

Anselm Haverkamp  
**Productive Digression**

# Paradigms

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Literature and the Human Sciences

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## Volume 5

Anselm Haverkamp

# Productive Digression

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Theorizing Practice

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Dedicated to the NYU English Department



# Preface

simply elucidate<sup>1</sup>

Collected Essays need, and need no introduction. If it is futile to read them without one, it is superfluous to read them at all. If they are readable in themselves, it may be profitable to find them in their place. As cases to be established, they must stand their own ground, on which their exemplarity deserves explanation. Exemplified they depend on each other. The network of the pieces collected seems best presented in groups of three, of which each triad defines or characterizes a site of theoretical interest rather than of systematic investigation. In more than one instance they are about to proliferate on the spot. Here the subtitle comes into view and explains the theoretical mode of digression as a productive practice. Genetically, the exemplary instances of this practice were connected through actual occasions and, at times, by a series of events. In the volume the occasional setting has vanished and the textual connections come to the fore. For the collection, therefore, the exemplarity of each case had to be underlined through additional references. Aside from this, the texts remain as they were.

The supplementarity of the pieces plays a more important role for their exemplarity than meets the eye. The casual network of triangular places interacts in more than the linear development that is to be expected from a sequence of chapters. Instead of a minimal coverage, the items carry over from one place into more than the next place and thus make visible – this is the intention – a secondary, broader level of interconnections. Theory proceeds from individual occasions or cases in order to exemplify; exemplarity is the outcome of the practice to be achieved and demonstrated. Historically, theory came about with, and was closely connected to critique; it was meant to investigate how things are given, constituted and, last but not least, embedded in ‘life’ – which may also include how they are endowed with life. The series of triangular topoi, as here arranged, drifts from the theoretical angle of theory production towards the possibility of a ‘life theory’ – of theory as life-related. The perspective that emerges from the digression called ‘the literary’ becomes clearer: how to conceive of ‘life’ in art and the transitivity of coming to know what happens in life while it is

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<sup>1</sup> T.S. Eliot, “The Perfect Critic” (1920), *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 50 – 58: 56. See Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 27; *Der Akt des Lesens* (München: Fink, 1976), 36.

lived. Tentatively, the first and the last two pieces may serve as framing introduction and focussing consequences.

*Productive Digression* offers a translation of the ancient term of ‘poetics’ as a practice of theory: The products produced in the mode of *poiesis* are digressive in that they operate off track; they resist the main stream of everyday prose. They do so for various reasons and in various respects. At times, the productivity of digressions stems from distraction: “Les *meilleurs* vers viennent par distraction,” Valéry found.<sup>2</sup> The modes of digression are in the main explained historically, relative to more or less relevant historical contexts and thus against that what they are meant to resist or bypass. Instead, this book investigates the means of resistance, the epistemology of production, in short, the logic of digression. Consequently, the method is to address the singular exemplarity of literature and art, to explain the impact of *poiesis* as an epistemological challenge, and to redefine the analysis of literature and art as branches of an Historical Epistemology.

As far as the actual trajectory of the book is concerned, a certain side effect needs to be mentioned and acknowledged: The proto-politics included and sometimes, though not always explained in these essays, was bound to, and remains bound by, the transatlantic theory formation whose emergence and formative unfolding happened over decades through the interaction of English, French, and German texts. The ‘French connection’ of American theory with the German phenomenological tradition, prepared and deepened for centuries by the Latinity of Romania and Anglia, is far from conclusive; bastardized with their Germanic other, the task of elucidating the conditions of these terminological interplays remains the most challenging part and task of theory.

Proceeding from the state of affairs in twentieth-century criticism and aesthetics (Benjamin, Adorno, Blumenberg, Merleau-Ponty), the epistemology of representation (Whitehead, Canguilhem, Bachelard, Rheinberger, Latour) needs revision with respect to criticism (Derrida, Marin, de Man, Agamben). The self-transgression of the theory scenario in the first triad (Adorno, Blumenberg, Derrida) reveals the necessity of a larger background and greater historical depth (here Heidegger–Cassirer), which could be supplemented in variations for each triad, as it is, in fact, implied in their sequence. From literary criticism to the recent agenda of the life sciences, the essays seek to redirect the logic of research towards the epistemological grounds of an aesthetics underneath the hermeneutics of everyday lives and their common ways of understanding. What is latent in life escapes those who live it.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Valéry, *Cahiers 1894–1914*, Édition intégrale, XIII, ed. Nicole Celeyrette-Pietri and William Marx (Paris: Gallimard, 2016), 191 (*Cahier* V, juillet 1914).



Art and literature capture, hopefully, skeptically, how to conceive of it by coming to grips with its ways in ethos and pathos.

