



## Science and Metaphor

*An international and interdisciplinary workshop  
organized by the English Department of Flensburg University  
and the online Journal Metaphorik.de*

**Date:** 18.-19. 10. 2013

**Venue:** Flensburg University, Institute for Language, Literature and Media Studies  
(Universität Flensburg, Auf dem Campus 1, 24943 Flensburg)

**Local organisers:** Anke Beger (Flensburg University)  
Martin Döring (Hamburg University)  
Olaf Jäkel (Flensburg University)

*There is no science without fancy  
And no art without facts.*

(Vladimir Nabokov)

### Objectives of the workshop

Metaphorical reasoning is a basic ingredient of doing science. Scientists use metaphors in order to interpret scientific results, formulate hypotheses or theories, and to communicate their research to a wider public. Thus, metaphor allows scientists to explore and negotiate the often highly abstract domains of knowledge they deal with. However, despite agreeing on the constitutive role of metaphor in science, the different disciplines concerned with it have neither established consistent theories of, or approaches to, investigating this phenomenon nor have metaphors been analyzed systematically in scientific contexts. The lack of a common approach to metaphor in science impedes the necessary exchange between the different disciplines involved. At the same time, the absence of contextualized and applied research on metaphor in science results in a vague concept of the value of metaphor in science and science communication.

The aim of this workshop is to fill these gaps by bringing together scholars from the humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences who explore the value as well as the challenges of metaphor in science and the communication of scientific concepts. This

framework not only allows researchers from the different disciplines to harmonize scientific activities as well as to promote theoretical and methodological synergies on a European level. It also allows researchers to explore how metaphor could be applied more beneficially when scientists communicate their specialized knowledge to a wider public.

## **Programme of the Workshop**

**Saturday 19.10.2013**

**Flensburg University, Main Building, Room HG 248**

9:00 Welcome Address (Andreas Christian, Vice President in charge of Research)

Introduction (Olaf Jäkel, Head of the English Department)

9:30 Martin Döring (Universität Hamburg):

“Metaphorical Vision Assessment: The Concept of ‘Life’ in Systems Biology”

(Coffee break)

11:00 Aleksandra Stelmach & Brigitte Nerlich (University of Nottingham):

“Epigenetics: Metaphors beyond Genetics?”

12:00 Benjamin Specht (Universität Stuttgart):

“Geistesblitze, Liebesfunken, Heiligenschein: Zum Zusammenhang von Problem- und Metapherngeschichte am Beispiel der Elektrizitätslehre um 1800”

(Lunch break)

14:00 Peter Heering (Universität Flensburg):

“Bridging the Gap between Science and Society: Metaphors as Mediators in Science Communication”

15:00 Gudrun Reijnierse (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam):

“Deliberate Metaphor as a Means of Transferring Knowledge in Written Academic Texts”

(Coffee break)

16:30 Anke Beger (Universität Flensburg):

“Different Functions of (Deliberate) Metaphor in Teaching Scientific Concepts”

17:30 Bettina Bock von Wülfingen (Humboldt-Universität Berlin):

“Die ‘ontologische Metapher’ – ein Widerspruch in sich? Aktuelle und historische Beispiele aus Zell- und Vererbungsforschung”

18:30 Last words?

For **further information** regarding the workshop, please contact Anke Beger (anke.beger@uni-flensburg.de) or Olaf Jäkel (jaekel@uni-flensburg.de)

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