A Figurative Mind: Gertrude Buck’s *The Metaphor* as a Nexus in Cognitive Metaphor Theory

Abstract: Gertrude Buck’s (1899) *The Metaphor: A Study in the Psychology of Rhetoric* (*Die Metapher: Eine Studie in der Psychologie der Rhetorik*) is a unique essay. In many ways, the essay predicts the metaphors of the twentieth century in rhetoric, linguistics, and cognitive science, inclusive of Richards (1936)’s insightful remarks on the mental foundations of metaphor, as well as the influential “conceptual metaphor” in Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Buck’s essay reflects also the themes of the metaphors which fascinated the German and French lexical semantics of the nineteenth century. *Die Metapher* is an original, but a neglected connection of the rhetorical tradition, linguistic turn, and cognitive science. We map the contours of this connection and explain how Buck’s arguments fit into the history of cognitive metaphor studies, with a focus both on Müller’s philology of the nineteenth century and Lakoff and Johnson’s linguistics of the twentieth century.

Keywords: Gertrude Buck, rhetorical style, metaphor, cognitive metaphor, philology, linguistics, figuration

*Plain statement must be defined in terms of metaphor, not metaphor in terms of plain statement.*

—Gertrude Buck, *The Metaphor*
hitorian Gertrude Buck’s (1899) monograph, *The Metaphor: A Study in the Psychology of Rhetoric*, is an important treatise in the history of rhetoric, particularly in the US English composition tradition, but also in the more broadly situated concern for figuration in general and metaphor in particular. Of course this concern for metaphor reaches far beyond the rhetorical tradition, extending from literary studies to cognitive science, but Buck’s account reminds us of the important role that rhetorical conceptions of metaphor offer to many of these allied fields; not least, in the way it forecasts the 20th century’s rhetorical, linguistic, and cognitive preoccupations with the trope, which in turn set the table for the current preoccupation with figurative language and the mind (e.g. Burkhardt and Nerlich, Dancygier and Sweetser, Gibbs and Colston). The *Metaphor* is, for instance, much richer in psychological detail than I.A. Richards’ more celebrated (1936) remarks on the mental underpinnings of metaphor, and more rhetorically sophisticated than Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) influential “conceptual metaphor” theory. Both approaches would have benefitted from her work; neither seems aware of her provenance. In other ways, her book importantly reflects themes of the metaphoria that gripped 19th century German and French lexical semantics; research that was also largely ignored in 20th century Anglo-American work on figures. Buck’s *Metaphor*, in short, is a markedly original but neglected nexus of the rhetorical tradition, the linguistic turn, and cognitive science. We chart the contours of this nexus, explicating how Buck’s arguments fit into the history of cognitive metaphor studies, with particular attention to Friedrich Müller’s 19th century philology and Lakoff and Johnson’s 20th century linguistics. Identifying Buck as a scholar in the fields of rhetoric and cognitive metaphor studies contributes both to our understanding of those fields’ histories and to our appreciation of a pivotal early Anglo-American voice for the study of metaphor’s underlying mental dimensions. In redressing her erasure from the thousand or more studies of metaphor that would follow, we aim to do more than locate her work in a historical moment, or illustrate a particular argument from a particular scholar; we also illustrate the importance of attending to such scholars for the forgotten insights that lie within

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the pages of their work. Particularly intriguing are Buck’s significant speculations into the developmental and evolutionary origins of metaphor. In this way, and with her grounding in and rejection of the rhetorical tradition, we can uncover a striking argument for a rhetorical program that informs, and profits from, a psychological theory of figuration. We will see that her arguments dramatically advance the claims put forward by the rhetoricians of antiquity and anticipate the research trajectories followed into the 21st century, but with one notable distinction: a restrictive semantic range for metaphor. Rather than a limitation of her thinking, there is a certain value to her delimiting work—it provides us with a precise rhetorical object to theorize, one free from imprudent expansion to the point of endless polysemy. A close investigation of Buck’s Metaphor and her treatment of the figure from rhetorical, linguistic, and psychological traditions helps us uncover a study that, though not lost, has essentially been occluded from several audiences to which it still offers important insights. Our argument aims to address these audiences by consciously positioning a historical account of Buck’s work against its implications for 21st century metaphor studies, particularly in a rhetorical program.

**THE CONTEXT**

[T]he metaphor is so simple a figure, and so abounds in discourse, that we need not dwell longer upon it.

—Henry Coppée, A. M., *Elements of Rhetoric* (1866)

Anglo-American treatments of rhetorical figures at the turn of the twentieth century were theoretically impoverished, routinized, repetitive, and uninspired. Figures were seen largely in texts of rhetoric and composition as extraneous devices worked into, or onto, a text for specific suasive or aesthetic purposes—in what Jeanne Fahnestock calls “value-added theories” of figuration. Rhetorical manuals did little more than itemize figures in playbook fashion. One by one, they defined figures; prescribed their use, occasionally proscribed their use; exemplified their application, sometimes their misapplication; and then moved along to the next figure in the list. Synecdoche, for instance, John F. Genung advises in his *Outlines of Composition and Rhetoric*, is “taking just the part . . . of the idea that best serves the

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present purpose, and naming the idea by that, letting the rest go,” while metonymy similarly, is taking just “the accompaniment . . . of the idea that best serves the present purpose,” using it to name the idea, letting the rest go.4 The two figures operate, then, by “utiliz[ing] the serviceable part of an idea.” We get two examples of metonymy, one of synecdoche, and we’re on to simile (“for illustrative value”), with one example; interrogatio (“for trenchant assertion”), three examples; exclamation (“for lively realization”), two examples; etc., etc., etc.5

Metaphor was no exception. Its job is to effect “condensed vividness,” Genung says, in a phrase that encapsulates the rhetorical consensus on metaphor in the period.6 Virtually every treatment of metaphor included condensation, comparison, and vividness. John S. Hart defines metaphor as “[a] sort of abridged simile,” abridgement bringing “a more lively and animated method” of comparison.7 James De Mille calls it an “implied comparison,” enumerating its “chief applications.” Metaphor should be used “first, when it is applied to ornament; secondly, to illustration; thirdly, to emphasis.” These applications, De Mille continues—summing up the general late 19th century Anglo-American attitude not just toward metaphor but toward figures generally—“present sufficient matter for consideration.”8 Once you have described a figure, commended its appropriate deployment, and perhaps cautioned against inappropriate deployments, nothing remains to be said.9

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4J.F. Genung, Outlines of rhetoric (Boston, Ginn & Co., 1893), (p. 150).
5J.F. Genung, Outlines of rhetoric, 150–151ff.
6J.F. Genung, Outlines of rhetoric, 149; four examples.
9There is a thematic exception to this treatment of figuration, the notion in a few key texts that linked some tropes to the architecture of association psychology. John Quincy Adams, for instance, invokes “principles of association . . . that serve as the foundations” of the “four primary tropes” in J.Q. Adams, Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory Delivered to the Classes of Senior and Junior Sophisters in Harvard University (Cambridge, MA: Hilliard and Metcalf, 1810), 2 (p. 311). Stevenson MacGill’s Lectures on Rhetoric and Criticism offers a taxonomy of figures that includes “figures of imagination,” explicitly linked to Hume’s psychology (1838, p. 243–249); they number six, are closely aligned to the traditional four. Alexander Bain goes furthest of all on this front, defining rhetoric as “the application of the science of mind in general and of the feelings in particular, to literary composition” A. Bain, Mental Science; A Compendium of Psychology, and the History Of Philosophy (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1870), (p. 225). His English Composition and Rhetoric advanced an explicitly psychological taxonomy of figures; see, A. Bain, English Composition and Rhetoric: A Manual (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1867). But this theme
We can partially explain this beggarly approach to figuration by the narrow pedagogical focus of these works—teaching college students to write effectively—but the fact holds that the landscape of American rhetorical studies featured no scholarship that framed figures in terms distinct in any significant way from the way they framed punctuation or tense choice. For one purpose, use a semicolon. For another, use the historical present. For a third—vivid comparative condensation—use metaphor. Albert R. Kitzhaber’s excellent survey of this period in American rhetoric describes the attitude toward figuration as “the assumption that figures are external to the matter of discourse and are added by prescription to gain an intended effect”; that is, the value-added approach. But Kitzhaber notes one exception, on the very cusp of the twentieth century. “The only serious attempt,” he says, to address “the essential problem of the nature and function of figurative language . . . was made by Gertrude Buck.” While mostly forgotten in studies of figuration, unacknowledged and perhaps unknown to most of the downstream rhetoricians, philosophers, psychologists, and linguists who explored similar problems and offered homologous answers, Gertrude Buck’s *The Metaphor* is the earliest signal of what became the twentieth and twenty-first centuries’ compelling realization that the human mind is fundamentally figurative, and of the corresponding move that Group μ characterizes (citing Jakobson’s famous “Two Aspects” paper) as seeing figuration as “a function of language, not a catalogue of products.” This realization is manifest in such works as *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), *Poetics of Mind* (Gibbs 1994), *The Way We
Think (Fauconnier and Turner 2003), and Dancygier and Sweetser’s FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE (2014), like Buck’s approach, all of these works rest largely, if not entirely, on metaphor. None of them mentions her.

