style, the distinction is between ways of thinking: thought

contributing to a subject either through claim-making or by altering thought's own mode and upsetting accepted ways of thinking. In addition, one side in the contest involves the scope of the 'our', what we think belongs to 'us', and the notion that we have a foundation or ground or essence being challenged. We know the two can address one another, as evidenced by *philosophical* appraisals of *performative* texts, e.g. Ricoeur's reading of Derrida, and *performative* responses to *philosophical* texts, e.g. Derrida's readings of the texts of philosophy. But here we would be asking for two ways of thinking to intersect. Is this possible. If so, what would it be like? How is intersection to be understood here?

Could it not be argued that intersection is a fudge, a compromise, something to aim for in the absence of one side succeeding over the other? Why should we expect two competing models of discourse to mesh with one another in a cogent, meaningful manner? These though are the reservations of speculative discourse, responsive to such requirements as appropriateness, coherence, entailment and support in our use of concepts. From the point of view of performative discourse, in which metaphorical conjunction is always, already at work, interweaving the two in such a way that the requirements of the one are filtered through the other would be the perfect metaphorical gesture, with further reinforcement provided by the fact that Nietzsche and Ricoeur advocate the move.

The intersections advocated by Nietzsche and Ricoeur are, as one might expect, have different contexts. The intersection of competing attitudes to life can be found in Nietzsche, I suggest, on the basis of the tension he creates between the Greek gods Apollo and Dionysius. Introduced in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), they represent a return to the pre-Socratic dynamics of Greek theatre made in order to restore the moral and epistemological significance of tragic drama, stripped from it by Plato's idealist metaphysics (Nietzsche 1967). The Dionysian principle brings frenzy, celebration, and loss of self, whereas the Apollonian gives shape, form, and 'necessary illusion' to these drives. However, Nietzsche claims, it is in the arts, not the sciences, that we can see this play being acted out, for the artist has to mediate between inner, chaotic impulse and outer, organized form. A painter, he writes, 'without hands who

wished to express in song the picture before his mind would, by means of this substitution of spheres, still reveal more about the essence of things than does the empirical world' (Nietzsche 2000: 58). Beyond this, intersection extends to become the mechanism of competing, mutually impinging drives in his will-to-power ontology which Nietzsche both asserts and lives through his writing. The ethical direction and, as it happens, personification of Nietzsche's ontology is *der Übermensch*, the 'overman', the person who is able to synthesize competing wills into a dynamic unity: 'active, successful natures act, not according to the dictum "know thyself", but as if there hovered before them the commandment: *will* a self and thou shalt *become* a self' (Nietzsche 1977: 232). For Nietzsche, it is one of the tasks – if not the most pressing task – of philosophy to make people aware of the capacity or the liberty they have to become overmen. The first words spoken by Zarathustra to the townspeople he meets assembled in the square are: '*I teach you the superman. Man is something that should be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?*' (Nietzsche 1977: 237).

The intersection of speculative and metaphorical discourse is at the centre of Ricoeur's study of metaphor, and primarily drives a theory of the creation of meaning, informed by Kantian philosophy. 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. The combinations of subjects which take place in metaphorical discourse are *diaphoric* (to use Aristotle's term) in the sense that they are unprecedented, unresolved and seemingly nonsensical (Aristotle 1996: 34-38; Wheelwright 1971: 71-91). 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. 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, a metaphor '*A is B*' occurs as a play of possibilities held in tension between the epiphoric '*A is B*' and the diaphoric '*A is not B*'. Despite this stress on intersection, speculative discourse is nevertheless 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' (Ricoeur 1978: 300). It proceeds 'from the very structures of the mind', according to Ricoeur, which it is the task of transcendental philosophy to articulate' (Ricoeur 1978: 300).