Thanks are due to more people than I can name here, but some should be mentioned, the readers and friendly advisers of first versions, Rüdiger Campe and Paul Fleming as editors, to begin with. I am grateful to Vera Beyer, Gottfried Boehm, Cynthia Chase, Petra Gehring, Eva Geulen, Peter Goodrich, Stephen Greenblatt, Martin Harries, Christoph Hoffmann, Eva Horn, Birgit Kaiser, Wolfgang Kemp, Thomas Khurana, Michèle Lowrie, Perry Meisel, Bettine Menke and Christoph Menke, Peter Nicholls, Bart Philipsen, Burcht Pranger, Francesca Raimondi, Juliane Reben-tisch, Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, Melanie Sehgal, Dirk Setton, Katrin Thiele, Katrin Truedstedt, Hent de Vries, Samuel Weber, Erica Weitzman, Christopher Wood, and Amy Ziering for all kinds of advice and encouragement. I am indebted to Barbara Natalie Nagel, Daniel Hoffman-Schwartz, Anthony Reynolds, Sandy Baldwin and Kirk Wetters for translations, help with translations and valuable suggestions, as well as to Florian Fuchs for providing an index of names. The texts had been drafted and most of them were written by the author in English; in some places they remain incorrigible due to the author's insistence on points, in which his native *oikeion* is hard to reconcile with sensible English usage. I am particularly grateful to Michèle Lowrie and Peter Goodrich for their sense of humor in helping me out and letting me have, at least partly, my way of putting things. After more than two decades of teaching in the English Department of New York University on Washington Square my gratitude to the genius loci is undiminished.

Dinard, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.



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# Equivalence Unbalanced

## Metaphor, Case, and Example

La mauvaise métaphore ne donne-t-elle pas  
toujours le meilleur exemple? (Derrida)

The functional method is finally a comparative one; introducing it  
into reality serves to open up other possibilities. (Luhmann)

Since quite a while – since Derrida’s controversy with Ricœur in the 70s at the latest – metaphor seems the easiest pre-text for discussing the format and limits of meta-physics, following the earlier dictum from Heidegger’s *Principle of Reason* of 1957 that metaphor makes sense only within the realm of metaphysics.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, the New Metaphysicians – most prominently Theodore Sider in *Writing the Book of the World* in 2011 – propose “to *expand* our conception of structure’s importance, generalize the *concept* of structure, investigate its nature, use it as the *foundation* of [a] ‘meta-metaphysics’, and reconceptualize metaphysics in terms of it.”<sup>2</sup> The proposed term, then, whose ‘conception’ is to be ‘expanded’ in order to ‘reconceptualize’ a *meta*-foundation of metaphysics – ‘structure’ and its implied other, ‘function’ – is to reset and reclaim an epistemological field, whose central term, ‘substance’, had been caught over the centuries of Western Metaphysics in a process – if ‘process’ were only the right word, but it is not – of *de*-construction. A generation before Derrida, Hans Blumenberg had called the meta-process at work within metaphysics a ‘meta-kinetic’ in allusion to metaphysics’s physical key concept, Aristotle’s *kinesis*.<sup>3</sup> To cut a complicated terminological maze short, metaphor was the Aristotelian name documenting, although not at all governing, the meta-kinetics of *de*-construction. Or – to

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Part of Michèle Lowrie and Susanne Lüdemann’s exemplarity project, *Exemplarity and Singularity: Thinking through Particulars in Philosophy, Literature, and Law* (London: Routledge, 2015), 46–57. A German version appeared in *Marginale zur Metapher: Poetik nach Aristoteles* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2015), chapter 1. I owe a lot to audiences in the FU Berlin, the University of Chicago, and the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

1 Paul Ricœur, *La métaphore vive* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 356–384; *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny (London: Routledge, 1978), 280–303. Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957), 89; *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press, 1991).

2 Theodore Sider, *Writing the Book of the World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), 5 (my italics).

3 The relevant reference for Blumenberg’s metaphorology would be Aristotle’s *Problemata* 10.13.1, where the plural *métakinêses* names changes, reversals, displacements in general and thus informs, metaphorically speaking, the metakinetics of historical horizons.

put it in terms of the new metaphysicians' approach, which seems in this respect, whether by intention or by mere deconstructive coincidence, the first truly post-deconstructive enterprise – metaphor is, and already was of old, the means of 'expanding', as it is the means of the accounting for "our conception of structure" in its emergence within (the kinetics of) deconstruction. In order to situate, articulate, discuss this post-deconstructive perspective, I propose to look back to the metaphysical setting investigated in Derrida's first deconstructive take on structure, which he named most perceptively in terms of its own mythic metaphors of light a "white mythology." In doing so, yet another and, as it seems, more basic feature surfaced, a term in no need of further explanation: namely the example as a form in which – or, more to the point, in whose exemplary format – the instances of metaphor occur, turn up, are identified and referred to as more or less clear cut cases.