In deep shadow, behind thousands of subsequent studies, Gertrude Buck’s conception of metaphor rests. We aim here to redress the erasure of her important contribution to theories of metaphor, especially to cognitive approaches to the figure. Despite Buck’s dramatic re-framing of metaphor—a contribution that would remain unparalleled in rhetorical studies until I.A. Richard’s work some 25 years later, and unapproached in scholarly depth or interdisciplinary verve until Metaphor and Thought, the multi-contributor volume edited by Andrew Ortony in 1979—her work remains largely unknown to rhetoricians, unheard of by psychologists, philosophers, and linguists. Nowhere is she mentioned in the 23 chapters of the Ortony volume, nor in the 29 chapters of its second edition, nor in the Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought that superseded it.

Our account contributes to the history of rhetoric and history of metaphor studies, but also contributes, through the detailed account of Buck’s theory, to the growing trend of examining the cognitive affinities that sponsor rhetorical figures. More, Buck’s accounts reminds us of the roots of the term metaphor and how far we have wandered from that original meaning, to the growing trend of examining the cognitive affinities that rhetorical figures gesture toward, and to questions of style and economy in language.


13By 1971, the list of publications ran to around 3000, as compiled by Warren A. Shibles, Metaphor: An Annotated Bibliography and History (Whitewater, WI: Language Press). Jean-Pierre van Noppen, Metaphor: A Bibliography of Post-1970 Publications (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1990), and Jean-Pierre van Noppen and Edith Hols, Metaphor II: A Classified Bibliography of Publications 1985 to 1990 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1990) increased that count by another 6000 or so, as of twenty-five years ago. We are unaware of anyone ambitious enough to make a subsequent count.

GERTRUDE BUCK AND THE METAPHOR: A STUDY IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RHETORIC

The old rhetorical hypothesis may be sharply contrasted with the psychological by saying that the former started with two objects and hitched them together to make the figure, while the latter begins with a single object or situation, out of which develop the two elements in the metaphor.

—Gertrude Buck, The Metaphor

Buck was born in July of 1871 in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and attended the University of Michigan, studying Greek, medicine, and later, English. She was preoccupied with figures and their psychological dimensions from her earliest exposure to rhetoric, writing a Masters thesis published as Figures of Rhetoric, a Psychological Study, and then—narrowing her focus to one representative figure while expanding her conceptual scope—wrote a doctoral dissertation published as The Metaphor: A Study in the Psychology of Rhetoric. Buck’s intellectual debts were owed, by her own account, to the supervisor (and publishing editor) of both her Master’s and Doctoral projects, Fred Newton Scott, and to John Dewey, philosopher of (among other domains) mind, information, and education. Like other rhetoricians of the period (if not all periods), Buck was deeply concerned with pedagogy. But she was a good deal more theoretically ambitious than rhetoricians of the period, more philosophically and psychologically informed, and more deeply read in continental philology. She anchored her views in American Pragmatism, with its associated Functional Psychology, and in the paleohistoricism of pre-Saussurean linguistics.

Her MA thesis prefigured her doctoral work. We do not chart here the specific claims and arguments adumbrated in the thesis that underlie the fuller articulation in the dissertation, but the basics of Buck’s overall case are sketched in the thesis: that metaphor arises from increasing discrimination of larger, hazy, originary categories; that metaphor begets simile; and that figurative speech is antecedent, psychologically and historically, to ‘plain speech.’ More of a pamphlet than a book, her thesis was published as the first volume in a University of Michigan Press series edited by her supervisor for both degrees, Fred Newton Scott, Contributions to Rhetorical Theory. Her dissertation (Buck 1899), was volume five in the same series. Both volumes are in the public domain, most immediately available to US scholars through the HathiTrust Digital Library (http://www.hathitrust.org); the dissertation is also available through Internet Archive (http://www.archive.org). A chapter of the dissertation (“Genesis: The Poetic Metaphor”), along with many other scattered pieces by Buck, is reproduced in Toward a Feminist Rhetoric: The Writing of Gertrude Buck, a collection edited by JoAnn Campbell. See also, G. Buck, Figures of Rhetoric: a Psychological Study (Ann Arbor: Inland, 1895).
Although Buck was productive and highly original, she had little direct influence on the field and institutional memory of her contributions faded with alarming rapidity. Feminist historiography that began in the 1980s did much to redress these erasures (see especially work by Virginia Allen, Suzanne Bordelon, Rebecca Burke, JoAnn Campbell, Gerald P. Mulderig, and Barbara G. Vivian). Beyond rhetoric and composition studies, Buck’s work remains completely obscured. We might speculate that Buck’s erasure has something to do with the minimal attention in composition studies to the work on metaphor by cognitive psychologists, and cognitive psychologists inattention to rhetoric and composition theory. Beyond the twentieth century, of course, Buck’s work also faces an obstacle insofar as her psychological framework is prima facie obsolete. In addressing her erasure we must attend to why Buck’s highly original work on metaphor—metaphor and its psychological mechanisms and cognitive affinities—has been, although acknowledged in rhetorical studies, discarded by those in rhetoric taking up theoretical studies of metaphor.

Most scholars of Buck’s work have noted how she anticipates the metaphoria that swept rhetoric (and poetics and philosophy and cognitive science and linguistics) in the latter twentieth century. Joanne Wagner, for instance, notes that Buck anticipated the “enormous importance that twentieth-century theorists would place on metaphor,” while Vivian explicitly juxtaposes Buck’s work to the far more influential theory of metaphor put forward three decades later.

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by I.A. Richards. Berlin provides us some further insight as to why rhetoric and composition studies may have overlooked this important early work, and it begins with Buck’s advisor, Fred Newton Scott. Berlin, in a chapter ironically titled “An Alternative Voice,” tells us that ultimately Scott never proved to be much of an alternative voice to current-traditional rhetoric, as he was summarily defeated in his efforts to construct a unique pedagogical program for rhetoric, one grounded in the American Pragmatic tradition of James and Dewey. Scott’s textbooks became only apparitions of their original intellectual form—“a bit disappointing,” says Berlin—at the hands of “the marketplace” and publishers. Although Scott and his student, Gertrude Buck, made numerous sophisticated arguments to reject current-traditionalist models of language, their program itself was never successful, though the lessons they offered to teach us were again discovered many decades later. Berlin states the case more provocatively: “The rhetoric of Scott, Denney, and Buck did not prevail. As far as college composition is concerned, it disappeared.” While we have no doubt, that is, of some patriarchal quotient in the marginalization of Buck, her association with Scott’s program is also implicated in that marginalization.

Here we take up Buck’s The Metaphor once more, but with closer attention to its place in the history of cognitive theories of metaphor, both its psycho-philological 19th century roots and its cognitive-figuration heirs (or, whatever it is you call scholars who have no idea what they might have inherited and either drew their concepts from other sources or just reinvented the wheel). At heart, through Buck’s work, we seek to continue and to advance her programme of making rhetorical concerns central to the psychology of figuration.

The interdisciplinary breadth of Gertrude Buck’s work is impressive. Her account of metaphor emerges from three bearings, each of them with strains of mutual influence: rhetorical, philological, and psychological. The rhetorical tradition—in a move repeated first by

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Richards (1936) and then by Lakoff and Johnson (1980)—she rejects extravagantly, condemning it as shortsighted and ossified. But that tradition effectively shapes the whole problem space—the phenomenon of an utterance that has two distinct semantic domains.²² (And, of course, scholars preoccupied with rhetoric, from Isocrates on, frequently dismiss rhetoric as they seek to renovate or reframe it, under its own name or another.) The philological tradition, especially as crystallized in Friedrich Max Müller’s *Lectures on the Science of Language*, she approaches with more nuance, partially adopting and partially rejecting it.²³ The psychological tradition, in its new functionalist (and in some ways, proto-behaviorist) developments, she positively embraces. Buck’s thinking was also shaped by the increasingly important influence of Darwinian evolution (especially through the impact it had made on philology and American pragmatism). While her ultimate focus is on rhetoric and composition, she seeks to explain the aesthetic and sausive qualities of metaphor, but also its ‘cognitive,’ developmental, and evolutionary roles. (*Cognitive, we confess, is anachronistic for Buck, but we are comfortable retrofitting it to her work. Many of Buck’s concerns align naturally with the set of interests later called *cognitive*—most notably, the ease with which she assumes the mind is disposed to respond in certain affine ways to the phenomena it encounters, both material and symbolic. We now drop the quotation marks around *cognitive* in the context of Buck’s framework.*)

Buck begins her argument less than modestly, repudiating over two millennia of thought and debate on metaphor. Everybody else had it wrong. This tack is familiar in its more recent incarnation. Lakoff and Johnson take the same stance eight decades later, though there is a startling difference. Buck examines that thought and debate. She misses some retrospectively important voices in those millennia—Vico, Melancthon, most of the Early Modern Stylists—but offers an admirably broad survey of metaphor in terms of the major landmarks of the rhetorical tradition, as that tradition was

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²²Richards calls these domains *tenor* and *vehicle*, in one common terministic dyad for metaphor, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *theme* and *phoros*, Lakoff and Johnson *source* and *target*. In “Homer is a pig,” *Homer* is the *tenor/theme/target*, *pig* is the *vehicle/phoros/source*.

