The language by which we characterize the city reflects the same ambivalence, and metaphors have eloquently expressed its diverse faces. The city may be an cultural oasis, a hub of commerce, the citadel of government, and the fount of civilization. No single metaphor for urbanism provides a complete picture; rather, each reflects one facet of a complex phenomenon. Some figures suggest optimistic possibilities and express ideals for urban design. The "garden city" conveys a fusion of nature and culture, a cultivated nature in which control takes a quietly benevolent
course in promoting the flowering of people’s lives in an Edenic urban setting. The "forest city," beloved of Finland's planners, defers to natural imperatives more respectfully, seeing urban success less in controlling nature than in envisioning a harmonious collaboration in which the forest is a benign setting for human habitation. The "machine city" reflects the technocratic goal of subjugating nature, imposing the human imprint on the landscape through what Victor Hugo called "the somber sadness of right angles:" survey grids, street grids, and housing tracts. The "asphalt jungle" conveys the vicious urban social patterns that emerge in predatory gangs, gratuitous violence, and the venal exploitation of the weak. To this perhaps Calvino’s "invisible cities" offer an antidote in the region of imagination and fantasy.

All these metaphors are true, for all convey aspects of urban life and the multiple conditions and experiences that cities offer. Each metaphor both captures something of the city and creates a greater understanding of it. To make such a claim, however, does not settle the issue but only raises it anew: For what is metaphor and how does it function? Even though metaphor is almost as common a subject of discussion as it is an object of use, it remains elusive. Perhaps we can best explore the first by examining the second, hoping to grasp something of the special quality of metaphorical thinking by probing into the way it works in a particular case. This inquiry into the aesthetic of the city has, then, two objectives. One is to explore the dimension of urban life suggested by a still different metaphor, "wilderness," hoping to discover what distinctive vision of urban life the "wilderness city" can provide. The other is to use this investigation to uncover something about the meaning and function of metaphor--more
Wilderness as a metaphor for the city

The meaning of 'wilderness' has a long and varied history. The shift in its connotation from a dark and dangerous place that fills one with foreboding to one of adventure, discovery, and even exhilaration and awe began in earnest in the West during the eighteenth century. Over the past hundred years, 'wilderness' has acquired a still more positive connotation, becoming a place to be protected and preserved, a source of value and of human connections with the rest of the natural world. When the wilderness metaphor is applied to urban experience, however, the word reverts to its earlier, forbidding sense of a trackless domain uninhabited by humans.

Wilderness differs in curious ways from the comparable metaphors of garden and forest. Unlike these, which convey cultivation and collaboration with nature, wilderness is a dark metaphor. Instead of elevating or romanticizing the city, wilderness makes it an ominous place and evokes a feeling of apprehension. The effectiveness of this metaphor may actually lie in its very obscurity and ambivalence: Working inversely, it illuminates the city through its very darkness. To the extent that regarding the city as wilderness tells us something about it that we might not obtain in other ways, the metaphor is useful. To the extent that it tells us something about ourselves, it may be even more useful. I find wilderness to have both such values, and in a rather unexpected way.

Thinking of the city as wilderness leads us in unusual directions. We may, at
times consider the city overwhelming and hostile, and not a place for preserving and promoting humane values. When unfamiliar, the city may appear confusing, threatening in its very strangeness. However, these traits are more recognizable, even acceptable, when the city's features are seen as analogous to those of a wilderness, some of which may be benign, others less so. For example, one can find a parallel between the momentary respite from immersion in the density of a city or wilderness either by the panoramic view from the observation deck of a skyscraper or a broad boulevard, or by the sweeping panorama one might obtain from a mountain top, a bluff, or a tall tree. The aroma emanating from a bakery or a restaurant may remind one of the odors of different vegetation or ground surfaces, such as a meadow, pine needles, or wet soil. The odor of decaying leaves or the effluvium of a marsh in the hot sun may resemble the smell of garbage containers on the sidewalk awaiting pickup or the exhaust of motor vehicles. Moving among buildings and along streets has some of the perceptual quality of walking among stands of trees and around dense growth. The background hum of traffic may remind one the wind rushing ceaselessly through the trees when a front is coming through. Pushing one's way through a crowd resembles the experience of pressing through thick vegetation. Constant alertness influences our passage through both city and wilderness, while the background apprehension of danger from motor vehicles and muggers parallels the constant threat, real or imagined, from the deadly creatures thought to inhabit a wilderness. In both city and wilderness, feeling out of place is a vivid component of the experience. With familiarity, the wilderness city may change into something different, such as a park or a jungle. The
last of these finds common ground between tribal warfare and the urban dangers of
gang wars. As a metaphor, wilderness preserves its darkness.