How do these accounts help us? The ambition here is not to make Nietzsche's and Ricoeur's work primary as theories of living metaphor, but to see how, as theories of intersection, they might inform the problem of the conflicting discourses of living metaphor. Both offer combinations of aesthetics and ontology in which the two act upon one another, but with Nietzsche giving the upper hand to the arts and Ricoeur assigning priority to rational, object-directed discourse. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a full assessment of their similarities and differences, although it has to be asked just how much can be extracted from different articulations of the concept of intersection. A key difference is apparent already. What the brief comparison demonstrates is that intersection is possible through force and wilful transformation, on the one hand, or a resolution-focused approach to the tension between sense and nonsense, on the other. The problem at the centre of the competing discourses of living metaphor is: who or what lives? A prior, possibly 'human' nature, or metaphor itself? Looking at what it means to find an intersection for these alternatives (given the undecidability of opting for one or the other), should we approach the difference in a forceful or a resolution-focused way? What would a forceful approach be? Or rather, what would a forceful approach *in Nietzsche's sense* be? As Richardson points out, force in Nietzsche is not intended as one-way (Richardson 1996: 148, 280). A Nietzschean, wilful perspective, Richardson argues, amounts *not* to viewing reality from one particular angle but to having a view which is necessarily taken beyond itself or (one might even go so far as to say) is constituted by its tensile, simultaneous accommodation of other, opposing views. Tension between viewpoints is maintained in Richardson's model not as a step towards broadening a perspective but as a means of retaining the counterpressure which, as he sees it, is intrinsic to the forcefulness of a perspective in its willing against other views. On this reading, some degree of consonance between Nietzsche's and Ricoeur's theories of intersection emerge. Both involve tension, counterpressure, the entertainment of opposites or contradictions, but with Ricoeur placing greater emphasis on resolution.

What then does it mean to interweave speculative and performative discourse in such a way that the requirements of the one are held in a tensional state, and what might it mean to arrive at a resolution? The tensional state will be a condition of ‘is the case’ and ‘is not the case’, ‘can be seen in this way’ and ‘can be seen in that way’, and ‘is spoken about’ and ‘is spoken with’ (‘about’ and ‘with’ indicating the different perspectives from which speculative and performative discourse are written). But what will this be like? Asking this question is not an innocent request for an example, since providing an answer will involve a commitment to a discourse or, more appropriately, creating and speaking through a tension between speculative and performative discourse. To ask in turn what this would be like again would not be innocent for it would involve crossing the threshold from an abstract proposal to a specific textual or aesthetic example. I am tempted to give an answer from my ‘home territory’, in speculative discourse, but the moment I feel I can turn to this for security, I sense the challenge of the ‘is the case’ and ‘is not the case’, the ‘can be seen in this way’ and ‘can be seen in that way’. What does belong to philosophy? Maybe a stance of being simultaneously inside, *of the system*, and outside, *about the system*, is precisely what is required. Isn’t this the territory where living metaphor excels, with new metaphors testing our sense of what belongs and does not belong to a semantic domain? A sense of belonging is intrinsic to thought, judgment and categorization. Declarative sentences, literal statements, and conceptual language take the form of subject–predicate statements where the predicate is assigned to, ascribed to or said to belong to the subject; ‘X is Y’ read as ‘X has property Y’: ‘the sky is blue’, ‘the government is corrupt’, ‘I am an artist’. Metaphor upsets this process. It both destabilizes and revives a sense of what can belong: destabilization because it combines two concepts which do not customarily go together, and revivification because the combination of concepts is an occasion for (depending upon which theory one subscribes to) increasing the scope of the concepts’ semantic fields or reminding us of ‘our’ creative being-within-language, a creativity which should not remain content with established significations and their customary belongings.

On this understanding, the intersection of discourses in the context of living metaphor becomes an attentiveness to what belongs and what does not belong, where it is

understood that this distinction is required but is also porous; what belongs and what does not belong can be upset, destabilized and revived. But ‘belongs and ‘does not belong’ to what? To whom or what is the question addressed? This will take the form of considering what kind of exchanges, cross-domain mappings, transpositions – choose your preferred vocabulary for the operation of metaphor – happen between the functioning of the two discourses. Given that the main difference between them is over ontology – a prior condition versus an always, already metaphoricity – belonging and not belonging will invariably be asked of the point where a prior nature becomes metaphor. Instead of choosing one or the other, the ‘intersection’ move asks us to be double-jointed, to accommodate two possibilities at once, to consider how one draws on the other, or how one requires the other for its possibility. Take the sentences in the previous paragraph from ‘Metaphor upsets this process’ till the end, for example. They are phrased especially carefully (not that careful thought hasn’t been paid to all the sentences in this paper). I am writing about metaphor at a point where two competing discourses on metaphor are at issue, in a state of intersection, and so attention has to be paid to different theses and displays from the speculative and the performative camps respectively. Both sides would arguably accept ‘upset’, ‘destabilized’ and ‘revivified’ as metaphors for what metaphor does, except that the subjects differ: the effect of metaphor wielded by a mind versus the effect of metaphor as an ontological process. Is it meaning that is revived or ‘our’ creative being-in-language? The ‘our’ is in inverted commas because we cannot take its status as a centre or point of origin for granted, and ‘being-within-language’ is hyphenated to acknowledge that we are not just beings who use language but also beings whose condition is defined and constructed in language.