Examples, to begin with, do not exist in the singular. They necessarily come in the plural, indeed, in rich abundance; an example always emerges as one of many. The functional qualification of exemplarity, which is responsible for the plurality of examples, is their equivalence. It results in the suitable example being the fitting one of the necessarily multiple examples, for which this one must be able to stand in. To this extent, the example seems the opposite of a metaphor, whose "singular accuracy" in successful cases is the object of a side remark in Derrida's "Mythologie blanche," which I take as my point of departure: "Is it not bad metaphors that always give us the best examples?"<sup>4</sup> In successful cases, metaphors break through the plurality of examples and the barrier of their functional equivalence, in which and out of which they obtain and guarantee their exemplary pertinence. The plurality of examples mediates between the individual case on the one hand and the singularity of metaphor on the other.

We owe to Derrida a long line of exemplary pretexts for the theoretical practice of deconstruction – the supplement, the secret, the crypt – whereby the pre- of the pretext is as elementary as the de- in de-construction, a pre- to be un-covered and de-scribed in the act, while "it happens."<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, the subject of the patient tracing of what happens and is the case in the process of deconstruction has never been the case of the 'case' itself, nor the case of the 'example': these are

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4 Jacques Derrida, "La mythologie blanche: La métaphore dans le texte philosophique" (1971), *Marges – de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), 247–324: 299; "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 207–272: 230.

5 Jacques Derrida, "The Time is Out of Joint," *Deconstruction Is/In America: A New Sense of the Political*, ed. Anselm Haverkamp (New York NY: New York University Press, 1995), 14–38: 17.

most easily neglected. The case of “bad metaphors” may be a good enough pretext to address the problem of equivalence and function. With Aristotle, Niklas Luhmann and Hans Lipps I approach this field in three stages, on each of which the peculiar double bind between metaphor and example emerges from the role of functional equivalence for the theory of metaphor introduced by Aristotle and deconstructed – questioned in its functional pertinence – by Derrida.

## I {Aristotle}

Equivalence is the object, instrument, and result of functional analysis. Not the least of Luhmann’s accomplishments was to distinguish, on the basis of this decisive moment in the conception of function, the emergence of functional concepts from the older concepts of substance in Aristotle’s sense, a process whose result also entails an entirely new way of *coming to conceive* of something. For this can be easily overlooked in the transformation of conceptual types from concepts of substance to the concepts of function described by Ernst Cassirer as the fundamental revolution in the progress of knowledge, that this transformation implies a change in the conception of conceiving and thus a metamorphosis of the concept of concepts itself.<sup>6</sup> One is tempted to say that the Kantian Cassirer pre-dates the conceptual status of Kant’s ‘transcendental’ concepts, in order to do justice to, and come to better grips with, the emergence of (conceptions of) function.<sup>7</sup> However, that which is to be conceived of and conceptualized in function in the place of stable substances demands not only greater flexibility in application. It also demands a different latency management with respect to an entity, which is no longer to be seized, assessed, and processed, but instead opens itself to other possibilities, onto a reality which, as a result of this opening, is differently constructed as ‘reality’ and, consequently, conceptualized differently, in the form of historically differing – since this differing constitutes ‘history’ in the first place – ‘reality-concepts’ in Blumenberg’s sense.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ernst Cassirer, *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1910), 18–20; *Substance and Function*, tr. William Curtis-Swabey, Marie Collins-Swabey (Mineola NY: Dover, 1953).

<sup>7</sup> See Heinz Heimsoeth’s commentary, *Transzendente Dialektik* I–IV (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1966–1971), I: 67–68.

<sup>8</sup> See Hans Blumenberg, “Wirklichkeitsbegriff und Möglichkeit des Romans” (1964), *Ästhetische und metaphorologische Schriften*, ed. Anselm Haverkamp (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), 47–73; “The Concept of Reality and the Possibility of the Novel,” trans. David H. Wilson, *New Perspectives in German Literary Criticism*, ed. Richard E. Amacher, Victor Lange (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 29–48.

Aristotle himself had recognized this implicit necessity and thematized the conceptual concern for functional stability in an esoteric treatise dedicated to this most decisive among the epistemological ‘problemata’ of his work. The book is called *Poetics*, but it would be tedious to follow this text’s esoteric construction all the way into the intricacies of the exemplary role that poetry plays in it as a singular paradigm of mobile latency within the conceptual. In a short passage, the lexis-chapters 20–22, this point becomes thematic under the very name of ‘metaphor’, which is introduced at this point. From Johannes Vahlen’s *Poetics*-edition and commentary in the nineteenth century up to Blumenberg’s *Paradigms of a Metaphorology* in the second half of the twentieth century (half a generation before Derrida), the function of Aristotle’s metaphor has been understood as the regulated correlation of cosmos and logos, of ontological order and conceptual stringency: “Cosmos and Logos were correlates.”<sup>9</sup> It does not only mean that the correlation of cosmos and logos is what explains the emergence of metaphor as a significant starting point for the long-stable constellation of theory called metaphysics; it also means that this correlation is thematized in metaphor. In introducing metaphor in addition to his ontological concepts, Aristotle creates functional concepts for the first time. As Bruno Snell has presciently observed, the origin of metaphor grows out of the thematization of function; metaphor is, let me conclude, introduced by Aristotle as a function of thematization.<sup>10</sup> What becomes manifest is the concept of metaphor; with it emerges a first intuition of what function is. Interestingly, Aristotle uses in the *Poetics* a unique formula for this process of an emerging conceiving: he call it a “definition *that comes to be* on the basis of what has been said of it.”<sup>11</sup>