²³A word about our Müller text: we believe we are using the same edition Buck cites—the American 1890 Scribner’s edition—as all our pagination lines up with hers. However, she gives the publication date as 1864, the publication date for the British Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green edition, which we have not been able to consult. See, if you can, F. M. Müller, *Lectures on the science of language, second series.* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1864), (p. 371); quoted from G. Buck, *The Metaphor*, 3, cited in n. 1 above.
construed in the late 19th century.\footnote{The historical headcount for Buck includes Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Cornificius, Bede, Puttenham, Stirling, Whately, Campbell, Adams, Kames, and Blair, and Wackernagel, which she augments with: Hegel, and Victoria Welby; philologists Jakob Bauer, Wilhelm Bleek, August Brinkmann, Gustav Gerber, Lord Monboddo (James Burnett), Max Müller, Hermann Paul, and Archibald Sayce; and a raft of her composition and rhetoric contemporaries, CB Bradley, JS Clark, Emma C. Davis & Harriet L. Keeler, Henry Day, JGR McElroy, James De Mille, John Earle, JF Genung, FB Gummere, JM Hart, AD Hepburn, DJ Hill, Brainerd Kellogg, SEH Lockwood, DN Lord, William Minto, Harriet Noble, JD Quackenbos, Scott & Denney, WC Robinson, ER Shaw, LA Sherman, Arnold Tompkins, and Wm Williams.} She summarizes all of the definitions of metaphor in this survey as falling into two categories she borrows from Müller, radical and poetical.\footnote{Müller’s exemplum-definition of \textit{radical metaphor} is as follows: “when a root which means to shine is applied to form the names, not only of the fire or the sun, but of the spring of the year, the morning light, the brightness of thought, or the joyous outburst of hymns of praise” (Lectures, 371). His example here is one of his favourites, the Sanskrit word, \textit{arakā}, which meant both the sun and a hymn of praise, from a root ARK, to shine (see also, “Abstraction” 617); in English, a comparable case would be the word \textit{right}, which references justice and chirality equally. Poetical metaphor is overt, noticeable metaphor, of the “Juliet is the sun” variety. Buck, by the way, shortens \textit{poetical} to \textit{poetic}; we have reinstituted Müller’s term.} She complains that ever since Aristotle these definitions have simply been recycled, and that they have merely “dissected the dead body of the metaphor,” not “told us how the living figure came to be, nor what it in essence is.”\footnote{G. Buck, \textit{The Metaphor}, 2.}

The division between radical and poetical metaphor, in Buck’s terms, is the division between artlessness and artistry:

Radical metaphor is the naive act of a mind not yet conscious of its own processes, making a figure because it must. [Poetical] metaphor is the purposeful effort of a writer to produce a certain effect, either upon himself or upon his reader, by the substitution of one word for another. The first is an act of necessity, the second of free choice. The first is at most but half cognizant of the end attained; the second has this end explicitly in mind and works deliberately toward it.\footnote{G. Buck, \textit{The Metaphor}, 19.}

That is, while Müller and Buck regularly draw on examples from poetry, their term for the artful metaphor is not chosen for its literary implications, but for the resonance of deliberate construction apparent in its Greek root, \textit{poieō (ποιέω)}, ‘to make.’ But, presaging the concerns that have come to dominate metaphor studies, it is the artless metaphor, the invisible metaphor, that most preoccupies Müller and inspires Buck. In the early stages of her argument, it gets all her attention, building the foundation for an evolutionary...
narrative from the artless metaphor to the artistic metaphor (and on through simile to plain speech). There had certainly been evolutionary accounts of metaphor before Buck, all of them variants of Cicero’s poverty-of-the-lexicon argument. “Necessity was the parent [of metaphor], compelled by the sterility and narrowness of language,” Cicero says, “but afterwards delight and pleasure made it frequent.”

(Müller, for his part, quite astutely notes the ‘hint’ of this argument in Aristotle [Poetics 1457b]—“Abstraction.” Cicero is thinking of words like footnote, for the ancillary text indexed to the bottom (the foot) of this page: one can see the metaphorical dimensions of the term when they are made evident, and thereby partially retrace its origins, but footnote functions in daily linguistic commerce as a literal term.

But this sort of account has no real explanatory bite, as Buck points out. It provides a motive for the use of metaphor (communicative necessity), and a context for that motive to come into play (insufficient lexical stock), but not an explanation of how you get from the motive to the metaphor. If your lexicon is inadequate, then you need to enrich it, but why would that enrichment necessarily be metaphorical? Why not metonymical? Why not just arbitrarily symbolic (invent a new noise for an unlabeled or newly invented concept)? Further, once you have enriched your lexicon, what is it about the mind that makes it delight and take pleasure in metaphor, spawning more artful metaphors and propagating all metaphors, radical and poetical, far and wide? Cicero’s job is over, as far as he is concerned, with lexical poverty (which points to radical metaphor) and pleasure (which points to poetical metaphor), but there is no explanation in sight. “What process in the mind of the writer [speaker] lies back of the figure as it stands in type [sounds]?“ Buck wants to know. “What process is induced in the mind of the reader [hearer]?“

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Buck calls this double incapacity “the dilemma of Cicero.” Poverty provides no answer to the artless genesis of metaphor, delight no answer to the genesis of artful metaphor. Yet poverty and delight both appear to tell us something. Poverty correlates with radical metaphor, and has been embraced particularly by philosophers of mind and philologists. Delight correlates with poetical metaphor and has been embraced particularly by literary and rhetorical scholars. Literary scholars were largely content with aesthetic delight, while rhetoricians frequently keyed an overlapping set of communicative functions to that delight (vividness, energy, force, and so on).

Turning first to radical metaphor—which she sees, along with Cicero and everyone else, as more elemental—Buck’s account flips the traditional story on its head. Implicit in Cicero, and more explicit in later scholars, such as Locke and Hegel, Müller and Whitney, and Blair, is the prior existence of some primordial vocabulary—somehow purer and more concrete and resting on a bedrock of sensation—which is then stretched and bent via metaphor to accommodate additional conceptions, in what Buck likens to a “purely commercial” transaction (the spiritus-example is from Locke and had become a familiar topos in philology):

The demand was made for a label to affix upon a newly manufactured conception; and since none existed which had been designed specifically for this purpose, there was nothing for it but to use another label, such as properly appertained to a conception resembling in some ways the nameless species. Thus when spirit, a new conception, came into the field of human consciousness, it stood there naked and shivering, until it was clothed upon by the word breath [L., spīritus, ‘breathing,’ ‘breath’] which represented an analogous material object.

No, Buck says; quite the opposite. The process is firstly more organic than transactional. The commercial-transaction account falls apart because it says nothing about where that primordial vocabulary comes from.33

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34 Buck’s organic account of metaphor is in keeping with the assumptions of the philological tradition. But, as Bordelon shows, it is also highly consonant with the influence of Jamesian psychology in her work. Bordelon (2007) describes James’ belief, evidenced in The Principles of Psychology (1890) and Psychology Briefer Course (1892), that perception begins as homogeneous and only later does the perception fracture through the process of discrimination into perceptions (201n21). Bordelon writes that Buck, following in the Jamesian tradition, “believed that the mind begins with a vague impression that, through differentiation, develops into a more complex consciousness, or perception” (62). Further evidence Bordelon points to is found in Buck’s “The Sentence-Diagram.”
from, nor, more importantly, how the stretching and bending occurs when some external necessity forces it to accommodate new conceptions (or, in the language of Augustinian semiotics, new signata, corresponding to the existing signans, spiritus). Locke, from whom she picks up the spirit/breath example, apparently felt he had gone deeply enough into the question by merely identifying the transaction, behind which was the hand of God,\(^{35}\) and the philosophers and philologists downstream from Locke were content at the level of identification. Buck was not, and she turned to contemporary psychology.