For metaphors embody values. They are judgments just as much when hidden
behind figurative language as when they are displayed openly. When traffic becomes
fearsome and urban crime endemic, the city is described as a jungle, a metaphorical
judgment of condemnation. Generally, it seems, when the city is compared with
nature, it comes out behind. From Aesop ("Better beans and bacon in peace than
cakes and ale in fear")\textsuperscript{10} through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ("God the
first garden made, and the first city Cain"	extsuperscript{11} and "God made the country, and man made
the town")\textsuperscript{12}, the city has usually been regarded as fearful and dangerous, a place to be
shunned in favor of the peace and safety of the countryside. For when untrammelled
nature is tamed into a garden, it is no longer frightening but a setting for gentle
pleasures preferable to city life.

The wilderness environment does not stand apart from the rest of nature; it has
no ontological status. Nor is it a neutral object. What we identify and understand by
wilderness are cultural meanings whose significance holds only for the culture in which
we participate. So, too, as we have noted, is the idea of wilderness historically
conditioned, changing in the eighteenth century from a wild place, haunted by darkness,
danger, and desolation, to one where we can encounter, admire, and enjoy nature.
This transformation in meaning is part of a process that still continues, as we
reconfigure nature from a threat into a resource, from a source of wealth into a haven of
respite from the pressures of urban life, from a playground into a domain demanding
Metaphorical reciprocity

One might expect to use the wilderness metaphor to gain a better understanding of the city by seeing it as a reconstructed, rationalized wilderness, interpreting the city, that is, through that image, though one somewhat hidden behind a coating of civility. Yet oddly enough, the metaphorical relation between city and wilderness seems to work in the opposite direction, as well: We may impose our sense of urban experience onto the meaning of wilderness and ascribe to it the fears and dangers we feel in the city. Not without some reason did Shakespeare characterize Rome as a "wilderness of Tigers," nor has it been the only city to figure in such descriptions. In this case, the city may be thought of as a metaphor for our cultural construction of wilderness. Once we enter into the metaphor, in fact, neither direction for developing its meaning seems independent of the other.

What insight does the wilderness metaphor have for the city? Like any metaphor, it enlarges experience by expanding its connections and reference. The metaphor of wilderness helps us grasp urban experience in a way that is clearer for being articulated in this fashion. Urban experience becomes more understandable, if not more congenial, by being seen as exhibiting the hostile, dangerous, dark traits of wilderness. In spite of the fact that the meaning of wilderness is a cultural construction, it nonetheless helps us grasp the experience of the city, that ultimate cultural artifact. To consider the city a trackless region uninhabited by humans is, of
course, literally false, yet from the standpoint of experience it may be singularly accurate. With its endless extent, enormous structures, and mammoth scale, the city overpowers its small and fragile inhabitants. Cars and trucks dominate its hard pavements; geometrical patterns decree the layout of streets and sidewalks, their distances unwalkable. Such traits render the city hostile to the passage of the human body. In the uncaring impersonality of the big city, the lonely, lost lives of many of its dwellers, and its blatant aggressiveness and masked cruelty, the city thwarts humane feeling. Grasped through the wilderness metaphor, the city ceases to be the fount of freedom and flower of culture we thought it was. Behind the veneer of customs, conventions, and institutions we discover the raw harshness and brutality of wilderness.