Ironically, an appropriate term to characterize my direction here is ‘ecological’ in the sense of ‘an expression of connections and context’ (Keller and Golley 2000: 2): a series of relations in which an identity cannot easily be divided into ‘what belongs to me’ and ‘what does not belong to me’. ‘Ironically’ because it is in sharp contrast to Lakoff and Johnson’s ecological spirituality. For Lakoff and Johnson, the ethical, ecological dimension of metaphor promised to make tangible the origin of human concepts in our shared, embodied relation with the world. However, on my account, the ecology of metaphor resides in a life lived with the question of belonging or not belonging kept

permanently open. We may try to make the division but, as stated above, it will be porous: an 'is' and 'is not', a 'this' and a 'that', an 'inside' and 'outside'. The ecological dimension of belonging is reinforced by the recognition that 'eco' derives from the Greek *oikos*, meaning 'house, not only of built houses, but of any dwelling place' (Liddell and Scott, quoted in Keller and Golley 2000: 7-8). Except this is not in a simple, territory-forming sense of 'I belong where I dwell', one where strangers are kept outside. Rather, it is belonging-as-dwelling where the sense of belonging manifests itself as an invitation to others, and an openness to the possibility that welcoming outsiders might lead to one's sense or space of dwelling undergoing change.

To conclude. The concept of 'living metaphor' enjoys a number of articulations within metaphor theory. A review of four key theories – Nietzsche, Ricoeur, Lakoff and Johnson, and Derrida – reveals a distinction between theories which identify a prior, speculative nature working on or with metaphor, and others wherein metaphor is shown to be performatively always, already active in thought. The two cannot be left as alternatives because they exhibit opposing theses regarding the ontology of metaphor, but neither can an impartial philosophical appraisal of the most cogent or defensible theory be made, since the status and conduct of philosophy are part of the problem. Two responses to the predicament from within 'living metaphor' theory have been considered. There was the possibility that Lakoff and Johnson's ecological spirituality thesis might have made the contest redundant on the grounds that all ontological obstructions are removed by the origin of human concepts in our shared, embodied condition. This approach was unsuccessful though due to the fact that shared embodiment does not entail the generation of concepts towards self, social and world nurturance. Metaphor was also limited to a body–concept relation. Given that the problem is one of competing discourses, I followed the lead of Nietzsche and Ricoeur in adopting the principle of intersecting discourses, not as a resolution but as a gesture which would allow the conflict to speak about 'living metaphor'. As a result, 'living metaphor' emerged as an attentiveness to questions of what does and does not belong, inspired by tensions between 'is' and 'is not', 'from this perspective' and 'from that perspective', and 'is spoken about' and 'is spoken with'.

The idea of the intersection of discourses is currently in vogue with research councils in many countries, albeit sadly not always on epistemological grounds. It often has more to do with research councils wanting (a) the projects they fund to be seen to have application in another domain, thereby effectively doubling a funding award's value-for-money, (b) a clear demonstration of the impact of research beyond its home territory, or (c) with art–science collaborations, a one-way process which ensures that scientific understanding is communicated to a wider audience through artistic illustration. Quite how the intersection of discourses I outline here will sit in this culture is not clear. On the one hand, what I propose is a form of interdisciplinarity ‘all the way down’, where one is alert at every point to what one takes to be one’s own territory and how this might undergo change as a result of coming into contact with a different field. The opportunities for speculation, conjecture, articulation and performance which emerge once one entertains the play between ‘can be seen in this way’ and ‘can be seen in that way’, ‘is spoken about’ and ‘is spoken with’, are extensive, if one values these things. However, on the other hand, one of the consequences of challenging what belongs to a concept is the suspension – not necessarily the rejection – of properties and values one takes to be central to the concept. If the concept in question happens to be a subject, or the subject term of a thesis, or a criterion of evaluation, then a move which throws one or more into question is unlikely to be welcome.

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