The chief stumbling block to the transactional account (one signans now buys you two signata) is the assumption that new, secondary conceptions arise fully formed, “completely defined and distinct from all other conceptions.”\(^{36}\) That, Buck tells us, is contrary to the known laws of modern psychology, which favoured articulation over simple addition. Buck can be a clear and graceful writer, and her argument on this point is a model of eloquent precision, embedding the eloquence of William James into the bargain, so we do not presume to paraphrase it:

> The definition of an idea is a long and gradual process, much like that by which a formless sprawl of protoplasm becomes a firmly articulate creature; or like that by which a dark, irregular blur against the landscape grows little by little, as one approaches it, into the sharp outline of a clump of trees, with all their minute ramifications and interlockings. The individual consciousness, both as to the whole and as to its parts, grows by successive differentiations into greater and yet greater distinctness of outline and richness of detail. According to the accepted theories of mental development, the first state of the individual consciousness is like that of the primeval earth, without form and void. Gradually, however, out of the wide-weltering chaos, the vaguest and largest physical sensations roughly define themselves, those of comfort as against discomfort; hunger as opposed to satisfaction; light in contrast to darkness; oneself versus others. Each of these large sensations can then differentiate itself still further;—that of light, for instance, into the different colors, these into tints or shades, and these again into halftones. This process of differentiation is the task of the entire mental life. Says James: “The object which the numerous inpouring currents of the baby bring to his consciousness is one big, blooming, buzzing

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\(^{35}\)“God having designed man for a sociable creature, made him not only with an inclination, and under a necessity to have fellowship with those of his own kind, but furnished him also with language . . . the great instrument and common tie of society,” from J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (Available online: http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/authors/locke.html), (p. 289).

confusion. That confusion is the baby’s universe; and the universe of all
of us is still to a great extent such a confusion, potentially resolvable
and demanding to be resolved, but not yet actually resolved, into
parts.” The task of all succeeding experiences is to separate out from
this chaos of sensation its particular elements.37

There was—summarizing the argument now—no distinction between
‘spirit’ and ‘breath’ in the primordial conception: the word *spiritus*
simply meant “the animating principle . . . not yet differentiated into phys-
ical and spiritual.”38 Only after such a differentiation of signification,
was one of them, the physical, awarded a primary status, with the
other signification now looking secondary, derived, metaphorical.
The physical referent now looks like a vehicle, a *phoros*, a source; the
abstract one, a tenor, a theme, a target. But they are neither, or perhaps
reciprocally both, for Buck: two co-equally derived *signata* from the
now-lost encompassing *signatum*, sharing the same *signans*. Figure 1
offers a three-stage storyboard of this diachronic process, contrasted
with the more traditional model, though Buck would want you to
close your eyes and imagine her dynamic process in motion (as she
describes mitosis in the quotation below).

Both models of metaphorical emergence assume a rather spare initial inventory of signantia, but they part company dramatically with the corresponding signata. The transactional model is atomistic, discrete, each signans paired with one highly restricted signatum; one coin, one commodity. The mitotic model is gelatinous, a more capacious signans fused with broad collusional signata in a rich semantic broth. At Stage 1, the relevant monovalent words sound the same; they have the same signans. But that signans evokes very different signata. In the traditional model, the signatum is a distinct, concrete referent, the act of respiration, represented in the figure by the English word, breath. In sharp contrast to this economic model of metaphor, buying up discrete new signata with an old signans, Buck takes her analog from cellular biology, mitosis:

The development of a metaphor is strikingly like [mitosis]. The amoeba, for instance, at one moment apparently a homogeneous jelly-like splash of protoplasm, shows an hour later a slight elongation and a constriction near its middle. It is becoming dual. Two sections of its body are beginning to show themselves where before was but one. The constriction narrows little by little, the two parts of the once single-celled animal become more distinct. Finally there is but a thread connecting them. It slowly parts, and there are two amoebae where one was before.

The signatum for Buck, in short, is a far more encompassing and amorphous concept (an animating principle represented in the figure with our English neologism, breathspirit), that encompasses the concrete act of respiration and the abstract notion of a mental executive or a soul, and whatever lies between. At Stage 2, the transactional model discovers or invents a new conception, the abstract mental-executive notion represented in the figure by spirit. Meanwhile, in the mitotic model, the existing conception, breathspirit, articulates itself into the distinct signata represented here as breath and spirit. In Stage 3 of both models, we have one word with two signata (two conceptions), a more concrete signatum regarded as primary, and a more abstract signatum regarded as derived, the radical metaphor. But our diagram

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39Buck’s term here is the now-archaic-in-this-context, fission, a synonym for mitosis in 19th century biology, undergoing displacement by the latter even as Buck wrote. The last usage cited for fission to signify cellular division in the Oxford English Dictionary is in 1871; the first usage it cites for mitosis is 1887. We have opted to update the signans here, especially because fission now has a prominent signatum in nuclear physics, with connotations Buck would want us to avoid scrupulously.


41Müller’s process model, to the extent he had one, is certainly of the transactional order (e.g., Lectures 369), for which Buck attacks him (6), but we wonder if
is somewhat misleading in picturing both endpoints as the same. It is faithful to the transactional model, which delivers us a single coin that may be spent on either of two commodities. But the mitotic model has more of the fluid polysemous implications of cognitive semantics. In any case, the transactional model is done at this point, while Buck’s model in fact has one more step. The mitosis is over. The metaphor has emerged. “We have now reached a point beyond which the development of the metaphor cannot go,” as Buck puts it. But the existence of two signata seems to demand that one of them take conceptual primacy. The transactional model handles this by giving one of them (‘breath’) historical primacy (“Spirit, in its primary signification is breath”—Locke), an explanatory move unavailable to mitosis. Buck only says “The rise of such conscious differentiation was marked by the limitation of the word ‘spirit’ to the immaterial meaning.” But this conscious differentiation is also what clears the way for simile.

Buck inherited guiding evolutionary preoccupations from James and Dewey, along with the familiar historical-development-of-language / psychological-development-of-individual-language-knowledge topos from philology. So, after she has explained the emergence of metaphor, she continues the trajectory from a ‘figurative’ primeval idiom to a ‘literal’ modern idiom; hence, the simile. Similes arise when “the two constituents [i.e., signata] of the metaphor have so far separated themselves from the original homogeneous sensation and from each other that they are recognized as two objects slightly cohering by some resemblance or analogy” (see Figure 2).
The conceptual-division model of lexical transformation was not unique to Buck, nor the derivative nature of simile. She may have taken her inspiration from the Anglo-Saxonist, Francis Gummere, or they each may have developed their models independently, or perhaps they shared a common source we have not been able to find, but Gummere had certainly advanced a highly similar claim in 1881—that metaphor came from an articulated division of one conception into two or more, and simile followed that articulation. But in breadth, in depth, in the aggregation of evidentiary support, and in overall sophistication, Buck’s arguments are exponentially more compelling. Most notably, she takes her chief warrant from psychology. “[A]ll the doctrines of recent psychology lead to [this] conclusion, that the actual perception of resemblance is an activity comparatively late in its development,” she proclaims, citing a series of case studies into what linguists would later call semantic overgeneralization: the girl who uses cola (≈ ‘chocolate’) for anything sweet, and the boy who uses tettere (≈ ‘potato,’ from pomme de terre) for any solid food, and the ungendered child who uses pussy-cat for all furry and velvety things. Each case demonstrates a process of articulation out of broad categorization. Only after the girl realizes that adults use cola for a

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45Gummere built his arguments almost exclusively in the context of defending Anglo-Saxon poetry against charges of being degenerate, of having fallen into a singularly metaphorical mode, out of the high-style structures of simile that characterize the classic poetry of antiquity, such as the Veddas, the Homeric epics, and the Old Norse Heimskringla. In contrast, Gummere argues that metaphor is the more ancient and authentic mode of expression, and that simile is the derivative mode. See, for more, F. B. Gummere, “Metaphor and poetry,” *Modern Language Notes* 1.6 (1886): 83–84. Buck cites Gummere approvingly on this point, quoting his claim that “[t]he imagination of primitive man was not analytic. He did not watch some ship ride the waves and muse: ‘How like yon craft is to a fiery steed! I liken it to a fiery steed—in fact I shall save time by calling it a fiery steed.’ His restless eye, subject to no fine tutorings of reason, saw an actual horse” (84; Buck 13).


smaller set of sweet referents, for instance, and that words like gumdrop and peppermint and peanut brittle go with some of those cola-things, does she begin the process of differentiating signata out of her original composite, attaching them to those other signantia.48

From this foundation of data, Buck’s move from individual cognitive development to historico-cultural development is natural, on the basis of two scholarly axioms of the period. First, in an anthropological variant of ontogeny-recapitulates-phylogeny, mixed with a progress-of-civilization ideology, childhood psychology was held to be isomorphic with primeval psychology (see esp. Buck 11). Late category discrimination for children therefore entailed late category discrimination in the ‘progress’ of a language. Second, the organic, evolutionary model of language ‘growth’ was paradigmatic, with different languages regarded by most scholars at the time to be in different stages of ‘advancement,’ which provided a wealth of evidence for Buck from anthropological field work. European languages (along with European technology, European culture, and European peoples) were regarded as fully developed, or at least as the pinnacle of development to that point in history, with other languages/technologies/cultures/peoples understood to be in variously more primitive stages of development. So Buck could offer evidence of earlier evolutionary stages of language by turning to existing ‘primitive’ languages: “The savage who spoke of [European ships coming] ‘from so far off as the sun slept,’” she observes, “perhaps never in his life-time learned to distinguish clearly between the action of a man in withdrawing to sleep, and that of the sun in disappearing for the night.”49 Speakers of a civilized tongue, on the other hand, make finer discriminations, and out of those discriminations arose metaphor. The now-suspect grounding of some of her premises and evidence, however, should not distract us from the fact that Gertrude Buck’s move is breathtakingly bold. She replaces two millennia of deeply entrenched assumptions that whatever else metaphor is, it is a somewhat mechanical function of addition, with the inverse and organic process of division.