As Aristotle’s differentiation into four quasi-categorical types of metaphor shows (valued by Quintilian as a philosophical heuristic of metaphor),<sup>12</sup> what seems at stake in the emergence of metaphor as a concept is the functional equivalence, in which metaphor keeps examples of quasi-categorical transitions in store; moreover – this is Snell’s point – it fulfills the function of holding them

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<sup>9</sup> Hans Blumenberg, *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie* (1960), ed. Anselm Haverkamp (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2013), 12, commentary 255–258. Johannes Vahlen, *Beiträge zu Aristoteles’ Poetik* (1865–67), ed. Hermann Schöne (Leipzig: Teubner, 1914), 137.

<sup>10</sup> Bruno Snell, *Der Aufbau der Sprache* (Hamburg: Claassen, 1952), 159; also *Die Entdeckung des Geistes* (Hamburg: Claassen, 1946, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1955), 427–430.

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle, *On Poetics*, trans. Seth Bernadete and Michael Davis (South Bend IA: St. Augustine’s Press, 2002), 17, Davis’s commentary, note 46 (my italics).

<sup>12</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 8.6.8–9 – in spite of Donald A. Russell’s warning, in his edition (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), III: 430, note 7, that “the classification is not Aristotelian”; it may be not only Aristotelian, but had been subjected to Aristotle’s rhetorical theory (Russell, 429) and is referred to by Quintilian in this respect.



in stock. That which comes to conceptual finitude according to categories finds in metaphor the possible μεταβολή εἰς ἄλλο γένος exemplified. Which means: the categorically fixed concept finds in metaphor the exemplary instances of a possible trans-lation, transfer or carry-over, between categories. Whereby, as Heidegger aptly surmises, “something up to that moment hidden may come to the fore.”<sup>13</sup> As a consequence, we can expand on Snell and conclude: the thematizing origin of function which results in metaphor lies in examples which transcend themselves into metaphor, a transformation one could at first take to be exemplary, but which upon closer reflection turns out to be an instance entirely without parallel. This was already the meaning of μεταβολή in Aristotle’s use, where the term figured as enhanced, “sudden metábasis” in tragedy.<sup>14</sup>

From classical rhetoric to the structuralism of Roman Jakobson and the *Rhetorique générale* of Liège, this state of affairs has, in fact, been based upon a well understood structural equivalence of paradigm and metaphor: “La définition du paradigme est, structurellement, identique à celle de la métaphore: au point qu’il est loisible de considérer cette dernière comme un paradigme déployé en syntagme.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, Jakobson’s famous thesis postulates a felicitous ‘sublation’ (which he calls ‘projection’) of the paradigm in the composition called ‘syntagma’.<sup>16</sup> The structural equivalence of paradigm and metaphor is brought into a more flexible correlation of cosmos and logos. Jakobson, however, does not take the role of the example into account; he takes it for granted. Thus, he absorbs every ontological determination that Aristotle’s categories offer into the versatile multi-functionality of the axes of projection. In Aristotle’s types of metaphor, on the contrary, the differentiating process was entirely apparent, even though their determination was categorically limited and not yet environmentally open to the unlimited space of linguistic possibilities intended in Jakobson’s avant-garde poetics.

Aristotle’s design of the *Poetics* presupposes at this point, as often (almost always, and with particular refinement in the *Poetics*), a Platonic standard, which Victor Goldschmidt has carefully brought out and Giorgio Agamben has

13 Martin Heidegger, “Vom Wesen und Begriff der Φυσικῆ; Aristoteles, Physik B, 1” (1939), *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt/M: Klostermann, 1967), 239–301: 249.

14 Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* I–II (München: Hueber, 1960), I: 583, §§ 1208–1210.

15 Group M (Jacques Dubois & al.), *Rhétorique générale* (Paris: Larousse, 1970), 116; *General Rhetoric*, trans. Paul B. Burrell, Edgar M. Slotkin (Baltimore MA: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 118.