At the same time and conversely, the plausibility of the wilderness metaphor comes from our experience of the city. Urban experience reappears in the meaning of wilderness. The metaphor tells us what we think about the city: that it is not a haven of safety but a place of danger, not the center of civilization but a maelstrom that consumes it. Wilderness becomes here the underlying image of urban experience. Moreover, in proposing that civilization lies merely on the surface, the metaphor leads us to rethink the meaning of civilization, itself. It encourages us to reconsider not only our values but our mode of life. One is reminded of the practice of the Chinese literati. Depicted in many paintings, these officials in retirement left the court cities to live in a natural setting and follow the more civilized pursuits of entertaining friends, drinking rice wine, and writing poetry. For them it was not the city that is the seat of culture but the countryside, perhaps even the wilderness. Understood in this way, then, the city
becomes not the opposite of wilderness but its double: Wilderness is not only a metaphor for the city but its mirror.

Thus the wilderness city possesses reciprocal meanings. The alien and hostile conditions we see in wilderness tell us something about the city. At the same time, we project our experience of the city onto our understanding of wilderness, turning wilderness into a reflection of our sense of urban life. The terms in this figurative equation, then, have no independent meaning. Metaphor, here and perhaps elsewhere, as well, embodies reciprocity: Not only is wilderness a metaphor for the city, but the city is also a metaphor for wilderness.

The rhetorical use of wilderness has, in fact, an ironic twist, for wilderness as a natural environment exists more in history and imagination than in fact. With the destruction of most of the primeval forests, what we have left is only what we call, oxymoronically, "wilderness parks." These are usually secondary "wildernesses," land allowed to grow over only after the earlier logging and farming activities have ceased to be profitable and have been abandoned. And these wildernesses are cultivated in the sense of being protected, often managed, and always surrounded and impinged upon by human activities. Perhaps, in a similar fashion, the primeval wilderness has been overgrown in human experience by the city. The metaphor suggests that the city has become the new wilderness, evoking, on the one hand, feelings of intimidation and awe, a sense of the infinite, and the experience of absolute dependency; and on the other, danger and the wild behavioral traits of hostility, aggression, and violence.
A role for metaphor

There is still more at work here than reciprocity, for metaphor has an implicit advocacy role. When we speak of a garden city, we are not merely using a figurative expression: We are extolling the garden as a model for urban life and a qualitative goal of urban design. Similarly, the forest city urges an integration with nature in designing our cities, not just by including gardens and parks but in both retaining and planting stands of large trees in close proximity with apartment complexes and shopping centers. The machine city presents a contrary model, glorying in human ingenuity, in engineering solutions to the problems involved in housing and servicing large concentrations of human activity. These metaphors have a rhetorical function, then, giving poetic force to an implied program for urban design.

The wilderness city has not, to my knowledge, been taken as such a model. It stands not as a goal but as a graphic expression of anguish at what urban experience has become for many less fortunate inhabitants of the modern city. As the positive meanings of wilderness become accepted more widely, this urban metaphor may lose its critical force. Possibly the values of respect for environment and other forms of life might help develop similar values in city living. I am not sanguine about such a change.

There is another, equally normative use of the wilderness metaphor, for the wilderness city also plays into the hands of the apologists for exploitation and selective advantage. The metaphor can be used not only to criticize the quality of urban life but to justify behavior we want to encourage in the market economy of mass society.
There are those who advocate competitive and aggressive behavior, who find relief in anonymity, and who utilize the tensions in watchfulness, suspicion, and hostility as a stimulus to acquisitive striving. If the wilderness metaphor should lose its force or be coopted by the advocates of its traditional features, critics of urban ills will have to search for another, more telling image to give rhetorical force to their grievances. A new metaphor will have to be fashioned to do the work of the old wilderness.