Buck’s process is metaphorical in that features of meaning connect two conceptions analogically. The outcome of this process, however, is

48The evidence is real, but skewed, perhaps inadvertently. Undergeneralization (potato for only ‘mashed potatoes,’ for instance, or candy only for ‘gumdrops’) is at least as common in childhood semantics as overgeneralization (e.g., B. MacWhinney, “First Language Acquisition,” in M. Aronoff and J. Rees-Miller, eds., The Handbook of Linguistics (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 466–487 (p. 472)). Notice, however, that this does not invalidate Buck’s position, just the tyranny of metaphor. One might easily explain undergeneralization in synecdochic terms.

not a metaphor; rather, it is an expanded inventory of ‘literal’ signata. She says that “radical metaphors were not metaphorical when first used,” that they are “vestige[s] of the early homogeneous consciousness;” they became so only when we “learned to discriminate between the two situations to which the same term has been applied.”50 But do they? Certainly philologists, along with philosophers, linguists, not a few rhetoricians, and various other language-inspector tribes see metaphors in words like spirit and foot of the page. Ordinary language users do not. Certainly they don’t for spirit, unless they study Latin or use an etymological dictionary. But they don’t for foot of the page either. It’s just another word. “It is the fate of certain figures,” Group μ says, “to be no longer recognized as such because they have become banal.”51 That’s why a common term for such words is dead metaphor. Ordinary language users do, in contrast, immediately see something explicit, designed, and poetical going on in John Donne’s “Thy soul, the fix’d foot, makes no show.”52 They see a metaphor. Müller realized this distinction was important, to the point where he had misgivings about calling the growth of an extension set a “radical metaphor.”53 The cognitive disposition for analogy is critical to both foot of the page (foot of the mountain, foot as a unit of measurement, footings of a foundation, . . .), on the one hand, and Donne’s fix’d foot, the soul, on the other. In the former case, analogy increases the reference stock of a signans. In the latter it provides, in Kenneth Burke’s terms, the conceptual perspective of one signatum on another.54

Radical metaphor is crucial for Buck primarily because it reveals the psychological foundations of (1) metaphor, (2) figuration, and (3) rhetoric. The template for this line of thought was set (once again) by Cicero. “[D]ress was first adopted for the sake of keeping off the cold,” he says, a matter of necessity in response to climatic conditions just as (radical) metaphorical extension was a matter of necessity for a lexicon adapting to a changing conceptual climate. “[B]ut in process of time [dress] began to be made an ornament of the body, and an emblem of dignity.”55 So, metaphor, and rhetorical figures more widely, became “poetical,” explicitly creative. It is here that the call

51 Dubois et al., A General Rhetoric, (p. 217).
53 See note 71, below.
for an explanation rears its head. In Cicero’s account, ornaments and emblems bring delight because—wait for it—ornaments and emblems bring delight. This paper-thin account was adopted for metaphor in perpetuity by rhetoricians, with various alterations to the resultant effect, making speech more vivacious (Campbell), more energetic (Whately), forcible (Wendell), clearer (Genung), more vivid and picturesque (Carpenter) more economical (Spencer), more stimulating (Hill).56 Some of these ‘accounts’ may be more intuitive than others (economy correlates with brevity and metaphors are marginally briefer than similes), but they are all based on tautological presumption (metaphors bring vivacity because metaphors are vivacious, energy because they are energetic, . . . ). Gertrude Buck is not happy with the vacuity of these ‘explanations.’

Here too, she flips the established view on its head; here too, she takes her warrant from psychology. This long-established parade of claims, she says, mistakes the cart for the horse, the effect for the cause. “The rhetoricians,” she says, “have begun at the wrong end.”57 She quotes James, Dewey, and even Hume on where to look for the explanatory end of the equation. Delight, vivacity, energy, all the floats in the Effects Parade, are the result of metaphor, she argues, not its cause. Here is a representative passage she takes from Dewey’s Psychology: “We do not desire the object because it gives us pleasure; but . . . it gives us pleasure because it satisfies the impulse which, in connection with the idea of the object, constitutes the desire.”58 Poetical metaphor arises when a person (and especially a sensitive poetical person) reflexively understands the process, and deliberately cultivates the mitotic experience for the purposes of deeper understanding and fuller communication. John Milton, for instance, in Buck’s story, undergoes a poetical reverie birthing L’Allegro which engenders a powerful perception of a malign environment, and brings forth “low-browed hills” as the “menacing effect of something dark and overhanging is but just resolving itself into the beetling rocks and the low brows of a human face.” When Alfred Tennyson, for “The Princess,” creates “fear chalked her face,” it is because that conception

has leaped to expression just at the instant when the first vague impression of a surface rapidly growing white was separating into the two yet

56G. Buck, The Metaphor, 2–3; see also 23–25. Recall that Buck overlooks such thinkers as Vico, as well as her near-contemporary, Nietzsche.
half-conscious images of a surface being overlaid with chalk, and a face paling under the influence of fear.  

Emily Dickinson gives us the image of “a whip-lash / Unbraiding in the sun” in “The Snake” through the mitosis of “[h]er hazy impression of a something long, brown, slender and convolute.” In this last example, Buck also sees Dickinson reliving and representing the poetical-metaphor process. The relevant stanza, in full, is:

Have passed, I thought, a whip-lash  
Unbraiding in the sun, —  
When, stooping to secure it,  
It wrinkled, and was gone. . .  

Buck sees here, in “stooping to secure it, / It wrinkled, and was gone” the precise moment of sensation in which a hazy long, brown, slender and convolute conception divided into ‘perhaps a whip-lash’ and ‘oh-ho! A snake!’

If we have now the process (creative conceptual mitosis) and result (delight, vivacity, etc.), what then is the cause of the effect(s) that metaphor induces. What is the impulse that incites speakers and moves hearers? Ultimately, Buck does not have a compelling answer to this question either (nor does her inspiration for this line of argument, John Dewey), but she goes dramatically beyond Cicero and the millennia of theorists in his wake by changing the game and putting the causal question first, rather than simply assuming that metaphors delight. In so doing, she forecast the direction metaphorical research took in the twentieth century, and now into the twenty-first. She shone a light behind the effects of the figures and onto the cognitive affinities of the mind.

Delight, vivacity, and so on, name the immediate psychological effects of metaphor on the individual cognitive organism, the specific symbol-using animal, the person, who experiences them. But there are far more profound social effects, which is where rhetoric comes most fully into Gertrude Buck’s picture of metaphor, moving from neuro-aesthetics to symbolic action. Having drawn deeply on philology and psychology for the foundations, Buck then brings in an architectonic, design-based, communicative theory of rhetoric (Fred Newton Scott’s influence is perhaps strongest here). “The writer

59G. Buck, The Metaphor, 84.  
wishes either to beautify or to energize his speech,” Buck observes, “[b]ut this is not a final answer [to the use of metaphor]. Why should he wish to do either of these things? What does it profit him to make his speech either more beautiful or more forcible?” The answers are to be found in “the communication theory of discourse,” which subordinates both the immediate psychological effects on the audience and the aesthetic and/or suasive strategies of the rhetor to the mutual results of the communicative exchange. That is, a metaphor “communicate[s] the maker’s vision of an object as it appeared to him at the moment of expression . . . a snap-shot at his own process of perception in one of its intermediate stages . . . the result of a vital process . . . spring[ingen] spontaneously out of a genuine thought-process and represent[ingen] with exactness a certain stage of a growing perception.”