16 Roman Jakobson, “Linguistics and Poetics: Closing Statement”, *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1960), 350–377.

recently emphasized. Goldschmidt's concern was not metaphor but the self-the-matizing use of the 'paradigma' as Plato's very accomplishment: "the paradigmatic element is itself a relation," he insisted.<sup>17</sup> Agamben concludes correctly what Aristotle already knew: "The paradigm is never simply given, but rather begets and produces itself."<sup>18</sup> More striking with respect to its syntagmatic anchoring, Agamben continues: "To serve as example, the syntagm must be suspended from its normal function; yet, however, it's just by the non-functioning in this suspension that it can show how the syntagma functions." In brief: as a paradigm, the example is in its thematizing function removed from the rule which it exemplifies, "in that it *manifests* that it belongs to this case." For Agamben, therefore, the paradigm is a "symmetrical opposite of the exception" that does not manifest itself *as* exception but rather results in one. Insofar as the example makes manifest, latency is the opposite of the resulting exception. Between exception and becoming manifest, examples, before they are domesticated in paradigms, spell out a kind of 'spell'. This spell is still present in the root of the German 'Beispiel' (Middle High German 'Bi-spel'), where 'spiel' has nothing to do with play, but means 'spell'. Kluge's etymological handbook identifies 'threat' and 'abuse' as the apotropaic illocution in acts of example-giving.<sup>19</sup> Etymologically, at least, the example seems an institution of latency.

## II {Luhmann}

Luhmann leaves no doubt that functional equivalence leads "ultimately" (as he puts it) beyond the merely functional: "The functional method is finally a comparative one, and introducing it into reality serves to open up what lies at hand for sidelong glances at other possibilities."<sup>20</sup> If examples serve as "guides in the search for functional equivalents," they can thus with respect to "functional explanation [...] be nothing other than the ascertainment [in general] and the exclusion [in particular] of functional equivalents." Rhetorically speaking, they "bring functional equivalents into the form of 'impossible alternatives' in order to use them to legitimate the course of action always already being followed – or con-

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17 Victor Goldschmidt, *Le paradigme dans la dialectique platonicienne* (Paris: Vrin 1947, 1985), 77.

18 Giorgio Agamben, *Signatura rerum* (Paris: Vrin, 2008), 25, 26.

19 Friedrich Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 21<sup>st</sup> ed. 1975), 63.

20 Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 85; *Social Systems*, trans. J. Bednarz Jr. (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1995), 54; in the following my abstract of pages 83–93, my translation.

versely to legitimate an entirely new course of action.” If functional analysis is for Luhmann “a theory technique,” through which “more complexity” becomes visible “than is available to the observed system itself,” what emerges into the full light of day is the tight-rope walk of latency that the example completes between good and bad examples, amongst a host of competing equivalents. “The phenomenon of meaning appears [in examples] in the form of a surplus of references to other possibilities of experience and action,” Luhmann explains. The example “appears” – it is the *phainomenon* in which, according to Luhmann, some function manifests itself as such.<sup>21</sup> In latency, it is pre-given in the paradoxical form of some sort of co-presence, which is, in fact, an “acute non-presence.”<sup>22</sup> For Luhmann, the kind of function that is the latent depends entirely on a visibility, which either emerges from some necessary blindness or conserves something which, on a system-dependent basis, functions in the dark. Latency, then, would be a name for every function’s non-dependence on transparency. Analysis is dependent upon making visible, whereas a function in itself (and on its own) is not. In the meantime, however, whatever functional equivalence brings to light changes the function that it was; what was latent becomes an exemplary instance – which is to say: although invisibly working, the hidden mechanism turns into a ‘reflective mechanism’. In and through self-thematization, the example comes to be reflectively a ‘learning of learning.’<sup>23</sup> In the rhetorical *exemplum* in particular, turning the exemplary instance into a valid case, the equivalence of examples produces the efficiency of reflexive learning. This is the veritable augmentation that rhetoric, counting the *exemplum* amongst its major achievements, has brought about and developed into a literary genre of its own.

Examples enable analytic comparability in the form of functional equivalence, whose pragmatic, situational compromise is left behind in the singular case of metaphors – even though a mob of competing examples may catch up with a metaphor and its transgressive impetus may be reduced to the standard of functional adequacy. For metaphors, this means that on a case by case basis, they ‘exemplify’ only themselves and nothing but themselves. As soon as they become examples, a host of unprecedented possibilities of functionalization emerges.

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<sup>21</sup> See Lothar Eley, *Transzendente Phänomenologie und Systemtheorie der Gesellschaft* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Alber, 1972), 80–81, 92.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Khurana, “Latenzzeit – Unvordenkliche Nachwirkung: Anmerkungen zur Nachträglichkeit der Latenz,” *Latenz: 40 Annäherungen an einen Begriff*, ed. Stefanie Diekmann, Thomas Khurana (Berlin: Kadmos, 2007), 142–147.

<sup>23</sup> Niklas Luhmann, “Reflexive Mechanismen” (1966), *Soziologische Aufklärung I* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1969), 72–102. See here also “Selbstthematisierungen des Gesellschafts-systems” (1973), *Soziologische Aufklärung II* (1975), 72–102.