A function of metaphor

Finally, can the wilderness metaphor tell us anything about metaphor in general? One thing this discussion has shown is that the terms of an effective metaphor are not discrete meanings that are simply related through this linguistic figure. Rather, they work together in complex ways, each informing the other, so that the meaning of the terms within the metaphor is not independent of the metaphor but rather is created by it. 'City' and 'wilderness' are not simple linguistic entities but complexes of historical and social meanings. Out of their juxtaposition emerges an awareness that extends well beyond the meaning each of the words originally carried. Reciprocity differs from interactionism, the theory that one begins the metaphor with words whose meanings are antecedently fixed but influence each other in the metaphor. Joining the words in a metaphor changes the terms because it alters their very meanings. There is more here than a linguistic form of the Hegelian dialectic, in which the metaphor synthesizes the meaning each term introduces separately. The meaning of 'wilderness' changes when juxtaposed with 'city,' and conversely, so that one can no longer speak of their
prior significance in accounting for their function in the metaphorical expression.

Change occurs in still another way, for we have to consider metaphor not just as a linguistic complex but as one that functions within a socio-linguistic situation. Meanings do not stand apart from the holders of those meanings, and people use language in a setting that is always historically and socially changing. Metaphors, then, introduce and participate in that dynamic human context, and they cannot be extrapolated from it, either as individual terms or as a linguistic figure, without irreparable distortion. Furthermore, as makers and users of metaphor, we do not stand outside and apart from their meanings: We construct them through our feelings, experiences, and behavior, as well as through our cognition.

My last and perhaps most curious observation brings together these others. For if the terms in a metaphor are not independent objects, if a metaphorical expression is not a self-contained meaning but joins with its users in a cultural context, it follows that an effective metaphor creates something new. We not only construct an understanding out of established words but create new meanings, meanings that extend, moreover, beyond linguistic limits to embody historical, somatic, affective, behavioral, and imaginative dimensions, all embedded in the life of a culture. Metaphor thus implicates a complex theory of meaning, most aspects of which are submerged below its linguistic tip. And the wilderness city with which we began has become more than we can say, even in the language of metaphor.
NOTES

1. "The city is a fact in nature, like a cave, a run of mackerel or an ant-heap. But it is also a conscious work of art, and it holds within its communal framework many simpler and more personal forms of art. Mind takes form in the city; and in turn, urban forms condition mind." Lewis Mumford, The Culture of Cities, (Harcourt Brace, 1938), Introduction. "Living in cities is an art, and we need the vocabulary of art, of style, to describe the peculiar relationship between man and material that exists in the continual creative play of urban living. The city as we imagine it, then, soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, and nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city one can locate on maps in statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture." Jonathan Raban, Soft City, (Dutton, 1974), ch. 1.

2. "Just as language has no longer anything in common with the thing it names, so the movements of most of the people who live in cities have lost their connexion with the earth; they hang, as it were, in the air, hover in all directions, and find no place where they can settle." Rainer Maria Rilke, Worpswede (1903; repr. in Rodin and Other Prose Pieces, 1954). "I live not in myself, but I become/Portion of that around me; and to me/High mountains are a feeling, but the hum/Of human cities torture." Lord Byron, Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage (1812), cto. 3, st. 72. And, most pointedly, "Prepare for death, if here at night you roam,/ And sign your will before you sup from home." Samuel Johnson, London.

3. Ebenezer Howard, Garden Cities of Tomorrow (Faber & Faber, 1945); Clarence

4. Munkkiniemi was the earliest of these planned forest communities. Tapiola, later, gained international prominence and was widely imitated.

5. Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus exemplify this aesthetic: "We want an architecture adapted to our world of machines, radios and fast motor cars, an architecture whose function is clearly recognizable in the relation of its forms." "Every architect must understand the significance of the city in order to be able to engage actively in city planning; he must recognize *simplicity in multiplicity* as a guiding principle in the shaping of its character. Form elements of typical shape should be repeated in series." Walter Gropius, "The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus," in *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, ed. Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, Ise Gropius (Charles T. Branford Co., 1959), pp. 27, 28. Frank Lloyd Wright observed that the steel and glass skyscraper is a mechanical building, a "machine pure and simple."


10. Aesop, "The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse."

11. Abraham Cowley (1618-1667), "Of Solitude," II.


15. See Hausman, *Metaphor and Art*, p. 31 and *passim*.

16. "Metaphors create integrated wholes that generate more than linguistic items and are something more than conceptual perspectives." Hausman, *Metaphor and Art*, p. 45.