Metaphor, that is, synchronizes minds. The thoughts and perspectives of the rhetor and those of the audience move along the same grooves—a view of metaphor later articulated by Wayne Booth, who argues that figurative language can provide an “an intensified meeting of minds.” With metaphor, in particular, the “process of interpretation is itself part of what is communicated” and engaging that process “produces a ‘bonding’ which is part of the ‘meaning.’” Thus the act of interpreting metaphor will always be more intense . . . than engagement with whatever we take to be nonmetaphorical. This metaphorical engagement, Booth says, works in large part because it “require[s] greater creative energy in the receiver than straight talk.” But we do not need Booth’s word for it. Here is Buck’s:

Metaphor demands more—that the reader come to the writer’s completed idea and in the writer’s own way. . . . While [plain statement] avails only to propel the reader’s thought along an accustomed and preferred channel, metaphor forces it to fall in with that of the writer, to trace the writer’s branching idea back to its source and then to follow its ramifications beyond the point of actual expression, to traverse a road that may be wholly new, a country hitherto unseen.

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62G. Buck, *The Metaphor*, 20 and 30, respectively.
Artistic metaphor grooves the mind of the reader/hearer into the same contours as the mind of the rhetor.

But not always, and here her mitosis model comes back into play; this time, in the service of pedagogy. Buck’s cultivated-mitosis experience is the source of authentic metaphor, the process that the rhetor goes through, and that the metaphor induces the reader/hearer to follow. But there is another sort of metaphor, Buck concedes, one that we might reluctantly call, to reflect a strain of contempt in her overall approach “the rhetorical metaphor.” It is a different sort of metaphor because it relies on a different sort of process, the inauthentic, mechanical, transactional process familiar from the rhetorical tradition. The gulf between poetical metaphors and rhetorical metaphors is between, as she quotes Oliver Goldsmith, “those metaphors which rise glowing from the heart, and those cold conceits which are engendered in the fancy.”68 These cold conceits come about by following the mistaken advice of rhetoricians who, admiring authentic poetical metaphors but not having the insights of modern psychology and anthropology available to guide their theory and teaching, came up with the transactional model. In a ham-fisted attempt to reverse engineer poetical metaphors, they prescribe that model as the creative process. Buck’s objection is viscerally moral, and deeply influenced by the romantic aesthetic that pervaded theories of invention at the time: “we shrink instinctively from this theory as applied to . . . the genuine [poetical] metaphor. We feel not only that it cannot account for these metaphors, but that it ought not to do so.”69

“Metaphor,” today

_We have found, on the contrary [to previous conceptions of metaphor], that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life._

—Lakoff and Johnson, _Metaphors We Live By_

What lessons might rhetorical studies, and language studies more broadly, have learned about metaphor if they had paid attention to Buck’s remarkable treatise? Two, principally, one highly generative; the other more negative, a partially articulated admonition. The generative one rhetoricians, philosophers, linguists, and cognitive scientists did in fact learn: that metaphor is the outcome of a universal mental

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69G. Buck, _The Metaphor_, 29.
disposition. But they did not learn it from her. The admonition, however, apparently remains to be learned: that the universal mental process which begets metaphor is distinct from its outcomes and realizations.

Gertrude Buck was, if not the leader in metaphor studies she should have been, certainly a harbinger of the studies which swept through language disciplines in the 20th century. In rhetoric, the best known modern bellwethers of these developments are I.A. Richards and Kenneth Burke, for works written three and four decades after The Metaphor. Both Richards and Burke were capacious readers. Neither of them mentions Gertrude Buck. Outside of rhetoric, scholars like Roman Jakobson, Max Black, and Mary Hesse are more prominent; they do not, somewhat more understandably, mention her either. But the most acclaimed proponents of metaphor theory, of the last century and this, are George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, for their run-away academic best-seller, Metaphors We Live By. As important as these other scholars were, Lakoff and Johnson are of an entirely other order. Their book was a crucial tipping point in a growing metaphoria, skillfully giving very close attention to phenomena that overlap substantially with radical metaphors. “[U]nder the microscope of the etymologist,” Müller noted, “every word almost discloses traces of its first metaphorical conception.”

Under the microscope of the linguist Lakoff and the philosopher Johnson, every concept almost discloses what they call its metaphorical structure. They have made one of the most influential contributions to cognitive language studies by attending to thematic lexical clusters rooted in the mental disposition Buck charted, shaping the agenda for ‘metaphor’ studies over the last thirty years, with no indications that it is abating.

But it is important to remember that what Lakoff and Johnson pioneer—their chief contribution to linguistics, rhetoric, literary criticism, and other forms of language studies—does not directly implicate metaphor, and that its indirect implications for metaphor are limited. The notion they unfortunately label ‘conceptual metaphor,’ sets of ‘radical metaphors’ clustered around specific guiding analogies, are not metaphors. Among Lakoff and Johnson’s most famous examples

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are ARGUMENTATION IS WARFARE and TIME IS MONEY (the small-caps convention is theirs), illustrated in Table 1.\textsuperscript{72} These lexical clusters reveal a largely submerged set of correspondences in English (and many other languages) that guides and constrains the vocabulary typical of one domain (argumentation, time) in terms of another domain (war, money). They frame one domain in the terminology of another. Lakoff and Johnson make the reasonable claim that these guiding analogies structure thought in one domain by the categories of another.

Noticing these analogic clusters is not unique to Lakoff and Johnson, of course. Quintilian, as a prominent instance, cites the following set of expressions used about argumentation “to fight firm; to aim at the throat, and, to draw blood.” These expressions clearly manifest the analogy, ARGUMENTATION:WARFARE, or, somewhat more accurately, ARGUMENTATION:ATTLE. Quintilian calls this sort of analogic framing, allegory, and he uses it to illustrate how that trope functions in “[our] most common understandings, and our daily conversation.”\textsuperscript{73} Indeed, many scholars who discuss radical metaphor notice this sort of clustering as well. Cicero’s initial examples included personifications of agriculture (roughly, ‘licentious’ vines

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{ARGUMENTATION IS WARFARE} & \textbf{TIME IS MONEY} \\
(Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:4) & (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:8) \\
\hline
Your claims are \textit{indefensible}. & You’re \textit{wasting} my time. \\
He \textit{attacked} my weak points. & This gadget will \textit{save} you hours. \\
His criticisms were \textit{right on target}. & How do you \textit{spend} your time these days? \\
I \textit{demolished} his argument. & That flat tire \textit{cost} me an hour. \\
I’ve never \textit{won} an argument with him. & I’ve \textit{invested} a lot of time in her. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Two ‘conceptual metaphors’}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{72}We shift Lakoff and Johnson’s well-known label for one of these frames, ARGUMENT IS WAR, to ARGUMENTATION IS WARFARE for the sake of clarity, because the target is clearly the argumentative process, not argumentative products. Lakoff and Johnson are aware of this distinction, since they move back and forth between the terms \textit{argument} and \textit{arguing} in the discussion of this frame (and also their proposed ARGUMENTATION IS DANCE), while sticking to \textit{argument} mostly for their later discussions of frames more precisely labelled, like AN ARGUMENT IS A BUILDING, and explicitly note the distinction rather late (88) but their failure to encode it in their labelling leads to some confusion.

and ‘generous’ crops), and Peacham\textsuperscript{74} catalogues over a dozen such analogic sets, including \textsc{understanding:sight}, \textsc{emotion:weather}, and \textsc{god:man}. But these analogic terminologies are not metaphors. For his part, Peacham treats them as topoi, “[t]he places from whence translations [metaphors] may be taken,” singling out the ones he charts as the “most apt, most usual, & most commendable.”

Certainly the small analogic vestiges in language that Lakoff and Johnson catalogue are not \textit{prototypical} metaphors—designed, artistic, poetical metaphors. Müller’s term for these vestiges, \textit{radical metaphors}, appears to mean ‘at the base, among the roots of language, not among the flowers,’ which gets at their elementally invisible nature; they are, in Gestalt terminology, ground, not figure. But even that coinage seemed ill-advised to Müller a bit later, because he came to see the expansion of the \textit{signatum} more as an extension than a transfer, more \textit{diaphora} (‘carrying’) than \textit{metaphora} (‘transferring’) he later said.\textsuperscript{75} Michael Reddy, specifically referring to the words and phrases characteristic of these ‘conceptual metaphor’ analogic clusters, in work that strongly influenced Lakoff and Johnson, coins the term \textit{metaphorisms}—vaguely metaphor-like thingies.\textsuperscript{76} The more familiar term is \textit{dead} metaphor, no longer active. Otto Jespersen, the great Danish linguist, elegantly calls them \textit{ex-metaphors},\textsuperscript{77} no longer functioning as such. But, whatever they might best be called (we lean toward Reddy’s coinage), we should certainly heed Wayne Booth’s caution:

[T]here is a problem for students of any subject when the word for that subject expands to cover everything. And that is precisely what has happened to this word. \textit{Metaphor} has by now been defined in so many ways that there is no human expression, whether in language or any other medium, that would not be metaphoric in someone’s definition.\textsuperscript{78}


\textsuperscript{75}“Perhaps the name \textit{[radical metaphor]} was not well chosen because it is rather a process of \textit{diaphora}, of carrying the root with its concept to this and that object, than a \textit{metaphora}, or transference from one object to another; yet [he added], for practical purposes, \textit{metaphora}, applied in this sense, can hardly be misunderstood, and, as guarded by a proper definition, it might well be kept” (“Abstraction” 617); see, F. M. Müller \textit{Metaphor as a Mode of Abstraction}, cited in n. 24 above.