Aristotle proposed a term – metaphor – that is not merely a concept, but also a metaphor itself: it illustrates what it performs, namely, to transpose. Its Latin translation as *translatio* repeats this transposition, transposes it and thematizes thus, in the manner of a reflective mechanism, metaphor's function as metaphor. In the form of translation, the transfer is conceived of in a quasi-categorical manner. I say 'quasi-categorical' because this type of transfer functions categorically only in the metaphoric, translated sense: it no longer distinguishes in terms of 'being', but according to, precisely, function. In other words: for Aristotle, 'metaphor' is a functional concept already (the first instance we may have), even if only one that remains embedded in, and bound to the onto-logical basis of the categories of substance. The differentiation of an ontological order of things which manifests paradigmatically in its poetic function and thus makes the poetic a paradigm of philosophy – the esoteric point of Aristotle's *Poetics* – does not come as a result of a power of its own, but comes about as an ancillary effect of the thematization of the functional in the example and, more specifically, in allowing the equivalence of examples to be played out in what Robert Merton aptly called "latent pattern maintenance."<sup>24</sup> Here, Aristotle's interest in tragedy as a philosophical paradigm began and is confirmed by his rather obvious lack of interest in *catharsis*, which was for him nothing but a compromise with the Platonic resistance to mimetic art; the term 'catharsis' refers only to a secondary, "non-technical" effect of tragedy in a medical metaphor for the intended public response, which is of no further relevance for the τέχνη ποιητική itself.<sup>25</sup>

The latency-management of examples, therefore, cannot lie in the strictly invisible, as Luhmann postulates; rather, it corresponds and reacts to that drive within the interaction of examples, which presses towards functional equivalence. It does not exhaust itself in the interaction of examples but extends beyond the exemplary: beyond the functional aspects in the tendency to, and imposition of equivalence into the radical singularity of metaphors. As hypotheses of a deeper truth metaphors refer back to the old correlation of cosmos and logos. This is the type of truth called ἀλήθεια by Heidegger, who sensed in the etymology of that word the metaphorological layer of the Greek 'meta' of meta-physics.<sup>26</sup> Along such lines a re-reading of Aristotle could proceed, which for Blumenberg and Derrida alike could be only of a vanishing importance: as a historical rehabilitation of the lost

<sup>24</sup> Robert K. Merton, "Manifest and Latent Functions" (1949), *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 73–138.

<sup>25</sup> See Friedrich Solmsen, "The Origins and Methods of Aristotle's *Poetics*," *Classical Quarterly* 29 (1935), 192–201: 198–199.

<sup>26</sup> See Holger Helting, "Alétheia-Etymologien vor Heidegger im Vergleich mit einigen Phasen der alétheia-Auslegung bei Heidegger," *Heidegger-Studien* 13 (1997), 91–107.

project of a Metaphysics. I'll leave this to the side. For what matters in the functional equivalence of examples is neither the evolutionary potential of a progress in knowledge as released in metaphors, nor is it the development of forces for scientific revolutions, advanced to the exhaustion of the underlying metaphorological paradigms. What is decisive in the functional equivalence of examples is the mobilized constellation, which in post-metaphysical times can no longer and not in the same way be ontological as it was for Aristotle.

### III {Lipps}

The practice of theory implied in the use of examples is a technique whose operation presupposes latency. However, we must first identify where it resides – this is in Luhmann's presentation not sufficiently clear. "Examples lead before the eye," is the commonplace, upon which examples are supposed to take place – a commonplace which is, as Hans Lipps promptly demonstrates, entirely unfit as a showplace.<sup>27</sup> For what examples are meant to 'illustrate' is properly fulfilled by the precondition of latency, which Luhmann understands as a surplus, if not superfluous, complexity – something not accessible to the observed system itself. The complexity does not reside, for better or for worse, in more or less clearly defined concepts. For Lipps, examples illustrate, make palpable, the 'know-how' of coming to grips with things (*con-cipere* as in *Be-griff*). Lipps therefore makes a point of distinguishing concepts (*Begriffe*) from conceptions (*Konzeptionen*).<sup>28</sup> These conceptions operate prior to, or alongside, or even despite the determinacy of defined concepts; they constitute 'reality' and are best understood, when taken at their word in examples. As an exemplarity that has become habitual in the practice of a routine, Lipps's conceptions reformulate Aristotle's concept of 'empirical' experience in offering a repertory of "practical distinctions."<sup>29</sup> Thus, Lipps continues: examples "illustrate the 'conception', but not that which is to be found in their retinue of determinations and characteristics"

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27 Hans Lipps, "Exempel, Beispiel, Fall" (1934), *Die Verbindlichkeit der Sprache* (Frankfurt/M: Klostermann, 1944, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1958), 40 ff. For Lipps's companion article "Metaphern" (1934) in the same collection see Anselm Haverkamp, *Metapher: Die Ästhetik in der Rhetorik* (Munich: Fink, 2007), chapter 8. The first translation of Lipps is Erica Weitzman's, "Instance, example, case, and the relationship of the legal case to the law," *Exemplarity and Singularity*, 16–35.