RHETORICAL RECOVERY

The mental life, like the physical, organizes itself from the whole to its parts, from simplicity to complexity, from homogeneity to differentiation.
—Gertrude Buck, The Metaphor

““The horse is already out of the barn,” we hear some of you saying. “Yes metaphor has ballooned out of recognition from the technical term it was in the rhetorical tradition, but it’s too late to do anything about it.”79 Group μ observed contemporaneously with Booth, almost fifty years ago, that “literary analysis... remains content with simply ‘metaphor’ to designate just about any figure.”80 Well, we may not be able to do anything about our neighbours in literary studies, or in linguistics, or even in the usually semantically fastidious precincts of philosophy. But we can rule our own tongues and our own keyboards. Here, in Booth’s inimitable style, are a few more cautionary remarks on the explosive proliferation of ‘metaphor’ studies, from the 1978 University of Chicago Symposium on Metaphor:

Explicit discussions of something called metaphor have multiplied astronomically in the past fifty years. . . . The bibliographies show more titles for 1977, for example, than for—well, the truth is that I refuse to do the counting to make this point, but I’ll wager a good deal that the year 1977 produced more titles than the entire history of thought before 1940. . . . I have in fact extrapolated with my pocket calculator to the year 2039: at that point there will be more students of metaphor than people.81

The year 2039 is nigh, both more figuratively and more literally than when Booth made his prediction. But it is not the number of students that is problematic—we welcome cross-disciplinary interest in one of our master tropes from the scholarly world as a whole—it is the ‘something called metaphor’ implications, the unworkable distention of the word. Returning to Buck reminds us of what metaphor is in the

79““And,” we hear a few specific rhetoricians among you, the Aristotelians, adding “The Philosopher himself meant something much broader than ‘the tradition’ took to be metaphor—he included what we now call synecdoche and metonymy (Poetics 1457b).” True, but he was (1) using it as a technical term about linguistic constructions, (2) he invoked a distinct mental process (analogy, ἀνάλογος), and (3) subsequent scholarship has (in fact, in a way not unlike Buck’s mitotic process) increased the technical discrimination with respect to these tropes, not diminished it.
80Dubois et al., A General Rhetoric, (p. 216).
81W. C. Booth, Metaphor as Rhetoric, 49.
rhetorical tradition, and of a key moment in rhetorical history for this extravagant distortion of the trope.

Lakoff and Johnson’s use of metaphor is especially infelicitous, and all the more unfortunate because it has also proven so infectious. We repeat: Lakoff and Johnson’s clusters are not metaphors at all. A fossil is not a mollusk. A boxscore is not a hockey game. A photograph is not a moment. They are indexes of phenomena. They are not the phenomena themselves. A ‘conceptual metaphor’ is not even an expression. It does not designate an individual construction, term, or utterance, but a specific set of terms and expressions that reflect a systematic perspectival framing. It does not designate a figure. As such, Lakoff and Johnson’s label has little call on the term metaphor as it has been historically understood in rhetoric. Their confusion no doubt results from the fact that, like many analogies, the ones they work with can be (and often are) expressed as metaphors. “Argument is war” is a metaphor. But, as they construe it, naming a cluster of terms and expressions manifesting the analogic framing of argument in terms of war, ARGUMENT IS WAR is not a metaphor. “Time is money” is a metaphor. TIME IS MONEY is not. “Language is a conduit” is a metaphor, though not a very elegant one and not one that anyone hears expressed outside of a few textbooks; LANGUAGE IS A CONDUIT is not. Conceptual metaphors are not metaphors. The adjective is almost as bad, especially since an adjective’s job should be to restrict the scope of a noun. This one does not. ‘Conceptual metaphors’ are conceptual, of course, but all analogic figures are conceptual. Metaphors, similes, personifications, reifications, conceits: they all work by framing one concept in terms of another concept. Indeed, all tropes are conceptual. That is their figurative calling card, distinguishing them from schemes. Conceptual metaphor, in short, should be discarded as a label, by rhetoricians if no one else. The noun is erroneous, the adjective is pointlessly and misleadingly redundant, and the phrase has led to a distorted understanding of the relation between figures and the mental affinities that shape their production and reception.

What Lakoff and Johnson explore of course, is analogic thought, at a very important noetically architectural level. It has echos in language, echos that sound faintly like metaphors. But to call either the thought or its echoes metaphor is a category error. The phenomenon they explore is of undeniably great significance, for rhetoric as well as for the cognitive humanities broadly, but we need another term. We propose, simply, analogic frame, happily adopting Reddy’s label for the terms and expressions that manifest given analogic frames, metaphorisms, since it correlates with research not just into dormant metaphors but also into thematic clusters of dormant metaphors.
This move brings an increased rhetorical precision to cognitive studies, particularly in the humanities disciplines that should know better—minimally, rhetoric and communication studies—and a fuller recognition of the scholarly tradition that has made the cognitive humanities not only possible but inevitable.\textsuperscript{82} Chief among our antecedents is Gertrude Buck, neglected not just in cognitive studies but also in her home discipline, rhetoric. Gertrude Buck’s metaphor is an essential, inevitable consequence of human thought and understanding, but it is a consequence, a semiotic outcome. It is not human thought itself, as the ‘conceptual metaphorists’ appear to believe (“metaphor is not just a matter of language, that is of mere words . . . human thought processes are largely metaphorical”).\textsuperscript{83}

We also wish to make another link to contemporary metaphor studies from Buck’s work, the powerful resonances her model has with Mark Turner’s explorations of analogic thought. Turner’s speculations about conceptual blending (a framework he co-developed with Gilles Fauconnier) and what neuroscience calls the binding problem suggest very interesting parallels with Buck’s neuro-physiologically mitotic-metaphor process. Roughly, the binding problem is concerned with how attributes disparately represented in the brain resolve (‘bind’) into a uniform perception. “It appears that there may be no anatomical site in the brain where a perception of a horse or a concept horse resides,” Turner notes, “The horse that seems one thing corresponds to a widely distributed fragmentation in the brain. Mentally,

\textsuperscript{82}Our usage not only integrates very nicely with the broad notion of frames that comes out of Artificial Intelligence, but also with its more specific realization in an approach to language we find very congenial (as, indeed, do Lakoff and Johnson), Charles Fillmore’s Frame Semantics, and generalizes efficiently to the cognitive reflections of other master tropes; see, FrameNet: https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/. Correlational Frames, for instance, covers what came to be called, on unfortunate extrapolation from Lakoff and Johnson’s term, ‘conceptual metonymy’—e.g., B. Rudzka-Ostyn, “Metaphor, Schema, Invariance,” in Louis Goossens et al., eds., By Word of Mouth: Metaphor, Metonymy and Linguistic Action in a Cognitive Perspective (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995), 205–244, (p. 232)—phenomena long explored by rhetoricians as CONTAINER FOR THE CONTAINED, PRODUCER FOR THE PRODUCT, and INSTRUMENT FOR THE USER. Meronymic Frames covers so-called ‘conceptual synecdoche’ (e.g., R. Wodak, The Discursive Construction of National Identity (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), (p. 44) such as SPECIES FOR THE GENUS, GENUS FOR THE SPECIES, and COMPONENT FOR THE SYSTEM. (Lakoff and Johnson, 36, by the way, regard synecdoche as a type of metonymy, in a confusion that unfortunately illustrates Burke’s observation that “the four [master] tropes shade into one another,” K. Burke, “Four Master Tropes,” (p. 421).

\textsuperscript{83}Metaphors We Live By, 6; their italics.
the unitary horse is a fabulous blend." Conceptual blending (AKA conceptual integration) is a more familiar model of analogic thinking than Buck’s. It works by integrating features of distinct domains (a whip and a snake, a landscape and a face, a blackboard and a complexion) to generate a new mental ‘space’ where the moving snake and uncoiling whip are fused, the foreboding vista and an angry visage, the fear-drained face and a chalk-covered board). Turner draws the binding problem in to support conceptual blending because he sees it as a process of aggregating disparate elements into a new space, and there is some legitimacy to the move (see also Fauconnier and Turner, 11–12, et passim). But the conceptual formation at the heart of the binding problem (many amorphous impressions resolving into unitary phenomena) looks much more like, if not quite the specific mitotic process Buck outlines, then certainly the Jamesean picture that inspired her model (the one big, blooming, buzzing confusion of numerous inpouring currents, potentially resolvable and demanding to be resolved, to which our cognitive—importantly including our symbolic—resources bring individuating coherence).

Like all rhetoricians, and an increasing number of other scholars, Buck is most interested in metaphor because of its suasive power. Speaking to matters of rhetorical style, of plain statement or the economizing of language, Buck argues that metaphor increases the suasive quotient of expression because “plain statement asks the reader only to arrive, by his own preferred route, at a certain idea.” While this strategy in-and-of-itself is not particularly problematic to suasive ends, metaphor offers a more interesting and, perhaps, compelling alternative. Not only has Buck refuted the traditional conceptions of metaphor development and reception, but advanced her argument for the importance of metaphor over a plain style. Metaphor creates, to repeat Buck’s evocative phrase, “ramifications beyond the point of actual expression” by activating the speaker/hearer’s analogic affinity, and thereby grooving her thoughts like those of the speaker/writer. Buck’s argument here has application beyond the immediate topic of metaphor to important and on-going debates of the marriage of form and content in contemporary rhetorical theory, especially to figuration.

85G. Buck, The Metaphor, 52, cited in n. 1 above.
86G. Buck, The Metaphor, 52.
87See, for example, R. Lanham, Economics of Attention (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2006); for figuration in particular, see Fahnestock’s rekindling of Burke’s “formal assent,” in Rhetorical Figures, 1999, 34–37; J. Fahnestock, “Rhetoric in the Age of
Buck’s psychology was pre-cognitive and post-associative—in fact, at the historical interface of those two programs, just before the long Behaviourism detour—and it misses the larger architectural implications both of those frameworks provide. The figurative insights of Associational psychology were constrained largely to a few tropes: metaphor and simile activate the “Similarity” affinity; metonymy and synecdoche activate “Contiguity;” antithesis, “Discrimination.”

Neuro-cognitive psychology, however, with a greater repertoire of principles, allows us to move into broader regions of rhetorical form. The mind, we know, is structured in accordance with an array affinities beyond analogy (Similarity), organizing its noetic universe under the guidance of those affinities, and Ciceronian ‘delight’ might be seen as the emotional response to the activation of those affinities. Figures of repetition (consonance, rhyme, ploche, polyptoton, synonymia) ‘delight’ us because repetition is the fundamental operation of our brains. It is not the firing of neurons that turns three pounds of jellied proteins into a brain. It is the patterned firing of neurons, in systematic repetitions, that makes a brain, and ultimately a mind. Figures of rhythm are repetitions of a more sustained sort (isocolon, tricolon, diastole, iambic meters). They ‘delight’ us because they activate specific, rhythmic neural firing patterns. Repetitions (including the special case of rhythm), in short, tap directly into the mechanical operation of our wetware. Boundary figures (alliteration, homoioteleuton, epanaphora, epistrophe, symploche) ‘delight’ us because our perceptions are naturally tuned for edges—beginnings and endings of surfaces, sounds, and sequences. Linguistic units (syllables, morphemes, words, phrases, clauses) have beginnings and endings, and figural action tends to cluster at the ‘edges’ of those units. Rhymes in poetry and songs, for instance, tend to fall at the ends of breath groups. Not all repetitions are equal. We are naturally tuned to symmetry, finding symmetrical faces more attractive, and responding to symmetrical patterns like the yin/yang and the swastika; we ‘delight’ in anti-metaboles, palindromes, and chiasma. We are naturally responsive to contrastive perceptions, such as movement in a static scene, stillness in the heart of motion, a circle in a sea of squares, darkness next to light; we ‘delight’ in oxymorons and paradoxes (and, echoing Bain, antitheses). We categorize phenomena regularly on the basis of their temporal or spatial proximity to each other, as the Gestaltists have empirically documented, reinforcing the more introspectively

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88A. Bain, English Composition and Rhetoric, 20–49, cited in n. 9 above.
arrived at Contiguity affinity of the Associationists; we ‘delight’ in metonymy and synecdoche. And, of course, the analogic mental affinity (Similarity, Comparison) has been a pillar in philosophy of mind from Aristotle on, again empirically documented by the Gestaltists and Cognitivists. Müller, for his part, calls it a “law,” adhered to by “each growing or developed language.”89 We ‘delight’ in metaphors, similes, and their kin.

Buck, typically, was not content with an unspecified ‘delight.’ Inspired by James and Dewey, she moved from waving vaguely at affective implications of the figure all the way to physiology. When a hearer/reader experiences a vivid metaphor, she argues, the resolution of two conceptions impels express physiological experiences, which manifest a mounting tension, as in the holding of one’s breath, until the “energy discharges,” with a “dawn” or “break” that allows the hearer/reader to resolve the tension.90

The effect of metaphor upon the reader is, then, agreeable, because metaphor stimulates [one] to actions, both of mind and of body, which fulfill the law of unity in variety, which offer an outlet for pent energies, which establish a symmetrical exercise, a moving poise for the physical functions, and which consequently are felt as pleasure.91

Here the metaphor is understood, not ‘just’ as a psychological event but as a physiological event. The resolution for a hearer/reader to ‘complete’ a metaphor goes beyond even the creator’s process, to involve the body. We do not have room in the present discussion to trace the intellectual currents between contemporary cognitive science, with its increasing neurological allegiances, and the newly physiological psychology Buck was drawing on, with its own understanding of neurology. But one of the most interesting parallels comes with the increasing attention to the convergence of, in the title of a recent book by Raymond Gibbs Jr., Embodiment and Cognitive Science, a book that also regularly cites William James approvingly. Gibbs is particularly attentive, as one would expect from his earlier The Poetic Mind, to the figurative evidence for, and the figurative implications of, this research convergence; especially in the titular figure of Buck’s monograph. “Metaphor is especially important in mapping experiences of the body to help structure abstract ideas that are fundamental to the way people think and speak,” Gibbs says—though we note his

89F. M. Müller, Lectures on the Science of Language, 351, cited in n. 66 above.
90G. Buck, The Metaphor, 58, cited in n. 1 above.
familiar reification of the figure—arguing further that this analogic mapping reveals a “deep-seated cognitive imperative to make sense of the world in terms of our bodies.”92 This imperative is not new to rhetorical theory, of course. We have already noted in this paper the emotive personifications Cicero used to illustrate analogic structuring, and that Peacham’s catalogue of analogic frames includes such embodied clusters as UNDERSTANDING:SIGHT and EMOTION:WEATHER; nor should we miss the fact that Locke’s keystone breath/spirit example realizes the body/mind axis. Vico’s examples, too, are famous for charting embodiment.93

Returning to Buck contributes to the possibility for a neurorhetorics, particularly following the work of Jack and Applebaum, as well as the neglected research of Richard Gregg.94 Buck herself likely would have appreciated the interdisciplinary scope of such efforts, given her embrace not only of philology and psychology but philosophy and Darwinian biology as well. Gertrude Buck’s metaphor is an inevitable outcome of human cognition and noetic structure. Giving Buck a voice she has been denied in metaphor studies, we let her conclude this paper with a summary of her contribution to the study of figuration, one that is indistinguishable from statements one can find by Lakoff,

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93 “It is noteworthy that in all languages the greater part of the expressions relating to inanimate things are formed by metaphor from the human body and its parts, and from the human senses and passions. Thus the head for top or beginning; the brow and shoulders of a hill; the eyes of needles and potatoes; mouth for any opening; the lip of a cup or pitcher; the teeth of a rake, a saw, a comb; the beard of wheat; the tongue of a shoe; the gorge of a river; a neck of land; an arm of the sea; the hands of a clock; heart for center (the Latins used umbilicus, navel, in this sense); the belly of a sail; foot for end or bottom; the flesh of fruits; a vein of rock or mineral; the blood of grapes for wine; the bowels of the earth. Heaven or the sea smiles; the wind whistles; the waves murmur; a body groans under great weight. The farmers of Latium used to say the fields were thirsty, bore fruit, were swollen with grain; and our rustics speak of plants making love, vines going mad, resinous trees weeping. Innumerable other examples could be collected from all languages,” from G. Vico, The New Science of Giambattista Vico, trans. 3rd Edition of 1744 T. G. Bergin and M. H. Fisch. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), (p. 405).

Johnson, Gibbs, Turner, or any of the important figures in metaphor studies now, a century after she wrote it:

metaphor is not, as we have been taught, an isolated phenomenon, a ‘freak’ in literature, more or less inexplicable, an arbitrary ‘device’ of the writer, but a genuine expression of the normal process of thought at a certain stage in its development, consonant with the ordinary laws of psychology and interwoven with all our common experiences.95

95G. Buck, The Metaphor, 69, cited in n. 1 above.