28 Hans Lipps, *Untersuchungen zu einer hermeneutischen Logik* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1939, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1959), 55–57. Compare a decade later Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), 27 ff., 40 ff., where the clarifying term 'know how' is introduced.

29 Friedrich Kambartel, *Erfahrung und Struktur* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1967), 48.

and what, consequently, leads to the well-defined concept. “Especially insofar as concepts cannot [– not yet and perhaps never –] be explained, it is basic that one, first of all, needs examples in order to clarify the direction of the [underlying] conception.”

“First of all” one needs examples before one arrives at concepts, takes to exemplum or finds metaphors: “*Exempla* point beyond themselves; examples are a means of paving a way for something.” The track or path to be built (as in Freud’s ‘Bahnung’) may in fact be a most fitting metaphor for the latency-management provided by examples. But while rhetorical *exempla* fulfill a manifest function in the reflective mechanism of learning, this function is just as clearly surpassed in metaphor.<sup>30</sup> In examples, of which there are for this very reason many to choose and too many to ever compare, one cannot speak with the same certainty of a mission accomplished as in a successful metaphor. Ironically, Derrida suggests, it may be as a result of this that a certain drive resides in the failed metaphor, which in missing the point enriches the categorical naiveté and blind confidence of examples with a mark, without which even good examples risk failing in the wider field of functional equivalences. This hardly remarkable, although nonetheless ineluctable marking in the field of equivalences lends urgency to the question of the linguistic form and constitution of examples, namely their manifold existence on margins which paradigms and examples have long abandoned. “What one learns from a paradigm [Lipps wrote way before Goldschmidt and Agamben], is precisely the mobility, i.e. the directedness and the constraints on the variability of a concept contained in the representative function of a model example.”

Like the rhetorical form of the exemplum, the paradigm is generated through secondary conceptual strategies. Like jokes, mere examples reach back to a primary, preconceptual stratum, while metaphors lead beyond the defining limits of a concept.<sup>31</sup> What is to be learned from a metaphor’s aim beyond the secondary level of rhetorical reflexivity is what examples draw upon in the first place: metaphors profit from the work performed by examples that aim at the turning-point between the latent process of conceptualization and the manifest concept exemplified by (the rhetoric of) *exempla*. It is not easy to isolate the point of conversion and to decide, where the turn takes place. Johannes Lohmann, Heidegger’s linguistic authority, speaks of a “stepping out of the latent into the actuality of

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<sup>30</sup> For the crucial distinction of example and *exemplum* see Bernhard Waldenfels, *Hyperphänomene: Modi hyperbolischer Erfahrungen* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012), 186–197.

<sup>31</sup> Compare Donald Davidson’s famous tour de force “What Metaphors Mean” (1978), *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 245–264.

self-consciousness,” a state of affairs, which he calls “illatency.” He identifies this “stepping out” – no doubt a pertinent metaphor – with a number of grammatical achievements of Latin (compared to its predecessor Greek).<sup>32</sup> Decisive for the purpose of the feature of ‘self-thematisation’ in Luhmann’s description is a linguistically manifest “categorical form” according to Lohmann. Luhmann’s reflective mechanism seems to offer the most durable type of latent pattern maintenance – one that improves with utmost success the functional understanding and elaboration of the τέχνη ποιητική inaugurated by Aristotle.

This success, however, happened on the grounds of a gigantic bias concerning the nature of Aristotle’s mimesis, a monumental mis-understanding of imitation, in which the principal plurality of examples found a radically limited application, in that it was channeled through the needle’s eye of Latin *imitatio*. Roman exemplarity was translated into, and reformatted by, Christian interpretation – *interpretatio Christiana* – as modeled upon and directed to the imitation of Christ – *imitatio Christi*. Not Greek tragedy, but the reframed Roman interpretation of Aristotelian *mimesis* is at the bottom both of the term’s success and more so of the many distortions suffered by the *Poetics* after its rediscovery in the Renaissance. Aristotle’s adaptation of Platonic *mimesis* did not signify much more than – precisely – the ‘embeddedness’ of tragic action in a life-world informed of old – in its actuality and probability – by ‘myth’ or, closer to Aristotle’s own philosophical point, by ‘history’ given as μῦθος.<sup>33</sup> Latin *imitatio* enters the picture at a much later stage, in a secular age, whose mythic analogue was the literary discipline of Roman *religio* – a life double-bound in the reflective mechanism of reading Livy’s *exempla* of the Roman republic or Vergil’s secondary epic of a historical legacy *sine fine* called Rome. Christian interpretation got used to this unintended – and in a way ironical – prophesy of structure. In Dante’s *limbo* – the non-paradise of pagan authors of promise – pagan irony is structurally equivalent to the allegories of salvation; it offers mere “allegories of reading” in Paul de Man’s cunning title, for the disillusioned modernity to come.<sup>34</sup>

With the crucial support of Latin grammar, Lohmann’s categorical form determines the shape of exemplarity as it develops from the latent efficiency of plural examples into the mechanically provided reflexivity of rhetorical *exempla*.

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32 Johannes Lohmann, *Philosophie und Sprachwissenschaft* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblodt, 1965, 1975), 88–90. Lohmann’s ‘Illatenz’ explains and replaces Heidegger’s etymological term ἀλήθεια.

33 Anselm Haverkamp, “Medea ex machina: Aristotle on Euripides” (2009), *Marginales zur Metapher: Poetik nach Aristoteles* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2014), 87–90.

34 Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press 1979), who would refer us to John Freccero, whose groundbreaking research has been collected under the title *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).



The technology of linguistic categories of form draws upon a reflexivity installed within these categories, whose central feature of reflection was called ‘metaphor’ by Aristotle. Before it comes to the rhetorical discipline of *exempla*, the plurality of examples prepares the ground of their metaphorological pre-disposition. The secondary format of the one unrivalled master plot of imitation is a format of epochal deception; behind it, the hidden economy of latency works the better, since its function does not depend on visibility; the transparency claims and postulates of critiques of ideology notoriously fail, because the technologies of mechanical reflection prove ‘auto-immune’ against any further reflection.

Lipps refers us to pre-poetical *Simple Forms*. As the most simple of philosophical forms, prepared by the Platonic form of the dialogue, examples would offer the most obvious paradigm. But André Jolles, who was the first to study simple forms in that sense, did not include the example, because all of his forms are varieties of exemplarity in their simplest states.<sup>35</sup> The form that comes closest in his list to the example would be the ‘case’, whose legal format corresponds directly to the fully developed rhetorical *exemplum*. The *exemplum* itself, one might add, originated in the first of Jolles’ simple forms, the ‘legend’, which conforms to the ‘simple social system’ in Luhmann’s understanding, where a small, limited community’s *forma vivendi* cultivates the singularity of a saint’s life as the *imitatio Christi* to be shared.<sup>36</sup> Beside that, the case of Socrates, whose irony made him the *figura cryptica* of Quintilian’s rhetoric, but also a prototype of saints and martyrs, became the paradigmatic philosophical instance, the metaphor rather than the exemplum, of a *forma vivendi*.<sup>37</sup>

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35 André Jolles, *Einfache Formen: Legende, Sage, Mythe, Rätsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen, Witz* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1930), as cited in Hans Lipps, *Untersuchungen zu einer hermeneutischen Logik*, 106, 137.

36 See Niklas Luhmann, “Einfache Sozialsysteme” (1966), *Soziologische Aufklärung II* (1975), 21–38: 23, 26. Compare Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, “Faszinationstyp Hagiographie”, *Deutsche Literatur im Mittelalter*, ed. Christoph Corneau (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1979), 37–84. But compare also Peter Brown, whose studies on the “Holy Man” in Late Antiquity, most famously “The Saint as Exemplar,” *Representations* 2 (1983), 1–25, have more and more brought to light, as in Brown’s *Authority and the Sacred* (Cambridge GB: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pt. III, the deep rhetorical ambivalence in the exemplary aim of that more than simple form’s *occupatio* (Jolles’s apt term).

37 Anselm Haverkamp, *Figura cryptica: Theorie literarischer Latenz* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 2002), 29, 82–85.



#### IV Coda {Kuhn}

What can no longer be maintained is the structural equivalence of paradigm and metaphor in the meta-functional, epistemological role proposed by Thomas Kuhn. In his *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Aristotle's metaphor would outdo the Platonic paradigm. What drives conceptual revolution is not metaphor's structural singularity, but rather the self-thematizing capacity of examples.<sup>38</sup> This extraordinary quality would derive not from the paradigm, whose 'priority' is confirmed by Kuhn, but rather would be fuelled by the never fully determinable plurality of examples, whereas the singularity of paradigms, as Kuhn insists, is fully exhausted in the conservative function of the normal-normative practice governing scientific progress. To this extent, examples would be the mythical margins, indeed, of the 'mythologie blanche', in whose horizon the unsuccessful metaphors would provide the best examples of this horizon's actual insurpassability. In successful metaphors, on the other hand, the opaque illusion of an unexpected luck would be mixed with, and remain marked by, a fatal after-taste of the never absolute, never ever perfect fit. Metaphors do not exist in perpetuity. Like literature, their eternal truth is their non-eternal endurance, the immanence of a fragile transcendence bound to fail. Like Phaeton falling back to the earth, they are to be appreciated only for the brief moment before their descent.

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<sup>38</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago IL: Chicago University Press, 1962), as discussed by Hans Blumenberg, "Paradigma grammatisch" (1971), *Ästhetische und metaphorologische Schriften*, 172–176.